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Moving from X to X^n collaboration modes
within organisational settings

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Abstract

Organisations are increasingly dependent on the collaborative effort of individuals and teams to achieve outcomes such as solve complex problems, take advantage of opportunities and enhance organisational efficiencies. In fact, there are few activities that human beings are involved in which do not involve collaboration. Yet the *experiences* of individuals called upon to make collaborations work are often over-looked by leaders and collaboration conveners pre, during and post collaborations. These leaders tend to concentrate their attention on operational antecedents such as systems, processes and resources required, as well as the attainment of the collaboration outcome. It is therefore unsurprising that the outcome of collaborative activity is often capped at the *specified* outcome. However, in the context of a perform and outperform world and especially where global economic growth is severely contracted, there is ongoing interest in the ability of organisations to create competitive advantage through collaborative-people-based advantage. The modern-day requirement is for collaboration activity to more accurately reflect the capabilities of the collaboration partakes.

This study examines how individuals' self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, and trust influence how they collaborate within an organisation setting. Accordingly, the two primary areas of examination are collaboration and individuals' experiences. This phenomenological and explorative study adopted an inductive, qualitative, single-case study approach adopting interviews, questionnaire, observation and secondary data as research instruments. The study was conducted with a mature non-profit organisation where collaboration was identified as crucial to the attainment of their goals and targets. A review of the evolution of collaboration as a theory in its own right was conducted as part of the study. The field of positive psychology and in particular the offshoots of positive organisation behaviours and positive psychological capabilities were reviewed as the foundation from which individuals' experiences were examined within the study.

The study revealed that while individuals' experiences were considered important by the leaders within the case examined, they were largely ignored during collaboration efforts. As a

result, individuals' experiences were not considered important inputs to collaboration efforts. Furthermore, individuals' experiences were not considered influential to the attainment of collaboration outcomes nor to the attainment of specified *organisational* targets and goals. In particular, optimism and trust were found to markedly contribute to individuals' experience during a collaboration, while self-efficacy and resilience did so to a lesser degree. Interestingly, rapid organisation growth emerged as an unanticipated yet key influencer to individuals' experiences during collaboration.

The study makes a threefold contribution. The first is theoretical contribution to collaboration theory by exposing the positive and negative, external and internal antecedents of individual's experiences during collaboration. The applicable experience construct (*self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, trust* and *growth* as an influencer), or a combination thereof, as found in this study, is mapped out for each antecedent type in the "Framework for Individual's Experiences during Collaboration". The framework also includes the positive and negative, individual level and organisational level outcomes of individual's experiences. Thus, in so doing, the second contribution made is to the continually expanding research of Psychological Capabilities (PsyCap) and the specific outcomes they influence. The third contribution of this study is the development of the "Xⁿ collaboration model" which depicts three modes of collaboration where each mode influences the outcome and performance of an organisation against its identified objectives.

Keywords: Collaboration; Individuals' experiences; PsyCap; Self-efficacy; Optimism; Resilience; Trust; Growth

The modern reality is that for many individuals within an organisation setting, the new normal is for them to bring their best to bare. This is irrespective of their personal efficacy, optimism or resilience levels (Avey et al., 2011; Coutu, 2002; Luthans et al., 2007; Luthans, Luthans, & Chaffin, 2019; West et al., 2009), whether trust has developed between individuals within the team (Chowdhury, 2016; Costa, Fulmer, & Anderson, 2018), whether sufficient time or effort has been dedicated by management to develop relationships across the collaboration teams (Brief & Weiss, 2002; Dent, 2000; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006; Salas, Goodwin, & Burke, 2009), often without due consideration to the prevailing organisational culture (Gibson & Zellmer-Bruhn, 2001; Hughes & Weiss, 2007; Zolfaghari, 2014) or context (Costa et al., 2018). Furthermore, individuals are increasingly faced with a workplace requirement to collaborate with people they don't necessarily agree with, like or even trust (Kahane, 2017).

Consider the modern-day demand to perform and outperform. This implies that optimal value needs to be extracted from the resources available to any organisation – particularly its' human capital. Yet, the outcome of collaborative activity is often capped at the specified outcome. Meaning, if X is the target of the collaboration project or initiative, then X is what is most likely to be achieved. This is irrespective of capacities of the individuals involved in the collaboration. Arguably, given the resources that are pooled together during a collaboration, the generative contribution of the individuals' and the potential of a collaboration should be exponentially larger than X. The potential could conjecturally be described as X^n where n reflects the generative outcome or result of the combined potential of the partakers of the collaboration. It may therefore be argued that it is in the X^n outcome mode, that partakers of a collaboration contribute more than what is explicitly asked of them. It may further be contended that in this mode, innovative solutions to complex problems emerge that reflect the considerable capacities and capabilities of the resources within an organisation. Practitioners are likely to assert that achieving outcomes in a X^n collaboration mode is the exception, with X collaboration mode, being the norm. Therefore, a burning question is, what are the factors that contribute to collaboration occurring at X^n mode, as a matter of cause? For collaborations where X is achieved, have the individuals' involved in the collaborations held back from sharing insights and knowledge beyond the specific role or perspective they have been asked to provide? If they have held back, then why is this the case? Does the type of organisation

an individual works in, for example, in the non-profit sector compared with the profit sector, influence whether individuals collaborate in an X^n mode?

Note: This conception of a X and X^n mode of collaboration, as discussed above, is illustrated in Table 1: X^n collaboration model below. The X^n collaboration model below captures a number of collaboration attributes such as a) achieving clear stated outcomes; b) an individuals' willingness to stretch beyond the stated input requirement, sharing insights, personal resources and networks; c) innovations identified; d) complex problem solved; e) a focus predominantly on operational and mechanistic antecedents; f) a focus that includes individuals' experience through for example check-in's, operational and mechanistic antecedents. The model further suggests the degree to which these attributes may be nascent during typical (X mode) collaborations and what may occur in a X^n collaboration mode. This is illustrated through colour-coding in the model and is based on the researcher's personal experiences and insights gained during collaboration instances across a number of settings, over an extended period of time. Importantly, these ideas will be explored during the literature review, as well as throughout the remainder of this paper and further developed during the Conclusion and Future Directions and Recommendations chapter.

Table 1: Xⁿ collaboration model

	X collaboration mode	X ⁿ collaboration mode
Achieve clear stated outcome		
Willingness to stretch beyond the stated input requirement, sharing insights, personal resources and networks		
Innovations identified		
Complex problem solved		
Focus predominantly on operational and mechanistic antecedents		
Focus includes <i>individuals experience through for example check-in's</i> , operational and mechanistic antecedents		

Key		
		Yes
		Yes, and reflects capacities and capabilities of collaboration partakers
		Yes, but only in terms of the stated goal
		No

It may be argued that it is in leaders and collaboration conveners best interest to create a Xⁿ mode during collaborations because they aim to mobilise individuals and groups to perform beyond expectations (Le et al., 2018; Rebelo et al., 2018). However, partakers of collaborations, such as you and me, are likely to argue that the tendency is for collaboration conveners to place emphasis on the attainment of the collaboration outcome. That is to say, the focus tends to be centred on a specific group of antecedents to (for example tool support) and the outcomes of the collaboration (for example X as discussed above). It is important to recognise that the behavioural antecedents to collaboration are varied, vast and depend on the collaboration context examined (Tsanos, Zografos, & Harrison, 2014). Accordingly, in practice, these behavioural antecedents are likely to represent a “grey area” for many leaders and collaboration conveners. This may account for why emphasis is often placed on “operational antecedents” or mechanisms of collaboration such as systems, processes and resources required. The so-called operational antecedents are specific in their nature, attributing to the clear areas of focus, measurement and management for collaboration conveners. The result, however, is that it is common cause that little consideration is given to

individuals' experiences as an influencing factor to the attainment of the desired collaboration outcome.

Accordingly, an opportunity exists to contribute to extant literature by examining individuals' experiences i.e. *self-efficacy*, *optimism*, *resilience* and *trust* as influencers to collaboration practices and outcomes.

1.2 Research Aims and Objectives

This study is aimed at *examining individuals' experiences in the process of team-level collaborations within an organisational setting*. In so doing, the researcher endeavours to highlight the need and importance for conveners of collaboration efforts, to be as concerned with individuals' experiences during collaborations as they are with the mechanisms and outcomes of collaborations.

Accordingly, there are two primary areas of examination in this study: Collaboration and Individuals' Experiences. From an academic perspective, collaboration has been distinguished from team-work to the degree that collaboration theory is now a research field in its own right (Colbry et al., 2014; Wood & Gray, 1991) that presents scope for furthering research into the antecedents and mediators of collaboration activity (Colbry et al., 2014). Interestingly, there is also growing interest in generating a shared vocabulary of terms in order to improve our understanding of collaboration (Mahler, Gutmann, Karstens, & Joos, 2014). Thus, while at a practical level collaboration has become engrained in how we approach the attainment of organisation goals, from an academic perspective, there is still much scope to further our understanding of the causal relationships that envelope this practice.

The approach to examining individuals experiences has evolved following the emergence of the "positive psychology" movement (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Positive psychology places more emphasis on the strengths and the positive characteristics of people, groups and society as opposed to negative traits, destructive behaviour and psychological

disorders (Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017; Luthans et al., 2007; Luthans et al., 2019; Newman, Ucbasaran, Zhu, & Hirst, 2014; Richardson, 2002). This emergent field has resulted in new research and applications beyond the disciplines of traditional psychology (Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017) and organisation behaviour (OB) studies. Most relevant to this study, is the emergence of positive organizational behaviour (POB) which in turn acted as the foundation for the determination of positive psychological capabilities i.e. PsyCap. PsyCap consists of the four positive psychological resources of hope, optimism, efficacy, and resilience.

It is against this backdrop of a growing body of research in collaboration theory and positive psychology, that individuals' experiences during collaborations are examined in a phenomenological and explorative study. Accordingly, the intra-organisational collaboration practices of individuals within a non-profit organisation were examined against the psychological constructs of *self-efficacy, optimism, resilience*. Luthan's (2002) PsyCap constructs includes hope. There is however a noted area of overlap between hope and self-efficacy as well optimism (Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017). Trust, has been identified as one of the most common behavioural factors during collaborations (Tsanos et al., 2014; Wildman et al., 2012). Consequently, trust, was included as fourth construct of individuals experiences instead of hope.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Area

“No man is an Island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main” (John Donne, Meditation XVII, (1572 - 1631))

There are few activities that human beings are involved in which do not involve collaboration. We collaborate at work, at home, within our communities, across boundaries and often across personally held views. Why do we do this? John Donne, the English metaphysical poet (1572 - 1631), would argue that it's because no human being is truly self-sufficient – that we must

each rely on others in order to thrive. In other words the sine qua non of collaboration is shared purpose (Woodland & Hutton, 2012).

Our modern day reality suggests that in order for us to thrive at and outside of work, we need to be able “to coordinate ourselves, communicate and achieve common goals: in other words, to collaborate” (Patel, Pettitt, & Wilson, 2012, p. 1). At an individual level, as we each reflect on moments where we have been involved in a collaboration, we are likely to further recognise that collaboration involves at least two admissions by us. One: that we accept we can achieve more together than on our own. Two: that we need to be willing to relinquish authority and control and share our knowledge, skills and insights so that we can thrive. In the context of global competitiveness and the need to achieve growth in economically strained environments, organisations today rely on the collaborative effort of individuals to solve complex problems and determine innovative solutions (Rousseau, Aubé, & Tremblay, 2013) in order to for example, extend market share as well as broaden reach and impact of products and services.

While it has been recognised that collaboration is a pervasive practice, it remains complex and difficult to achieve (Colbry, Hurwitz, & Adair, 2014; Lau & Williams, 2016; Wood & Gray, 1991). Part of the complexity relates to how integral it has become in our day to day world. We collaborate at intra- and inter-organisational levels, as well as team and individual levels (Colbry et al., 2014; Kahane, 2017; Woodland & Hutton, 2012). It is therefore unsurprising that definitions of collaboration as a practice vary with different aspects of collaboration emphasised from one definition to the next. These include Donne’s notion of interdependency, to Patel et al’s. (2012) emphasis on communication and coordination and most recently to Lau and Williams (2016) definition: “Collaboration can be defined as a collective effort from individuals with different expertise providing solutions that go beyond what one can achieve alone” (Lau & Williams, 2016, p. 336).

Accordingly, this research aims to contribute to the extant knowledge of the influencers to successful collaborations through the examination of individuals’ *self-efficacy*, *optimism*, *resilience* (Luthans, 2002; West et al., 2009) and *trust* (Chowdhury, 2005; De Jong & Elfring, 2010; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Wildman et al., 2012). It must be noted that the researcher has considerable personal experience in working with collaborative arrangements within the business sector. In these environments, and as discussed above, individual’s experiences are rarely considered mediators to the attainment of collaboration outcomes. Therefore, in order to

gain a fresh perspective on the area of study the researcher elected to conduct the study with a mature non-profit organisation where collaboration was identified as critical to the attainment of their goals. Accordingly, a further aim of the study is to build on recent areas of inquiry by providing insights gained in a social-purpose organisation experiencing rapid growth, in a South African context.

In summary, the study was conducted with two overarching goals: 1) Understand and contribute to extant knowledge on collaboration and individuals' experiences. 2) Illuminate what leaders and collaboration conveners should further consider in order to create an Xⁿ collaboration mode within their organisations.

Finally, it is worth noting that this study was conducted in a single setting and the research questions were designed to create in-case contrast. Accordingly, it was important that the research questions could be applied and be accessible across organisational level of influence (leaders and staff) and be applicable and relatable irrespective of which area of the organisation participants worked in. In line with these objectives, the primary research question was:

“How do individuals' experiences during collaborations influence the outcome of the collaboration?”

2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Colloquially, a strong argument can be made that an examination of individuals' experiences during collaborations is worthwhile and important – we inherently know this, because of our very own personal experiences during collaborations. We know what makes us feel like going beyond the stated requirements and share information, insights and personal resources such as our time and personal networks – i.e. our individual X^n mode. We also know what makes us feel like pushing away from the table and not going beyond what has been asked directly and specifically asked of us – i.e. our X mode. We inherently know that our experiences before, during and even post collaborations influence how we perform. In this way, we create an irrefutable link between the practice of collaboration and individuals' experiences.

This literature review is aimed at exploring this notion from a theoretical perspective. It will first begin by examining how collaboration as a theory has developed and evolved. The unit of measurement for collaboration i.e. inter and intra-organisational, team, interpersonal and individual level will be noted throughout the review. Both positive and negative influencers to collaboration antecedents, positive and negative influencers, and outcomes of collaborations are noted through the review and are illustrated at the end of this section in Figure 5: Internal collaborative ecosystem (researchers' depiction).

Next the review examines the phenomenon of individuals' experiences. It first discusses the theoretical platform used to identify the constructs of individuals' experiences that were used in this study. Each construct is then examined both independently and dependently- meaning where there are clear intersections between constructs, these are highlighted and discussed. The review then examines how individual's experiences and collaboration have been linked within academic literature and explores how this has influenced academic and practitioner's alike when examining collaborations.

Leaders influence how we feel at, and perform in, the workplace. Consequently, a review of collaboration practices and individual's experiences during these, cannot be complete without

a review of the role of leaders and collaboration conveners. The third area of examination is therefore the support role that leaders play (or not) during collaborations. The complexities related to this requirement is also briefly discussed.

As discussed earlier this study was conducted with a non-profit or social organisation. In the case examined, growth was found to be a contributing factor to individuals collaboration experiences. Accordingly, the fourth and final area of examination is organisational growth within the context of a social organisation. The dynamics of managing growth, expectations of funders and organisation development are reviewed. A review of accountability is included as a subsection of growth. This is examined in the context of social organisations and organisational growth.

The figure below illustrates the outline and focus of this literature review.

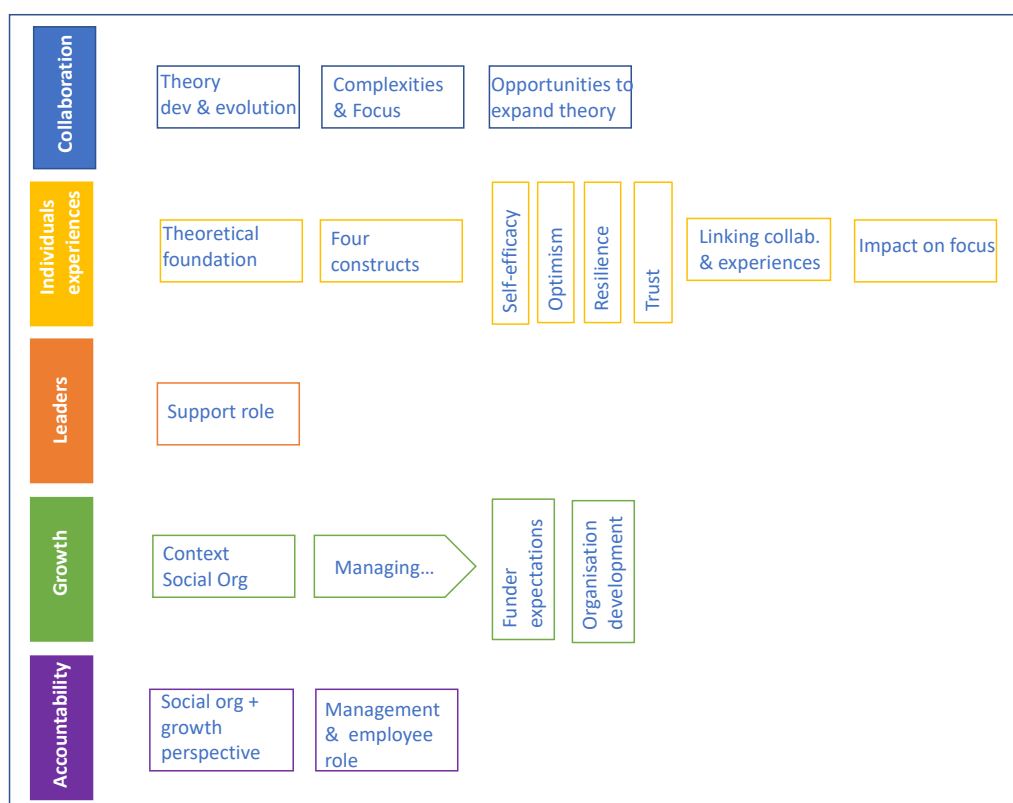


Figure 1: Literature review outline

2.2 Collaboration Theory

“Human history is largely a story of people working together in groups to explore, achieve, and conquer” (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006, P. 77). Collaboration, one may argue, is the keystone required to achieve outcomes such as solve complex problems (Kahane, 2017); take advantage of opportunities, enhance organisational efficiencies (William, 2012); effectively leverage capabilities of partners- both internal and external (Antikainen, Mäkipää, & Ahonen, 2010; Dent, 2000). It is through collaboration, that organisations are able to address societal issues, accomplish tasks, and reach goals that fall outside the grasp of any individual entity working independently (Woodland & Hutton, 2012). While researchers have offered their perspective on definitions (Lau & Williams, 2016; Patel et al., 2012), antecedents (Tsanos et al., 2014) and desired outcomes of collaboration, no single theoretical perspective provides an adequate foundation for a general theory of collaboration (Colbry et al., 2014; Wood & Gray, 1991).

Wood and Gray (1991) sought to address this gap by providing a theoretical foundation for collaboration theory. They put forward that collaboration refers to the *process* and that collaborative alliances refers to the *form*. Together, they believed these concepts provide the foundation for answering questions of why, how and with what consequences organisations participate in multiparty problem solving. They elucidated that much of what was understood about collaboration alliances was based on case research, such as the one undertaken in this study, thereby exposing a vast array of settings in which collaborations occur (Wood & Gray, 1991).

It may be argued that adopting the notion of collaboration of a process provides a much richer and more complete understanding of the practice than any single definition may do. Furthermore, as discussed earlier, definitions of collaboration as a practice vary with different aspects of collaboration emphasised from one context to the next. Even within the broader category of “the workplace” it is possible for the definition of collaboration to vary depending on the type of collaboration that is being pursued for example. Accordingly and in line with Wood and Gray, this review explores the practice of collaboration from the perspective of antecedents, influencers and outcomes. It therefore explicitly does not aim to provide a definition of collaboration as a basis for the study.

It is worth noting that despite the growing use of collaborative alliances, Wood and Gray (1991) found that much of organisational literature at the time, still treated the individual organisation as the centrepiece for theorising and was consequently lagging in terms of theory development. Their view was that a shift was required from a focus on the individual organisation to the interorganisational domain. Accordingly, Wood and Gray (1991) examined six major theoretical perspectives that appeared to have significant possibilities for explaining collaboration and collaboration alliances. These and the orientation they were found to have are illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Theoretical Perspectives on Collaboration

Theory	Orientation (Wood & Gray, 1991)
Resource dependence theory.	Organisational centred.
Corporate social performance theory /institutional economics theory.	Alliance centred.
Strategic management theory.	Organisational centred and considered the antithesis of the goals of collaboration alliances.
Microeconomics theory.	Organisational centred but with potential to address alliance needs.
Institutional theory/Negotiated order theory.	Organisational centred.
Political theory.	Applicable to both intra-organisational and interorganisational levels.

Each of the theories above have some relevance to this study. For example, resource dependency theory, which is concerned with the influence of external factors on organizational behaviour (Hillman, Withers, & Collins, 2009) and strategic management theory, which is broadly concerned with the development and deployment of organisation-level capabilities (Doh, 2005). However, no single theory above, offers a comprehensive model for collaboration (Wood & Gray, 1991). It is also of interest to note that Wood and Gray’s findings also reflect that the theories examined above are largely organisation centred and apply insufficient attention to the individual.

Like Wood and Gray (1991), Vangen and Huxham (2003) interests was at the “inter-organisational” domain. They believed that it was within this domain, that the aim of cross-sectorial collaborations, usually to deal more effectively with major issues, such as social problems, resided. They found that collaboration imposes huge demands on those entering it and that the likelihood of disappointing outputs and failures was high. They put forward that the typically ambiguous, complex, and dynamic structure of collaborations presents challenges that require practitioners to engage in a “continuous process of nurturing”. In recognising the anxiety that managers experience during collaboration, Vangen and Huxham offer acknowledgement of the value in examining individuals’ experiences- albeit it limited to a specific group of individuals within organisation settings. An important insight from Vangen and Huxham’s research is their finding that socially oriented collaborations do not tend to rely on a contractual relationship. Rather, participants involved in collaborations within these organisations, are forced to focus on softer control mechanisms to manage the power relationships as one observes in resource dependence theory. In line with this, their study found that trust was repeatedly reported to be significant and hence important, in the nurturing of collaborative processes.

The theory of collaboration was further developed by Hansen and Nohria (2004) in the context of an increasingly competitive global environment. They considered the competitive advantage of multinational organisations and posit that while these organisations past success were due to the effective leverage of their physical assets and brand they were now based on the “ability of business units, subsidiaries and functional departments within the company to collaborate successfully by sharing knowledge and jointly developing new products and services” (p.22). Importantly Hansen and Nohria, emphasise that collaboration is competitive advantage precisely because it is so difficult to achieve. They introduce the concept of and posit that the advantage depends on the distinct organising capabilities of an organisation, which cannot be easily imitated. They highlight five distinct categories where collaborative benefit may be derived. While it may be argued that the outcome of increased profit may not be front of mind for social organisations, the remaining four categories which relate to reduction in costs, improved decision making, innovation and an improved ability to pursue goals that involve distributed units are all of relevant and appropriate.



Figure 2: A Framework for Creating Value Through Interunit Collaboration (Hansen & Nohria (2004))

Hansen and Nohria ‘s work is important because they advance the theory of collaboration by highlighting the complexity related to *achieving* collaboration as a process. Their view of the process as depicted in the figure above includes management levers, barriers to collaboration and value creation. In order words the antecedents to, influencers and finally the outcomes of collaboration.

In line with Vangen and Huxham (2003) and as anticipated by Wood and Gray (1991), Woodland and Hutton (2012) believed that the ability to collaborate on both a large and small scale is one of the core requisites of post-modern society. As with Wood and Gray (1991) Woodland and Hutton distinguished between collaboration as a process and collaboration alliances as the form. They concentrated their examination on the various “form’s” where collaborative approaches have been used to solve social, political, and economic problems.

Woodland and Hutton (2012) build on the view that although the literature in support of organizational collaboration is vast it remains a misunderstood construct. Accordingly, their contribution is to outline a Collaboration Evaluation and Improvement Framework that “provide evaluators with a theoretically grounded and actionable framework for approaching the task of evaluating and improving organizational collaboration” (p. 381). Much more relevant to this study than the framework, however, is their synthesis of the principles for organisational collaboration. These (depicted in the diagram below) are: a) the sine qua non of collaboration is shared purpose; b) collaboration is a nested phenomenon that exists simultaneously at the interorganizational, intraorganizational, and interprofessional

levels; c) collaboration is developmental nature, recognising that as with teams, collaborative partnerships navigate through different levels of development; d) like Wood and Gray (1991) and Vangen and (Huxham) (2003) who recognise more complex and higher stakes purposes warrant greater degrees of connection, the fourth principle is collaboration exists at varying levels of organizational integration and is directly related to the purpose of the partnership; e) collaboration entails ongoing cycles of inquiry which include “dialogue, decision making, action and evaluation around a shared purpose” (p. 371).

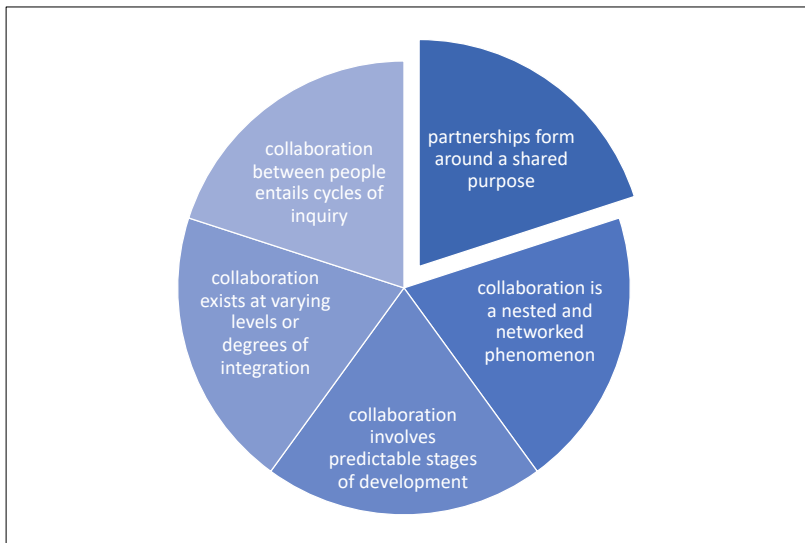


Figure 3: Five key principles of organisational collaboration (Woodland & Hutton (2012))

It may be argued that if these principles apply to evaluators, they could be equally important for collaboration conveners and participants too. While Woodland and Hutton do not examine this, it must be noted that it is likely that there may be differences in the perspective that each stakeholder (evaluator, convener, participant) may apply. For example, an evaluator may wish to assess whether the collaborative arrangement has been formed has a clearly articulated purpose. The convener may interpret and articulate the common purpose in terms of attaining a specified organisational goal for example X which they have been charged to accomplish. The participants on the other hand, may interpret the purpose beyond the organisational goals, but also in terms of their personal value system, which if shared with the convener, has the potential to be a motivating factor for all individuals to collaborate in an Xⁿ mode. Similarly, the idea that there are predictable stages of development during collaborations, may vary based on whose perspective is applied. For example, a convener may assess the collaboration to be at developmental stage that is different to participants, if the latter group do not, feel their voice

is heard during the collaborative engagement. It is important to note that Woodland and Hutton argue that “it is rarely feasible to evaluate collaboration at every level within complex open systems” (p. 372). Yet, it may be argued, this is often an expectation of collaboration conveners – to manage collaboration at every level within complex open systems.

It is also important to note that Woodland and Hutton (2012) argue that while “collaborative mind-set and behaviours” are critical to successful partnerships, attention should be placed on developing the *process* and *structures* of collaboration. However they found that although managers, who according to Martin and Eisenhardt (2010) are often the conveners of collaborations within organisations, cite collaborative mind-set and behaviours as critical to successful partnerships, almost none implement initiatives to develop the process and structures of collaboration. This finding, especially when considered together with their findings on the challenges and feasibility of applying each of the five collaboration principles at every level of a collaboration, is most interesting and relevant to this study. They are consistent with Vangen and Huxham (2003) view that the demands of collaboration on leaders and participants is significant and not to be underestimated. Furthermore, these findings and views provide insight as to why well intentioned and equipped leaders, fall short of engaging with individuals’ experiences during collaboration which ultimately aim to attain goals the organisation.

Patel et al.'s (2012) contribution to theory is the explicit inclusion of and discussion on collaboration at the interpersonal level. They identified seven factors that were associated with the development and maintenance of collaborative interactions: context; support; tasks; interaction processes; teams; individuals; and general (an overarching factor). These factors which build on Wood and Gray's (1991) conception of collaboration as a process, also contribute to our understanding of the different antecedents of collaboration. Interestingly, Patel et al. (2012) offer a definition of collaboration which relates to the extent to which any community at work and outside work, can “coordinate itself to communicate and achieve common goals” (p. 1). While it appears almost too simplistic at first glance, it is important to recognise that it captures at least three of Woodland and Hutton’s (2012) principles for organisational collaboration discussed above. While the context of Patel et al.’s examination was technology based it is worth noting that they distinguished support of collaborative working from support for the execution of tasks, “that is work as a team as distinguished from work of a team” (p. 21).

This is exciting as it suggests a maturation of collaboration theory where its principles are increasingly linked to definitive statements of what collaboration is and is not and that are distinct from examinations on teamwork - irrespective of whether a form or process lens is applied.

More recently, Colbry et al. (2014), highlight that theories of collaboration existed at the interorganisational and intergroup level, but not the intragroup or team level. They believe that collaboration should be investigated from an interpersonal, intraorganizational, or interorganizational level. Of these three levels, they note, most has been written about interorganizational and intergroup collaborations (Wood & Gray, 1991). Accordingly, they posit that the definition of collaboration at the interpersonal level is: “Any on-going interpersonal interaction not characterized by a significant power imbalance, with the express purpose of achieving common goals” (P. 67). Colbry et.al note Patel et al.'s (2012) seven factors that contribute to development and maintenance of collaborative interactions. However, their criticism is that these factors continue to be discussed at the interorganizational and intergroup levels even though they apply to interpersonal collaborations. They highlight that interpersonal collaboration has predominantly been studied within the rubrics of leadership, followership, teamwork, shared leadership and social exchange. Importantly they identified that no direct studies were conducted *on collaboration at the interpersonal level*. This is an interesting finding as it suggests that the lens through which interpersonal collaboration is examined could influence what we learn about the phenomenon. Each rubric above effectively acts as a filter and when considered with one another and could potentially contribute to the complexities and challenges that both Vangen Chris; Huxham Siv (2003) and Patel et al. (2012) have discussed. Colbry et al. (2014) recognise that groups are often required to collaborate without a hierarchical authority structure. Accordingly, they contribute to collaboration theory by engaging on the implications of how the role of leaders, managers and fellowship is considered. They highlight that a consequence of calling manager’s leader’s and of conflating their actions and behaviours, is that the impact of followership is minimised and ignored. Furthermore, the ability of followers to demonstrate managerial and leadership qualities during collaboration is often ignored. Colbry et al's. (2014) study raises questions about the degree to which hierarchy within collaborations i.e. the assigned roles of leaders, collaboration conveners and participants influence their experiences at an individual level during collaborations.

Kahane (2017) highlights that a consequence of looking to teams to solve complex problems, is that many individuals in organisation settings, are faced with a workplace demand to collaborate with people they don't necessarily agree with, like or even trust. He believes that collaborations involve working in complex situation with diverse others. He found that collaboration efforts are often driven by one paramount leader in a controlling role who defines why we must collaborate; what the clear focus should be, and who should change what for the collaboration to be successful. He, like Colbry et al. (2014) puts forward the importance of embracing the needs and inputs of multiple and diverse collaboration participants, irrespective of hierarchy, in order to attain the intended goal. He posits that "in complex situations, members of the team have significantly different perspectives, affiliations, and interest, and are free to act on these" (p. 48) (when operating in a mode of "stretch collaboration"). Kahane posits that true collaboration involves both engaging with others and advocating for one's own interests and that self-interest and fear are legitimate experiences during a collaboration. Kahane's work is interesting because his narrative is individual centred. It further recognises that individuals can exert choices based on their experiences.

2.2.1 Summary Collaboration theory

Collaboration as a theory, has developed and evolved over a period of almost thirty years. It is worth noting that the world in which we live and work in has changed dramatically over period. Technology, the internet, globalisation and most recently the pervasiveness of social media are all part of the context against which the practice of collaboration has been examined. This has been across a range of units of analysis i.e. inter and intra-organisational, team, and more recently at the interpersonal and individual level. A key development reflected in the review above is the change from thinking that organisations collaborated with each other to exploit opportunities, to now understanding that individuals are called on to collaborate with each other within teams, across business units (intra level) and also across external organisations. As discussed above, it is important to note that studies of collaboration where the unit analysis is the individual, is sparse and therefore represents an opportunity to build on extant literature in this field.

Finally, an important development reflected in the literature is that collaboration has been positioned as practice that is distinct of the more generic term “teamwork”. This has resulted in antecedents to, influencers and outcomes of collaboration, being more specifically examined within the literature. As this field of study continues to develop, so too will the antecedents, influencers to and outcomes of collaborations further develop.

2.3 Examining “Individuals’ Experiences”

Human capital is one of the strategic resources that organisations deploy in order to gain and sustain competitive advantage in an ever-increasing competitive global environment. Competitive advantage had traditionally been sought through the effective deployment of physical assets (for example, leading edge technology or distribution) and exploiting brand and reputation. However Hansen and Nohria (2004) argued that the new source of competitive advantage lay in an organisations ability to collaborate successfully by sharing knowledge and jointly developing new products and services across its business units and teams. Yet, the underlying mechanisms coupling human capital to competitive advantage has been poorly understood, despite growing interest on how organisations are able to create competitive advantage through “people-based advantage” such as knowledge, skills and abilities (i.e. the micro-foundations movement) (Newman et al., 2014).

The notion that valuable complex knowledge often originates in individual experiences and perceptions is echoed within the field of Strategic Management (Chowdhury, 2005). He believed that when this knowledge is shared across the organisation it can become a source of competitive advantage. Chowdhury reveals how powerful those with complex knowledge are in organisations and conversely the reliance that other individuals and teams have on them particularly in the context of team level collaborations. These individuals’, according to Dorado (2005), could potentially contribute to positive team outcomes and are likely to be highly influential change agents within an organisation.

2.3.1 *The nexus between individuals’ experiences and collaboration*

It is widely accepted within the field of Organisation Behaviour, that the organisations in which people work affect their thoughts, feelings, and actions in the workplace and away from it. Likewise, people's experiences affect the organizations in which they work (Brief & Weiss, 2002). Patel et al. (2012) consider how "experiences" have been considered in the context of studies on collaboration. They put forward that experience relevant to collaboration, is task or team-related and incorporates any shared history of working together. The length of time teams have worked together, how well they know each other, how successfully they have worked together in the past, and their shared working and personal experiences can all enable members to predict each other's behaviour, reducing the demand on communication, and workload (Patel et al., 2012). Unlike, Nilsson and Paddock (2014) who offer "Inscaping" - the *practice* of surfacing the *inner experiences* of organisational members during the normal course of everyday work, Patel et al. (2012) do not offer a mechanism to achieve the in-depth sharing of experiences. Their view of "shared experiences" is framed by individuals' and team's *familiarity* with the business, processes, tasks, and technologies, which they can draw on to complete mutual tasks. While this may result in what Nilsson and Paddock (2014) term "work Inscaping", it falls short of creating environments, such as those found in transformative organisations, where individuals share a heightened sense of mutual responsibility (that can contribute to an Xⁿ collaboration mode). In these environments, individuals pay greater attention to the impact that their work has on others and put more energy into supporting each other's success (Nilsson & Paddock, 2014). Here, individuals more readily ask questions like "What are we excited about or afraid of when we undertake a particular project?". The nature of this question integrates experiences at both a work and personal level and is directly related to collaborative activities. For example, while an individual may be excited by the nature of the project, their commitments in their personal life such as with children, may make them fearful about committing to the long hours the project may demand.

According to Patel et al. (2012) skill level, a broad range of psychological factors and well-being (illustrated Table 3 below) all influence individuals' collaborative performance.

Table 3: Influencers to individuals collaborative performance (Patel et al., 2012)

Factors that influence individual's collaborative performance.	Description
Psychological factors.	Needs, biases, perceptions, mood, motivation, attitudes, values, beliefs, expectations, personality, confidence.
Cognitive factors	Attention, perception, memory, mental models, reasoning etc.
Wellbeing factors	Aspects of mental workload, situation awareness, working style and behaviour.

On examining the factors above, it is apparent that the range of factors a) that may be applied to individuals' experiences is vast and b) accordingly the expectation of collaboration conveners and leaders who manage collaborations is equally vast. This insight may account for how little attention is practically placed on experiences during collaborations: the experience "field" is complex and furthermore, specific to an individual and their circumstances. Accordingly, for many organisations, the quintessence of a collaboration is the outcome and the mechanistic requirements related to it (Patel et al., 2012). This complexity is also noted by Nilsson and Paddock (2014) who highlight that Inscaping may be difficult to achieve in highly politicized organisations where showing vulnerability can be detrimental; in rapid decision-making organisations who may struggle with the slow tempo of Inscaping and organisations who face a high degree of external scrutiny and where pressure to conform to certain norms can be overwhelming.

Kozlowski and Ilgen (2006) address the dynamic and reciprocal relationship of the individual and team from a multilevel systems perspective. Their perspective supports the view that individuals and work teams are embedded in a broader organizational system and task environment that drives the difficulty, complexity, and tempo of the team task. They argued that the team task (such as a collaboration) determines the workflow structure and coordination demands (i.e. exchanges of behaviour, information, etc.) necessary for accomplishing individual and team goals and resolving task requirements. Kozlowski and Ilgen present a strong argument for the interrelatedness of the individual and the team within the organisation.

This is built on further with West et al. (2009) who through their organisation behaviour perspective, posit that if one examines the experiences of teams, then one can gain reasonable insights to experiences of individuals. They believed the integrated nature of the dynamics between individuals and teams was further demonstrated by the finding that individuals working in team contexts often forego their individual identities to take on the identity of their team.

Furthermore, given that individuals strongly identify with their teams, West et al. found that it is plausible to speculate that a team's positivity may influence individuals within the team and their interactions toward the completion of a task/collaboration. They identified *self-efficacy* (I /we can do this); *optimism* (it will work out my/our way) and *resilience* (I /we can bounce back from this) as attributes that influence individual's positive experiences within team settings and which result in positive outcomes or collaborations.

The genesis of these three constructs and their applicability to this study are explored and discussed below.

2.3.2 *Positive psychology*

One of the most influential developments toward enhancing our understanding of how to optimise the potential and contribution of human capital, stems from the field of positive psychology which was pioneered by Martin Seligman in 2000. His positive psychology movement encouraged a focus on the strengths and the positive characteristics of people (such as flourishing and vitality), groups and society compared to the negative traits, destructive behaviour and psychological disorders (e.g. depression and dysfunction) that psychology tended to be focused on at the time – the latter largely driven by surge of treatment of mental illness post World War Two (Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017; Luthans, 2002; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). It interesting to note that contemporary literature in psychology at the time, published approximately two hundred thousand articles on the treatment of mental illness; eighty thousand on depression; sixty five thousand on anxiety; twenty thousand on fear; and ten thousand on anger; but only about one thousand on positive concepts and capabilities of people (Luthans, 2002). Luthans notes that Seligman's (2000) work was seminal and resulted in a wave of support by academics and practitioners alike particularly flowing the global climate post the events of September 11, 2001 in the United States of America.

Seligman's theory is particularly relevant to this study, because it intersects two conflicting views: *the individualistic approach*, which emphasises that we should take care of ourselves, and nurture our own strengths and *the altruistic approach*, which tends to downplay individuality and emphasises sacrifice for the greater purpose (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). It is in this intersection, where individuals' experiences (the individualistic) during collaborations (the greater purpose) that this study is located.

2.3.3 Positive organizational behaviour (POB)

As noted above, Seligman's positive psychology movement acted as springboard for *new research* and applications well beyond the discipline of traditional psychology (Avey et al., 2011; Brief & Weiss, 2002; Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017; Newman et al., 2014). Most noteworthy to this study is the swell of interest and refocus on positive-oriented research in organizational behaviour (OB) studies. This was spearheaded by Fred Luthans who formally defined positive organizational behaviour (POB) as:

“the study and application of positively oriented human resource strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace” (Luthans, 2002b: 59)

Luthans developed four scientific inclusion criteria to distinguish POB constructs from other positively oriented organizational behaviour constructs: a) they needed to be based on theory and research; b) they needed to use reliable and valid measures; c) they are “state-like” and open to change and development; d) they must demonstrate impact on desired outcomes (Luthans, 2002; Luthans et al., 2007). Luthans believed that this criterion required POB to have theory and research back-up and thus differentiated it from the “surface positivity” that was found in the popular ideas of Ken Blanchard's One Minute Manager, Steven Covey's Seven Habits, and Spencer Johnson's Who Moved My Cheese, which all dealt with organisation behaviour topics (Luthans, 2002). Luthan's criteria-based approach to POB is particularly attractive for this study because it lends the examination of individuals' experiences toward a researchable topic.

2.3.4 *Psychology Capital (PsyCap)*

Positive organizational behaviour, in turn, resulted in the emergence of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) which sought to go “beyond traditional economic capital (“what you have”), human capital (“what you know”), and social capital (“who you know”), and consists of “who you are” and, of most importance for developmental ramifications, “what you can become” (Luthans et al., 2019, p. 40). Luthans believed that an individual’s positive psychological state of development was characterized by: (1) having confidence (self-efficacy) to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; (2) making a positive attribution (optimism) about succeeding now and in the future; (3) persevering toward the goals, and when necessary, redirecting paths to goals (hope) in order to succeed; and (4) when beset by problems and adversity, withstanding, bouncing back and recovering (resilience) to attain success (Luthans, 2002; Rebelo et al., 2018). Avey et al. (2011) argued that PsyCap can be related to employee commitment to the organisation. They posited that individuals with high PsyCap would find their needs for efficacy and accomplishment fulfilled within an organisation setting. Accordingly these individuals are more likely to “embed themselves and be enthusiastic about their work (engagement)” (p. 132). Khandelwal and Khanum (2017) supported this view and highlight that “research has consistently demonstrated that PsyCap is positively related to a variety of job attitudes, behaviours and organizational outcomes” (p. 90). Thus, if we have high efficacy, are resilient and enjoy high levels of optimism, then we are likely to feel positive about our jobs, behave in ways that demonstrate this and support for our organisations and its goals.

This relationship between PsyCap and desirable organisation outcomes, at an employee level, is aptly depicted in their framework for PsyCap research in Figure 4 below.

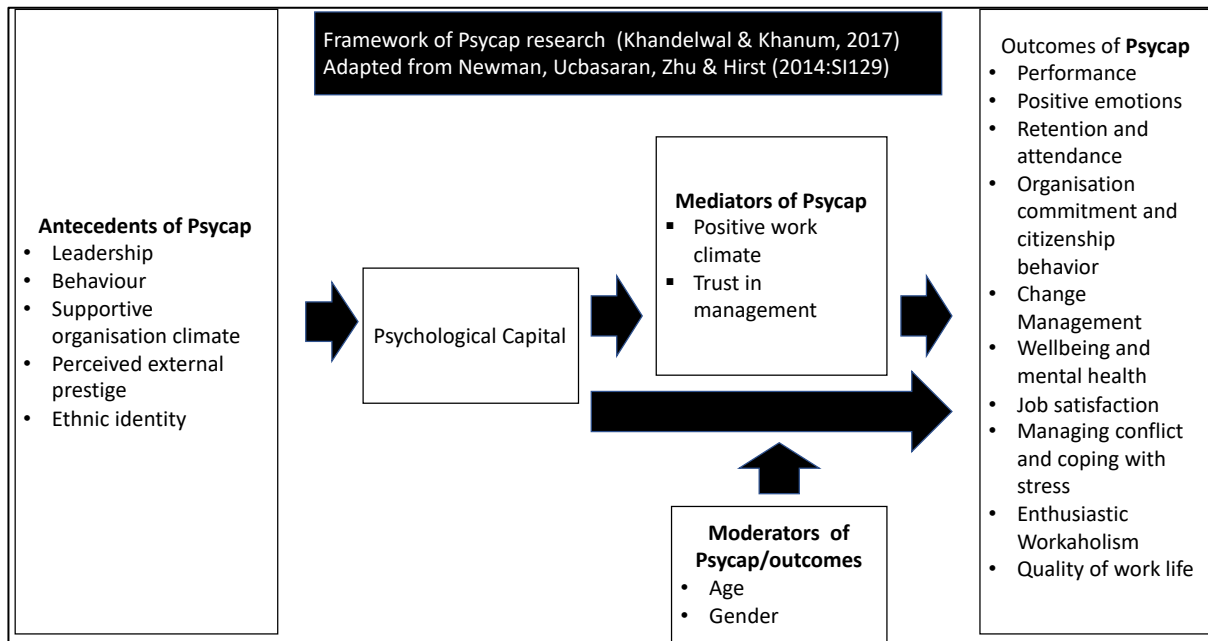


Figure 4: Framework for PsyCap research (Khandelwal & Khanum (2017))

Khandelwal and Khanum’s framework succinctly captures how increasingly expansive research and application of PsyCap has become over time. There are, however, several areas considered in this study, which are underexamined within their framework. For example: a) the effect of PsyCap on collaborative performance or outcome versus the individuals own performance, b) in the context of a perform and outperform world, organisation growth is underexamined as either an antecedent, mediator or moderator to PsyCap. This suggests a decoupling within the literature of studies related to individual experiences (or PsyCap) and collaboration efforts. This phenomenon is echoed in practice where emphasis tends to be either on antecedents to or outcomes of collaboration, where individuals’ experiences are engaged with in separate contexts outside of the collaboration.

It is pertinent to note Fineman's (2006) caution that, “there is an unarticulated dark side to positiveness” where those who appear not to “fall into the template” of these positive constructs may be stigmatised within their organisations. Avey et al. for example, noted that while PsyCap was found to lead to positive emotions in the workplace, they also found PsyCap to negatively relate to “emotional labour” which is the level of emotional investment necessary to accomplish a job.

Accordingly, having noted the relevance of positive psychology and positive organisation behaviour to this study, it is important to note criticisms of the approach and the move toward positiveness in general. The most germane was expressed by Fineman who was concerned about the cultural restrictiveness of the movement toward positiveness. He perspicaciously highlights that the positive movement is “tied broadly to North American cultural norms, where individualism, optimism, and self-confidence are celebrated” (p. 281). This criticism is particularly relevant in a South African context where there are significant cultural differences across race, age, generational, geographic location and time (for example pre-and post-apartheid) to name a view. Fineman goes on to highlight that the positive psychology platform (including POB and PsyCap) would need to confront conditions and identities where subdued or "negative" emotions have social and organizational currency, as may be the case in conservative corporates for example. It is pertinent to note Fineman’s criticism particularly given the dearth of research that has been conducted on PsyCap in non-western countries, with the exception of China (Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017) and more recently in India.

Notwithstanding the criticisms and constraints noted above, Luthans PsyCap remains an attractive model as a foundation for this study for several reasons. The most germane being that PsyCap is interested in “who you are” and “what you can become” within an organisation setting. Accordingly, in the context of this study, exploring an individuals’ PsyCap has the potential to reveal insights on why individuals may shift from operating in a X collaboration mode toward and Xⁿ collaboration mode. It is also relevant to note that these capabilities have been found to influence job attitudes, behaviours and organisational outcomes (Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017) which, it may be argued, are central tenants of collaboration, and therefore pertinent to this study.

Thus, drawing from Luthan’s work on psychological capabilities, this study aims to examine individuals’ experiences, in terms of self- efficacy, resilience, optimism and trust. Please note that the hope psychological capability, for reasons outlined in the Introduction section above, has been excluded from this study and instead trust has been included.

Accordingly, what follows is a review of each of the experience constructs examined in this study: self-efficacy, optimism, resilience and trust.

2.3.5 *Self-Efficacy*

The review of self-efficacy is based on the theory and research of Albert Bandura. He posited that self - efficacy may be defined as self-confidence, an ability to gather the motivation, cognitive assets and action necessary to perform within a given situation (Harms & Luthans, 2018; Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017; Luthans et al., 2007; Newman et al., 2014). Luthans (2002) believed that this positive belief was exactly in line with the POB approach. He later posited that “it further represents an awareness of the resources needed to make a choice, welcome a challenge, and a belief that one’s capabilities will be sufficient to complete a task”(Luthans et al., 2019, p. 46).

From a social psychological perspective, self-efficacy, optimism and control are constructs that overlap each other and that have strong overtones of expecting a desired outcome (Scheier & Carver, 2009). Individuals with high self-efficacy (and control) tend to believe that their personal efforts or skills are what determines an outcome. This, Scheier and Carver argue, is particularly true when the desired outcome has something explicitly to do with the individual themselves.

It is interesting to note the generative theory view of self-efficacy espoused by Fuller et al. (2018). They consider two broader self-efficacy beliefs: the individuals' belief in their ability to learn new things (i.e. learning self-efficacy) and ability to think in new ways and produce creative outcomes (i.e. creative self-efficacy). They highlight that creativity has been found to have linkages with opportunity recognition, development of new products and organisation innovation - often requirements to attain a collaboration outcome. At the individual level, it has been strongly linked to various positive work related outcomes ranging from basic brainstorming to complex scientific work (West et al., 2009).

However, what of the antipathetic effects of self-efficacy?

Bandura (2012) puts forward that under forcible disincentives (for example two business units compete with one another, yet individuals within those units are called upon to collaborate on a project) or imposed social and physical constraints, individuals are disinclined to act on their self-efficacy beliefs. He notes further, that in most of the sources of discordance (between self-efficacy and performance/outcome), the problem is not the self-knowledge but rather the extraneous factors that distort the relation between self-belief of capability and action. This

suggests that even though an individual may possess all the traits discussed above and be sufficiently confident and capable to apply their resources to a collaboration, they may choose not to exercise them in the presence of external influencers. This is because as Bandura notes, human functioning is a product of the interplay of intrapersonal influences (such as self-efficacy), the behaviour individuals engage in (for example choosing to operate in X or Xⁿ collaboration mode), and the environmental forces that impinge upon them (Bandura, 2012; Le et al., 2018) such as rapid organisational growth, competing organisational agenda's, leadership behaviour, feeling that their voice is not heard. One could therefore argue that self-efficacy is a powerful psychological capability that not only influences individual performance, but also choices related to effort exerted toward achieving goals at organisational level. Accordingly, this construct could be an important indicator for collaboration conveners to monitor during collaborations as it would provide a reasonable indicator of effort exerted toward the collaboration.

2.3.6 *Optimism*

Schulman et al. (1993) posited that “individuals who habitually explain good events as unstable, specific and external are said to have an optimistic style” (p. 568). They further noted that individuals with the “opposite explanations of bad events as stable, global and internal (it’s going to last forever, it’s going to undermine everything I do and it’s my fault) are said to have a pessimistic style” (p. 568). Interestingly, they further argue that optimistic individuals take credit for positive events in their lives thereby boosting their self-esteem (or efficacy) and morale. However, as Newman et al. (2014, p. 89) highlight optimism also “permits them to disconnect themselves from negative life events, guarding themselves from self-blame, depression, guilt and despair”. One may therefore infer that optimistic individuals could rationale that by “holding-back” their contribution during a collaboration, they would “protect” themselves from the negative experiences of being associated with unsuccessful collaborations. Conversely, one may also infer, that optimistic individuals would participate in a Xⁿ collaboration mode if they believed they would be credited during a successful collaboration. This is in line with Scheier and Carver (2018) who posit that optimism might be an emergent phenomenon, arising from situation-specific expectancies but being distinct from them. Importantly, they also highlight that from an expectancy theory perspective (largely based on research in the early 1980’s), optimists are defined as individuals that simply

expect good things to happen to them. However, from an attribution-based approach, the focus is less directly on expectancies, and more on measuring the causes or situational forces people identify to explain the outcomes that they experience (Scheier & Carver, 2018), for example Leadership behaviour, Accountability for Behaviour etc. as causal factors. Accordingly, one could anticipate that individuals who are optimistic about eventual success continue trying, even when things are difficult (for example during collaborations where there is pressure to deliver against a set target) because of a strong alliance to a leader or organisational purpose. However, individuals who are doubtful about the future, (for example where they are not aligned with the direction of an organisation) are less likely to take action that could make that future more positive. According to Scheier and Carver (2018) they are also more likely to engage in off-task thinking, employ temporary distractions, and just give up - and therefore, it may be inferred, are also less resilient.

West et al. (2009), who examined optimism from a positive psychology lens found that the qualities of an optimist translated well to a team level positive capacity. Aligned to Scheier and Carver's view and from an expectancy theory perspective, they posit that individuals/a team with shared beliefs and expectations regarding the likelihood of positive outcomes, are more likely than individuals/a team that lacks such expectations, to actively engage in work tasks.

Irrespective of the lens applied above, optimism emerges as a useful indicator and construct to explore during an examination of individuals experiences during collaboration.

2.3.7 Resilience

Drawn from developmental psychology, resilience refers to the capability of individuals and groups to “bounce back” from adverse or stressful situations (Luthans, 2002). He later added that individuals who are high in resilience, are likely to adapt in the face of negative experiences and changes in the external environment. Perhaps in response to the caution that optimistic individuals' are not necessarily resilient individuals (Coutu, 2002), Newman et al. (2014) drew an important distinction between resilience and the other three constructs of PsyCap. *resilience*, they posited is reactive rather than proactive. Building on the work of Fred Luthans, Luthans et al. (2019) explored the construct grit which they viewed as being part of, but distinct to resilience. They further recognised that optimism plays an important role in demonstrating

the “persistence of grit toward attitudes and beliefs that lead to more productive behaviours” (p. 46).

It is worth noting that a significant portion of resiliency literature is dedicated to the quest of describing those internal and external resilient qualities that help people to cope with or “bounce back” in the wake of high risk situations or after set-backs (Richardson, 2002). Richardson posits that a principle component of resilience as applied to the workplace, is that after a negative event, the *individual rebounds to a higher level of motivation* - rebounding beyond homeostasis. Coutu (2002) reasoned that the qualities of resilient individuals may possess are: (a) a firm acceptance of reality, (b) a deep belief, often buttressed by strongly held values, that life is meaningful, and (c) an astounding ability to improvise and adapt to significant change (p. 48). The latter characteristic, one could argue would be most valuable in circumstances where rapid organisational growth has occurred - over a short period of time and where communication channels become increasingly strained, leaving individuals with little information to direct their efforts. Under these types of conditions, one might expect that individuals’ would have difficulty coordinating tasks among each other, or establishing effective patterns of cooperation/collaboration whereby teammates request and provide information from the right individuals at the right times (West et al., 2009). West et al. highlight that where there is a lack of communication and increased uncertainty regarding task roles, one might expect that teams facing high levels of threat or stress (for example being dependent on funding that is not secure), would not display high levels of cohesion – placing additional strain on any collaboration requirements. Resilient individuals however, have been found to learn and cope with mistakes, failures, and setbacks more effectively and importantly do not allow bad circumstances to keep them from performing at high levels (Luthans et al., 2019). Related to these attributes, Newman et al. (2014) highlighted that research has established that PsyCap “positively influences employees’ intentions to remain and their commitment towards the mission of their organization” (p. 126). Thus, in the context of the perform and outperform environment within which many individuals and organisations are required to function, one may infer that it would be important for collaboration conveners to ensure that resilient individuals are identified to be participants and contributors to collaborations.

Finally, it is worth noting that Richardson (2002) postulates that resilience and resiliency, have emerged as intriguing areas of inquiry that explore personal and interpersonal strengths that can be accessed to grow through diversity. In the context of the stressful circumstance that

many South African's live in and which form the backdrop to their efforts in the workplace i.e. limited economic opportunity; poverty; high levels of violent crime etc. exploring resilience in the context of individuals experiences during collaboration represents an interesting opportunity both pragmatically as well as academically.

Richardson's (2002) review of studies conducted on resilience from the late 1980's to early 2000, found a common trait amongst resilient adults and children, was self-efficacy or self-esteem. This view was confirmed and taken further by Luthans et al. (2019) who found resilient and gritty individuals to have high self-esteem, self-control, malleability, even temper, and openness to new experiences.

2.3.8 Trust

Four decades of research leave little question as to how vital trust is for the effective functioning of work relationships (Costa et al., 2018). According to Salas, Sims, and Burke (2005) (as cited in Costa et al., 2018) this is particularly so where there is high interdependence between parties and the need for collaboration and flexibility is also high. Theories on trust have been based on the notion of interdependence between the party who trusts and the party who is trusted (Vangen & Huxham, 2003). Furthermore, according to Vangen et al., many authors in the late 1990's wrote about trust as though it were a precondition for successful collaboration - a lubricant for collaborative transactions. They believed this presents a practical dilemma for collaboration conveners where there is no history of relationship between the participants of a collaboration or where previous relationships have not engendered mutual trust. While Vangen and Huxham (2003) are concerned with interorganisational relations, their research is in line with Kahane (2017) who highlights the challenges associated with collaborating with people you may not agree with, like or even trust.

Chowdhury (2016) shows that trust (affect- and cognitive-based) informs the *degree* to which individuals with complex knowledge share and collaborate. Interestingly social network theory suggests that strong social ties, as well as weak social ties, can improve complex knowledge sharing (Chowdhury, 2005). However, teams with strong ties not only have higher levels of trust but also attain their goals more effectively, as compared to teams with weak and sparse ties (Costa et al., 2018). This phenomenon is also evident from a behavioural economics

perspective where the effect of market and social norms is explored (Ariely, 2010). Market norms lack the warmth that is implied in affect-based trust (Chowdhury, 2005). Rather the exchanges are “sharp-edged”, transactional in their nature and are characterised by “you get what you pay for”. When social norms apply, the individual does not focus on the benefit or value to “I”, rather consideration is given to the welfare and needs of others even at the sacrifice of their own desires (Ariely, 2010). In this way social norms may be the bedrock of social purpose organisations. This may in turn result in these organisations enjoying higher levels of employee engagement (Sambrook, Jones, & Doloriert, 2014) where employees are thinking about solving complex work problems even when at home, are hardworking, flexible and demonstrate passion for the organisation (Ariely, 2010). However, in the face of a negative response to substantial extraneous influencers, such as rapid growth, employees may continue to be driven by social norms in their personal contexts yet find themselves functioning in an environment that is increasingly more typical of one where market norms dominate. These individuals, Ariely says, essentially become conflicted, less motivated to engage and their tendency to demonstrate passion and care is muted. They are unable to achieve congruency between their personal values and values they live at work and may result in negative work attitudes and outcomes for the organisation. Furthermore, the individuals feel more stressed and uncertain which over time result in negative consequences in their health, wellbeing and personal lives (April & Schörger, 2017; Scheier & Carver, 2009, 2018).

IPO (input-process-output) theory (Salas et al., 2009) suggests that input factors, such as team and individual characteristics, as discussed above, function through mediators such as team reflexivity (such as those which occur during check-in processes during team meetings), team monitoring, and team effort, to influence outputs such as team satisfaction and performance (De Jong, Dirks, & Gillespie, 2016). Where those are ongoing teams (vs short-term teams such as those formed to meet a specific collaboration requirement) there is more focus on interpersonal relationships, which increases the impact of trust dynamics on team member interactions (Antikainen et al., 2010). They believe this may account for why some short-term teams tend to be motivated to predominantly meeting their own personal goals, despite working in teams that produced superior performance. In fact, according to Antikainen et al, short-term teams report either a negligible or conditional effect of trust which directly impacts relationship development ; team effectiveness and performance (Chowdhury, 2005; De Jong & Elfring, 2010; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006; West et al., 2009). What is unclear from Antikainen et al., is

whether organisational type, for example a social organisation versus a profit motivated organisation, would impact the behaviour of short-term versus ongoing teams trust emergence and development.

In contrast to the short vs long term effect on trust (Antikainen et al., 2010), Vangen and Huxham (2003) view trust building as a cyclical process. They posit that with each positive outcome, trust builds on itself incrementally, over time, in a virtuous circle. Each time partners act together, they take a risk and form expectations about the intended outcome and the way others will contribute to achieving it (for example, whether an individual is likely or unlikely to be accountable for delivery on certain agreed commitments). They believe that each time an outcome meets expectations, trusting attitudes are reinforced. This, they believe, becomes part of the history of the relationship, increasing the chance that individuals will have positive expectations about collaborative actions in the future. One could argue that this cyclical view to trust building, supports the development of an individual's PsyCap because of the experiences they have during each trust building cycle. This multiple level and simultaneous view of trust development is echoed by Costa et al. (2018) who purport that trust development in teams is subject to factors across levels in organizations, for example organizational structure, human resource management (HRM) practices, organizational culture and climate. These in turn impact performance and other relevant outcomes at both the individual and team levels. Importantly, Galaskiewicz, Bielefeld, and Dowell (2006) highlight that trust development extends to external partnerships and arrangements of social organisations, for example with fund-raising and recruiting volunteers.

It worth noting that while trust may be conceptualised at an individual level (Costa et al., 2018), it is enacted at a team level. Accordingly, the review on trust has been predominantly in the context of teams.

Trust is clearly as complex as it is multi-levelled and multi-faceted. It is intertwined into the day to day experiences of individuals' within and outside an organisation setting- indeed in almost every aspect of our lives. It is for this reason that trust is included as one of the four experience constructs examined during this study.

2.3.9 Summary individuals' experiences

In the context of a perform and outperform world, there is ongoing interest in the ability of organisations to create competitive advantage through “people-based advantage”. Competitive and collaborative advantage (Hansen & Nohria, 2004), one may argue requires going beyond achieving what is asked (X collaboration mode) toward what is possible (Xⁿ collaboration mode).

The exploration of “individuals' experiences” during collaboration, has been reviewed against the back drop of positivity psychology movement (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and the subsequent development of positive organisation behaviours and then positive psychological capabilities (Luthans, 2002). The PsyCap's of self-efficacy, optimism and resilience were each further reviewed. *trust*, included as the fourth construct in this study, was also reviewed.

The review has confirmed what we intuitively know to be true - individuals' experiences are interrelated. Further the review has confirmed the relationship between PsyCap and performance. For example together, resilience and optimism play an important role in developing attitudes and beliefs that lead to more productive behaviours (Luthans et al., 2019). They also lead to individuals being able to manage stress and challenges in productive ways (Avey et al., 2011) thereby contributing to their ability to be more effective during collaboration efforts.

Importantly the literature on PsyCap has explicitly linked self-efficacy and optimism with leadership (Le et al., 2018). Leadership, has further been identified as a factor that influences the trust development (Costa et al., 2018; Wildman et al., 2012) and performance of individuals within teams. Accordingly, a brief review of leaders in the context of their role as collaboration conveners is included below.

2.4 Leaders and Collaboration Conveners

It may be argued that the primary objective of any employed individual is to generate value for their organisation by working toward the attainment of organisational goals. Leaders are central in supporting individual's toward these outcomes and influence *how* individuals within

a team achieve their results. Rebelo et al. (2018) argue that transformational leaders, are well positioned to influence a team's PsyCap as well as the way the members interact to achieve their goals as a result of their own interaction with the team. They describe transformational leadership as a motivating, adaptable and flexible style that encourages followers to do more than they originally expected. In other words, it may be argued, to influence individuals to operate in a Xⁿ collaboration mode. The job of these leaders, argue Rousseau et al. (2013) is to get individuals to make "coordinated and task-appropriate use of their collective resources in accomplishing the team's work" (p. 345). These leaders are visionary, communicate and translate their goals to individuals, offer support and stimulate individuals "to take risks and inspiring high levels of involvement in the group" (p. 364). Rebelo et al. (2018) further purport that it is well established that transformational leadership is an antecedent to behavioural outcomes (PsyCap) and in particular team performance.

Patel et al. (2012) argue that even well-designed teams with good people, can perform poorly if they are not provided with the management support and resources, they require in order to meet their goals, and collaborate with internal and external colleagues and clients. They emphasise that collaboration within organisations requires effective and appropriate support - which may make the difference between a successful collaboration and an unsuccessful one. However this may be easier said than done. Vangen and Huxham (2003) highlight that collaboration gives rise to a variety of issues of concern and anxiety for managers. These issues range from identification of collaboration partners; complexity and multiplicity of aims, risk and vulnerability; complexity and dynamics of collaborative structures; and power imbalances. Luthans would argue that the PsyCap of these leaders can be negatively affected by the demands of collaborations.

It is important to recognise that it is not only leaders with positional authority who affect and direct collaborations within organisations. Change agents and other collaboration conveners, are politically skilled actors who can bridge unaware, unsure or sceptical individuals to explore the possibilities of cooperation (Dorado, 2005). These collaboration conveners do not rely on their position and title. Rather, they facilitate change from diverse forms of agency i.e. strategic, routine, and sense- making. They appear to have the capability to develop cognitive based trust (Chowdhury, 2005) with collaboration partners, and may play a leadership role

during cooperation or collaboration efforts. Accordingly, they may be as susceptible to the stress and anxiety during collaborations as leaders are (Vangen & Huxham, 2003), and in addition, have to navigate through the complexity of managing power and control dynamics during collaborations (Colbry et al., 2014; Kahane, 2017; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). These conveners and participants of collaborations, may be more reliant on support that occurs through processes akin to “Inscaping” (Nilsson & Paddock, 2014) rather than the technology based approach where focus is on the exchange and creation new knowledge (Patel et al., 2012).

It is interesting to reflect on the dynamics between leaders, PsyCap and goal attainment within the entrepreneurial environment. These CEO’s have been found to display leadership styles that motivate, satisfy, commit and increase the effectiveness of subordinates (Papalexandris & Galanaki, 2009). Accordingly, in this regard, they contribute positively to the PsyCap of individuals within their organisations. However, these leaders, tend to be susceptible to the gradual forming of perceptions, beliefs, and behavioural norms that become an identity prototype (Powell & Baker, 2017) within an organisation. The effect is “the way we do things”, is driven by an in-group and becomes as meaningful as “what we are trying to accomplish” (Powell & Baker, 2017). This research suggests that individuals’ experiences within organisations vary significantly depending on which identity prototype they associate or are associated with. Accordingly, identity prototyping (driven by the leader), may have a negative effect on individuals PsyCap- affecting their resilience for example. This is supported by Powell and Baker’s finding that founders, opted to exit the alliance once their identity prototype was no longer part of the “in-group”.

2.4.1 Summary Leader’s and Collaboration Conveners

The review above highlights that leaders, particularly transformation leaders, are an important antecedent to the PsyCap of individuals. In this way they influence how collaborations are approached and supported, and importantly can motivate individual to operate in an X^n collaboration mode.

As discussed earlier, leaders play a crucial role in the attainment of organisation goals and in the context of a perform and outperform world, growth is often a key pursuit. Accordingly, growth and related to that, accountability are often requirements and important influencers to collaboration efforts. These are discussed below in the context of social organisations for reasons already outlined in the Introduction chapter above.

2.5 Growth

Social organisations compete with other social organisations for limited funds. This competitive environment forces these organisations to work hard to become market leaders for the services and programs they provide, thereby forcing them to be more strategic (William, 2012). Furthermore, the importance of funders must be noted with regard to the setting of agenda (e.g. growth), for these organisations (Galaskiewicz et al., 2006).

It is worth observing that certain basic principles of strategy, expertise and efficiency apply to the non-profit sector, just as they do to every other kind of enterprise (Kramer, 2005). Kramer posits that the ambition shared by many funders and non-profit leaders alike, of “going to scale” through rapid organizational growth, results in a belief that increasing social impact can only be achieved by growing the organization itself. Galaskiewicz et al. (2006) postulate that purpose, rather than economic self-interest (as observed in for-profit organisations), is the dominant factor in explaining growth in public charities. One of the implications of this phenomenon is that non-profit leadership tend to have a weaker financial incentive to economise and drive efficiencies across their organisations. These leaders Galaskiewicz et al. (2006) argues are motivated to expand their activities and pursue growth to better achieve the mission of the organization.

However, over-committing resources beyond its capability is a recipe for disaster and reduces the likelihood of any organisation achieving its goals (William, 2012). William further highlights that satisfying the funding requirements of funders creates an organizational environment that is concerned with implementing survival tactics. Vangen and Siv (2003) highlight further that within social organisations there is a need to demonstrate collaborative ability and success, and have this acknowledged, often in order to secure future funding on which an organisations survival may depend. In this survival mode, effective communication

between managers and staff within the social organisation, is often compromised. One could argue that under these circumstances the PsyCap of leaders and followers alike are negatively affected. The value of effective communication is that it links employee performance to the strategic goal of the organisation (William, 2012). This, William's posits holds staff accountable for their performance and contribution to the purpose of the organization.

These factors may account for the glaring issues uncovered in this study, related to "Accountability for delivery" following rapid organisational growth. It is worth noting that William's view on the influence of funders, is in line with Galaskiewicz et al's. (2006) network theory perspective. They highlight that funders are more willing to donate or lend money, labour power, and facilities if they believe that the organisation does quality work, provides important services, and is successful in procuring resources required.

The discussion above, points to the requirement for social organisations to become more "business-like" (Galaskiewicz et al., 2006), by implementing systems and procedures which formalise activities related to human resources (e.g. electronically applying for leave vs verbally conveying the information); financial planning and record keeping, formalising organisation structure (Kramer, 2005; William, 2012) and roles and responsibilities.

However if the transition into rapid growth is not effectively managed, tensions about who worked harder, longer, and better begin to emerge within the social organisation (La Piana, 2010) and have a negative effect on the PsyCap of individuals and the cooperation between themselves and their teams. Furthermore, in their haste to grow, managers often overlook critical developmental questions related to how the organisation is doing internally (Greiner, 1989). Instead, Greiner highlights, their gaze is fixed outward toward the environment and the future, resulting in the flawed belief that pursuit of project targets will provide a new organizational identity. Greiner further posits that the inability of managers to understand their organisations development problems can result in an organisation becoming 'frozen' in its present stage of evolution or stuck in its historical narrative.

2.5.1 Accountability

The global growth of the non-profit sector has resulted in increased visibility and public scrutiny by diverse stakeholders including government oversight agencies, private donors and foundations, members/ communities which they serve (Strathern, 2000) , the media, and the public at large (Kearns, 2016). Indeed, this study (the examination of individuals' experiences during collaboration) suggests that employees are likely to be applying equal scrutiny to the social organisations within which they work- particularly as far as accountability for delivery is concerned. Furthermore, the competitive nature of non-profits in order to secure funding creates pressure to create managerial efficiency (Poole, 2007) and report effectively to funders (Kramer, 2005). As with Vangen and Siv (2003), Poole (2007) postulates that the need to secure funding or projects from government often results in non-profit's shifting their organisational culture, mode of operation and priorities. This phenomenon may be further exacerbated by the motivations of leaders of non-profit to achieve further reach and impact of their projects (Galaskiewicz et al., 2006).

It is worth noting that research on accountability and specifically an analytical framework for strategic decision making within non-profit organisations is scant (Kearns, 2016). This is of concern when considering the impact of growth at an intra-organisational level versus sector level, as discussed above, and its effect on organisational development (Greiner, 1989). There is a gap regarding appropriate measurement and reporting amongst social organisations, as they seek to respond to the demands of funders and other key stakeholders (Kramer, 2005; William, 2012; Galaskiewicz et al., 2006; Kearns, 2016). Kearns (2016) perspective is largely inter-organisational. He addresses strategic and tactical responses of leaders to accountability but excludes the lens of the individuals. One may therefore make inferences about the antecedents to leaders PsyCap as it relates to accountability but not individuals. It is interesting to note Mooney and Law's (2007) study which found that despite the nature of their work, input from welfare workers/employees at the field operative level, is rarely sought. Thereby creating a tendency of "top-down" structures and cultures within non-profit organisations (Poole, 2007). Strathern (2000) posits that this "top-down" approach may be prohibitive to the development of the broader expansion of auditing functions i.e. where there is a meeting of economic efficiency and good practice. She believes that procedures for assessment have social consequences, and postulates that accountability has acquired a social presence of a new kind largely driven by non-profit organisations. While her research highlights the complexity and intersectional nature of values and practices, an argument could be made that values and

practices are antecedents of accountability (as illustrated in this study). Importantly, Strathern puts forward that accountability is part of the general fabric of human interchange. In line with this, she draws attention to the relationship between “checking” (audit of accountability) and trust and mistrust; as well as “checking” as an indicator of performance.

2.5.2 *Summary Growth and Accountability*

The insights gained from the review on growth help to contextualise, from a literature perspective, how a “then and now” narrative could emerge within an organisation experiencing rapid growth. It further elucidates the perils should rapid growth not be managed effectively from an organisation development perspective.

Furthermore, the review suggests that risks related to organisation identity and purpose can emerge where the growth agenda becomes overwhelmingly influenced by the goals of external funders. The literature also goes as far as suggesting that these challenges could affect how individuals relate to each other, their leaders/managers and the organisation itself. The literature does not provide explicit insights on the effect of rapid growth on individuals’ experiences during their collaborative efforts. However, one may infer that rapid growth can potentially negatively affect an individuals’ PsyCap. This would however need to be explored further in future work.

Related to growth is accountability. As social organisations increasingly compete for funding, an increasing interest in accountability has developed. This may be from external and internal stakeholders, like staff. Accountability, as reviewed, relates to use of allocated funding. Interestingly it also relates to the intersection between values, purpose and accountability. What is not evident from the review is the impact that accountability has on an individuals’ PsyCap and how this may influence how they approach collaboration efforts made possible by funding.

2.6 Conclusion literature review

The primary research aim was to examine individuals’ experiences in the process of team-level collaborations within an organisational setting.

The purpose of the literature review was to educate and orientate the researcher to the scholarly conversation related to the research aim above and where necessary update the research question. A further goal was to provide any update on the state of research related to the fields of collaboration theory and individual experiences as well as any related and appropriate fields. The researcher also aimed to identify any gaps and opportunities that would emerge from the literature review and which is related to the field of research interest. Finally, the researcher also sought to explore her concept of X and Xⁿ collaboration modes as outlined in the Introduction chapter, in the context of scholarly conversation.

Accordingly, the review examined collaboration from a theory development and evolution perspective. Interest was applied to identifying antecedents to, influencers, and outcomes of collaborations, rather than a definition on collaboration. Next, the review examined the phenomenon of individuals' experiences from the theoretical foundation of positive psychology, positive organisation behaviours (POB) and positive psychological capabilities (PsyCap). Based on this foundation, each of the underlying constructs to individual experiences applied in this study i.e. self-efficacy, optimism, resilience and trust was then examined. These constructs were examined against the backdrop of collaboration efforts. The role of leaders, their influence on individuals' PsyCap and performance was notable within extant literature and was consequently explored. The final section examined literature on growth and accountability within social organisations for reasons outlined in the Introduction chapter.

The table below depicts the areas of interest that were examined, as well the scholarly conversation related to these. References for these conversations have also been included.

Table 4: Conversant's examined

Area of interest	Conversant	References
Collaboration		
	General Positioning and relevance	(Wood & Gray, 1991) (Dent, 2000) (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006, P. 77) (Antikainen, Mäkipää, & Ahonen, 2010) (Woodland & Hutton, 2012) (Patel et al., 2012) (William, 2012) (Tsanos et al., 2014) (Colbry et al., 2014) (Lau & Williams, 2016) (Kahane, 2017)
	Theory Collaboration: process vs alliance Domain: inter -intra-organisational	(Wood & Gray, 1991) (Vangen & Huxham, 2003) (Doh, 2005) (Hillman, Withers, & Collins, 2009) (Hansen & Nohria, 2004) (Patel et al., 2012) (Colbry et al., 2014) (Kahane, 2017)
	Antecedents Competitive environment	(Hansen & Nohria, 2004) (Woodland & Hutton 2012) (Martin & Eisenhardt, 2010) (Patel et al., 2012) (Colbry et al., 2014)
	Influencers Competitive environment	(Hansen & Nohria, 2004) (Woodland & Hutton 2012)

	Outcomes Competitive environment	(Hansen & Nohria, 2004) (Woodland & Hutton 2012)
Individual's Experiences		
	General Positioning and relevance	(Hansen & Nohria, 2004) Dorado (2005) (Newman et al., 2014) (Chowdhury, 2016)
	Nexus between individuals' experiences and collaboration	(Brief & Weiss, 2002) (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006) (West et al., 2009) (Patel et al., 2012) Nilsson & Paddock (2014)
	Positive Psychology	(Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) (Luthans, 2002) (Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017)
	Psychology Capital (PsyCap)	(Luthans, 2002) (Fineman, 2006) (Avey, Reichard, et al., 2011) (Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017) (Rebelo et al., 2018) (Luthans et al., 2019)
	Self-Efficacy	(Luthans et al., 2007) (West et al., 2009) (Scheier & Carver, 2009) Bandura (2012) (Newman et al., 2014) (Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017) (Harms & Luthans, 2018) (Fuller et al., 2018) (Le et al., 2018)

	Optimism	(Schulman et al., 1993) (Luthans, 2002) (West et al., 2009) (Newman et al., 2014) (Scheier & Carver, 2018)
	Resilience	(Luthans, 2002) (Coutu, 2002) (Richardson, 2002) (West et al., 2009) (Newman et al., 2014) (Luthans et al., 2019)
	Trust	(Vangen & Huxham, 2003) (Salas, Sims, & Burke, 2005) (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006) (Galaskiewicz, Bielefeld, & Dowell, 2006) (West et al., 2009) (Salas et al., 2009) (Ariely, 2010) (Antikainen et al., 2010) (De Jong & Elfring, 2010) (Anne Sambrook, Jones, & Doloriert, 2014) (Chowdhury, 2016) (De Jong, Dirks, & Gillespie, 2016) (April & Shorger, 2017) (Kahane, 2017) (Scheier & Carver, 2009, 2018) (Costa et al., 2018)
Leader's & Collaboration Conveners		

	Transformational leaders, PsyCap, Support, Performance	Vangen & Huxham (2003) (Dorado, 2005) (Papalexandris & Galanaki, 2009) (Patel et al., 2012) (Rousseau et al., 2013) (Colbry et al., 2014) (Nilsson & Paddock, 2014)(Chowdhury, 2016) (Kahane, 2017) (Powell & Baker, 2017) (Rebelo et al., 2018)
Growth		
	Funding, Competitiveness, Organisation development	(Greiner, 1989) (Vangen and Siv, 2003) (Kramer, 2005) (Galaskiewicz et al., 2006) (La Piana, 2010) (William, 2012)
	Accountability	(Greiner, 1989) (Strathern, 2000) (Vangen and Siv, 2003) (Kramer (2005) (Galaskiewicz et al., 2006) (Mooney and Law, 2007) (Poole, 2007) (William, 2012) (Kearns, 2016)

It is important to note that the literature review definitively endorsed the notion that collaboration is at the centre of daily organisational life- in fact increasingly so. It further endorsed the view that collaboration is distinct from team work (Wood & Gray, 1991). Accordingly, collaboration, as a theoretical area of inquiry in its own right, has developed and

evolved over close to a thirty-year period. The impact of technology, the internet and globalisation on collaboration theory development and practices is evidenced within the literature (Lau & Williams, 2016; Patel et al., 2012; Woodland & Hutton, 2012) and has influenced theory development. Interestingly, the impact of social media on collaboration theory and practices is not yet evident within the literature and could be an area worth exploring in the future. It is relevant to note that the scholarly conversation on collaboration has shifted from being largely organisation centred, i.e. inter-organisational (Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Wood & Gray, 1991), toward intra-organisational (Colbry et al., 2014; Patel et al., 2012) and more recently toward the individuals' engaged in collaborations (Colbry et al., 2014; Kahane, 2017). Furthermore there is an increasing body of research emerging on achieving collaboration efficiencies (Kramer, 2005; William, 2012; Woodland & Hutton, 2012). These are predominantly centred on matters related to the processes, structures and systems of collaboration i.e. operational antecedents to collaborations. It worth noting that both positive and negative antecedents to collaborations were elucidated. The review also builds on our understanding of how organisational expectations i.e. the outcomes, of collaborations have evolved over time (Antikainen et al., 2010; Dent, 2000; Hansen & Nohria, 2004; Kahane, 2017; William, 2012). Both positive and negative influencers to collaboration have also become more evidenced within the literature (Hansen & Nohria, 2004; Kahane, 2017; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Woodland & Hutton, 2012). Together, these antecedents, influencers and outcomes constitute what the researcher has termed "the internal (meaning internal to the organisation) collaboration ecosystem" as depicted in Figure 5 below.

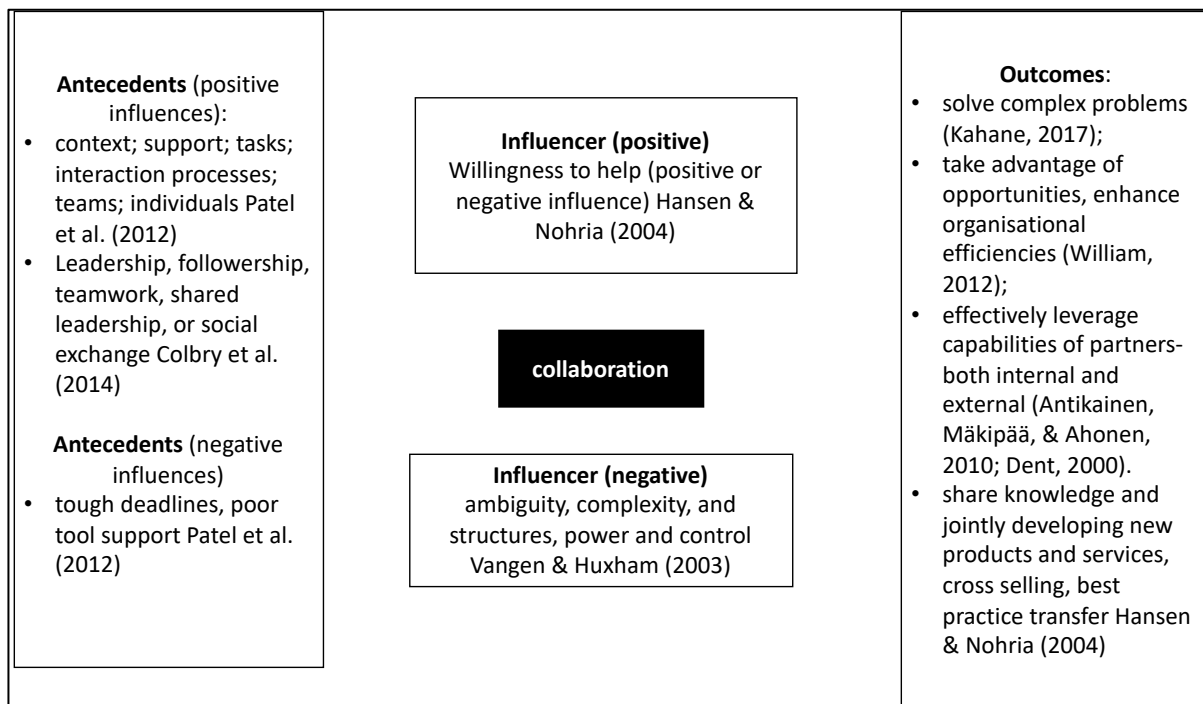


Figure 5: Internal collaborative ecosystem (researchers’ depiction)

It is worth noting that the link between individual’s positive psychological capabilities (PsyCap) i.e. their hope, efficacy, resilience and optimism i.e. their experiences, have been found to positively relate to their performance (Antikainen et al., 2010; Hansen & Nohria, 2004; Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017; Newman et al., 2014). These have accordingly revealed insights on why individuals may shift from operating in a X collaboration mode toward and Xⁿ collaboration mode. Finally, the validity and usefulness of applying these constructs in this examination of individuals’ experiences during collaborations, is strengthened because they are researchable and measurable (Luthans, 2002).

However, it is evident that the scholarly conversation related to the experiences of individuals or their PsyCap during *collaboration* remains sparse. This is aptly echoed by ” Newman et al. (2014):

“we call for researchers to pay more attention to possible multi-level applications of PsyCap research, study the underlying mechanisms by which PsyCap influences individual, team and organizational outcomes, and identify possible factors that may moderate the relationship between PsyCap and its outcomes at different levels of analysis”. (p. 128)

Accordingly one could argue that individuals' experiences as an integrated (meaning part of) influencer to collaboration, is underexamined both in the field of collaboration, as well as in the body of work related to PsyCap as depicted by Khandelwal and Khanum (2017) in Figure 4 above.

Yet, as the review has shown, organisations who are able to generate collaborative advantage through people advantage, are most likely to be successful in outperforming their expectations (Hansen & Nohria, 2004). That is to say, individuals within these organisations are most likely operating in a X^n collaboration mode. This remains an insufficiently exploited advantage and may also be related to how complex the individual experience field is. These complexities are compounded when matched with the range of challenges that leaders and collaboration conveners themselves are faced with, as they encourage individuals to do more than they originally expected (Colbry et al., 2014; Kahane, 2017; Rebelo et al., 2018; Rousseau et al., 2013; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). The support role of leaders and collaboration conveners can therefore not be underestimated in pursuit of competitive advantage and outperformance often in the context growth targets. This is including the important aspect of accountability for delivery which in turn may impact individuals' experiences during collaboration. Furthermore, the review illuminated how demanding organisational growth can be on the management of key stakeholders of an organisation, the nascent systems and processes within the organisation and the degree to which decision making can move from being strategic in nature to tactical (Kearns, 2016; William, 2012). Importantly, the literature establishes a relationship between organisational growth and the experiences of both leaders and staff as they grapple with organisational development demands.

2.6.1 The emerging gaps

Three primary gaps have been exposed during the literature review and more so, are reflected in practice. First, individuals' experiences during team level collaborations and how these in turn impact the attainment of organisational goals such meeting higher targets in line with an organisation's performance (or growth) strategy, is underexamined. Second, PsyCap and in particular the role of self-efficacy, optimism, resilience and trust is underemphasised in academic literature on collaboration experiences. The third gap is an observation from the review on extant literature. The studies on PsyCap and collaborative practices have predominantly been conducted in the western world. Accordingly, one could reasonably state

that the significant cultural differences that are observed in South Africa across race, age, generation, geographic location and time (for example pre-and post-apartheid) are inadequately represented and considered within extant literature.

3. Research Methodology Chapter

3.1 Research Strategy and Approach

The purpose of the study was to “Examine individuals’ experiences during team-level collaborations within an organisational setting”. The researcher was further interested to learn if these experiences influenced the way individuals approached collaborations and the impact that may have on outcomes of the collaborations.

To achieve these objectives, the research strategy that was applied was an inductive (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013; Maxwell, 2008), qualitative (Bevan, 2014; Eberle, 2013; Flick, 2018a), case study approach applying interviews, questionnaire, observation and secondary data as research instruments (Cassell & Symon, 2004; Eisenhardt, 2016; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Staa, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2012) . The examination of individuals’ experiences during team level collaborations involves a study that is socially constructed, filled with multiple meanings and interpretations, and where emotions are involved (Hurworth, 2011). Furthermore, the exploratory nature of the research objectives requires a reflexive stance towards knowing and representing examined experiences, throughout the research process (Hershberg, 2014). Therefore, this study has adopted a constructivist and interpretivist approach. For the interpretivist, the goal of theorizing is to provide an understanding of the direct lived experience instead of abstract generalizations (Hurworth, 2011). Accordingly, the researcher did not subjectively define the word “experience”. Rather, the strategy was to provide parameters for four constructs to frame the word “experience” and allow the definitions to the constructs to unfold during the interviews with participants. It is worth noting here, that following the review of literature prior to conducting the study, the researcher determined the four constructs to be: self-efficacy; optimism; resilience (West et al., 2009) and trust.

3.1.1 Inductive Approach

Qualitative researchers tend to generate two kinds of questions that are much better suited to process theory than to variance theory (Maxwell, 2008):

- a) questions about the *meaning* of events and activities *to the people involved in them* and

b) questions about the *influence of the physical and social context* on these events and activities.

Both types of questions involve situation-specific phenomena such as an individuals' experiences during collaboration in a social-purpose organisation. Further, they generally involve an open-ended, inductive approach to discover what the meanings and influences are to individual experiences and how they are involved in collaboration events and activities—an inherently processual orientation (Maxwell, 2008). While modern day management practice tends to be driven by the notion that what can't be measured can't be managed (Druker, 2001), the single most profound recognition in social and organizational study is that much of the world with which we deal is essentially socially constructed (Gioia et al., 2013). Following this, the study aimed to focus more on the *means by which individuals go about constructing and understanding their experience* and less on the number or frequency of measurable occurrences to which the deductive approach is more appropriate (Gioia et al., 2013). The inductive approach was therefore well suited to examining individuals' experiences during team-level collaborations within an organisation setting.

3.1.2 Qualitative Method

In line with inductive research approach, this study aimed to undertake a qualitative approach because it aimed to understand, describe, and to some degree explain a social phenomenon 'from the inside' through analysing (Flick, 2016):

This section discusses case study as the research design, the two pilots on survey and interviews and then each of the following data collection methods: secondary data; survey; observation and interviews.

The researcher sought to describe individual's experiences and the dynamics associated with this, within a single setting (Eisenhardt, 1989). Furthermore, the researcher wanted to examine these dynamics by employing multiple levels of analysis within the single study. The case study was therefore an appropriate research method to apply because the method helped the researcher to understand and demonstrate how the organisation and environmental context was having an impact on the social processes (e.g. the experience of individuals) within the selected case (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2013).

Yin (2013) advised that when selecting a case, the researcher needs to attend to both practical and substantive considerations such as availability, relevance, and usefulness to the research question. Accordingly, the researcher sought out an organisation which was large enough in terms of full-time staff compliment, for a sufficient number of individual experiences within a single setting to be examined. Related to this the ability to gain access to these individuals was a key priority. Importantly, establishing partnerships and working collaboratively needed to be regarded as important by the organisation. Accordingly, the case study was conducted with a social-purpose organisation called *Ukufunda*¹ that operates in Cape Town, South Africa with a nationwide reach. This organisation experienced exponential growth over the period 2017-2018. The impact of growth was far-reaching. Most significantly, and fortuitously, at the time of the study, the leadership of the organisation had identified “working in silo’s” i.e. inadequate collaboration across teams, as the most significant challenge they were facing. Accordingly, it was relevant and fitting to choose *Ukufunda* as the case to answer the research question. The leadership of *Ukufunda* and researcher thus shared a common goal: to understand the dynamics present in their organisation that influenced individuals’ experiences during collaboration. Details of this are discussed in the case study itself in the Research Findings chapter below.

Thus, the *Ukufunda* case represented an opportunity to explore the phenomenon of individual experiences in depth and in context through the systematic piecing together of detailed evidence collected, to generate (or replicate) theories of broader interest (Cassell & Symon, 2004). To achieve this, the case study combined the following data collection methods: a survey adapted from the Index of Interdisciplinary Collaboration (Bronstein & Bronstein, 2002); semi-structured interviews; observation of team meetings and cross-departmental meetings and analysis of secondary data. These are expanded on further below. Consequently and as anticipated by Staa et.al, vast amounts of data were produced during the course of the study (Staa, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2012).

Furthermore, the multiple sources of data discussed above, created an opportunity for data source triangulation (Miles & Huberman, 1994) where data was gathered through several sampling strategies (e.g. observation meetings and interviews), at different moments in time, in different social situations (e.g. face to face interviews in the office, at a coffee shop and

¹ Please note that *Ukufunda* is a pseudonym.

video conferences), and with a variety of persons (e.g. thirty three participants located across three offices in three different provinces) (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The interviews afforded the researcher the opportunity to clarify what was discerned during the observation meetings. Similarly, during the data analysis process, the researcher was able to triangulate key findings e.g. impact of growth with data sourced from *Ukufunda*'s website, strategic plan, staff survey (conducted by an independent third party), input from various participants and the observation meetings. The following section will discuss the multiple methods of data collection.

3.1.3 Data Collection Pilot

Pilots were conducted for both the survey and interviews.

3.1.3.1 Survey

A key requirement was to adapt the IIC to be more readable and applicable to a Social Enterprise in a South African context. Accordingly, the researcher conducted a pilot with participants² from *Ukufunda* to obtain feedback on the Collaboration Survey's readability and logic (Bronstein & Bronstein, 2002; Maxwell, 2018). As advised by her supervisor, the researcher was cautious of creating a balance between using feedback from the target organisation while not compromising the research interest. The following specific adaptations were made to the Collaboration Survey based on the feedback received:

- a) Questions that were specific to social workers and health care were removed³.
- b) Language was simplified to make the survey more accessible to participants e.g.
 - a. The question: *I utilize other (non-social work) professionals for their particular expertise*, was changed to
 - i. *I rely on people who are not in my organisation, for their particular expertise.*
 - b. The phrase "*professionals in my setting*" was consistently changed to

² The General Manager and Head of Monitoring and Evaluation.

³ Note: this change was made prior to conducting the pilot.

organisation. As Rapley & Rees (2017) noted, “documents both electronic and paper-based are a ubiquitous aspect of the formation and enactment of contemporary life” (p. 378). Consequently, throughout the data collection and data analysis phases, the researcher drew on secondary data to clarify and triangulate data observed and captured (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The secondary data collected and examined is illustrated in the table below. This data helped the researcher gain valuable insight to the organisation which would otherwise have been difficult to gain through the survey, observation of meetings or interviews.

Table 5: Secondary data reviewed

Document	Insight gained
2017 Annual Report	Progress on priorities during the year that significant funding was received and the onset of the growth period. Gained insight on resource allocation and expenditure.
The Main Narrative Report July 2018	Key initiatives and projects and their intended outcome.
The Strategic Plan 2019-2023	The strategic focus of the organisation as a whole, as well as each project within the campaign. Also gained insights to the ambitious growth planned.
The SPH qualitative research report 2017	Progress and plans related to a key programme and how resources were allocated and applied.
The findings and analysis of the Staff Survey conducted by an independent third party in June-July 2018.	Key issues identified by staff of <i>Ukufunda</i> in three-month period leading up to this study. Recommendations by the third-party consultant were also noted. This was extremely useful during triangulation of data collected during observation meetings and one on one interviews.
<i>Ukufunda</i> Website, Blogs and various newspaper articles sourced via internet searches	Was able to understand the positioning and marketing narrative of the organisation; the external partner and stakeholder map of <i>Ukufunda</i> . Importantly also gained insight on when various funding was secured and how that was positioned in the market. The growth narrative was amplified in these searches.

3.1.5 Data Collection Method: Survey

The survey is included as Appendix 1 and the interview consent form (which was issued with the survey) is included as Appendix 2.

Ukufunda, has three offices which are located across three provinces (Western Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal). In addition, they have staff who operate from their home in rural towns across South Africa. It was therefore not possible to engage with all potential participants on a face to face basis. Thus, a key challenge was how to sensitise participants, on an individual level, to the research topic. The researcher adopted a multi-step approach which included a survey to address this challenge and sensitise the organisation to the research topic (Cassell & Symon, 2004).

The first step was to adopt an inclusive approach and sensitise the entire organisation to the fact that a researcher would be working within *Ukufunda*. This was done via an email from the Head of Monitoring and Evaluation. The email provided a brief background to the researcher in order to establish credibility with participants (Flick, 2018a); it clarified the research topic and also positioned why the research topic was important for *Ukufunda* in the context of some of the challenges experienced across the organisation. Participants were urged to participate if invited to complete the survey and be interviewed, however they were afforded the option to not participate or withdraw from participation at any time. Participation in the Collaboration Survey was therefore on a voluntary basis. Importantly the email, clarified that not all staff would be invited to participate. This was important for the researcher as she was cautious about creating unnecessary concern within the organisation regarding who was selected and why (Alvesson, 2003; Cassell & Symon, 2004; Flick, 2018b; Hogan, 2011). Next, the researcher issued an invitation to participate in the Collaboration Survey to a targeted group of forty-nine participants. The process of selecting who the survey would be sent to is discussed in the Sampling section below. It is worth noting here however, that consideration was given to achieving diversity within the sample group. Thus, tenure with the organisation, gender, race, age and role and geographic location of the participant group were all key considerations. The aforementioned email included a “interview consent form”. The researcher also included a covering note to the invitation to participate in the survey, restating key messages from the initial email from *Ukufunda*'s Head of Monitoring and Evaluation. This was to ensure that

information provided to the participants was clear, consistent and without deceit about the study (Hogan, 2011).

It must be noted that the primary purpose of the survey was to create an opportunity for participants to familiarise themselves with the research topic in the most effective manner, with consideration to access; time available and geographic location of participants. The researcher was aware during this early stage of the study, that “working in silo’s” had been identified as a key organisational challenge by the leadership team. Furthermore, the organisation was experiencing unusually high staff turn-over in the two months leading up to the study. Consequently, the researcher believed it was important to set the tone of the research as based on collaboration, versus a venting opportunity on the organisational challenges as may be the risk.

The literature review revealed that while an increasing amount of attention was given to the topic of collaboration, models to measure individual’s *experiences* during a collaboration were not readily available. Bronstein’s (2017) developed an open source, Index of Interdisciplinary Collaboration (IIC) to assess respondents' self-reported sense of the quality of collaborative exchange. While Bornstein’s interest was primarily with collaboration outcome, her index acted as a useful baseline from which to understand the experience of participants during interdisciplinary collaboration. The researcher then followed a process of refining the IIC in order to ensure relevance and appropriateness to the research question. This resulted in the researcher developing a forty-four item, five-point scale called the “The Collaboration Survey”, in November 2018. The survey included as Appendix 1, was designed to take less than 12 minutes to complete. It was conducted over a period of two weeks to allow for sufficient time for the participants to complete⁵.

The Collaboration Survey broadly explored three lines of enquiry; these are illustrated in the table below.

⁵ Please note, as will be discussed in the “Data Collection: Survey – Challenges” section below, this was extended to four weeks.

Table 6: Collaboration Survey lines of enquiry

Line of Enquiry	Sample question from Collaboration Survey
Questions related to individuals' experiences and linked to one of the constructs i.e. <i>self-efficacy, optimism, resilience</i> and <i>trust</i>	"My colleagues from other departments believe that they could not do their jobs as well, without help from my department"
Questions related to the participants role during collaboration	"I view part of my role as supporting the work of other people who I work with"
Questions related to organisational practices and culture	"Colleagues from other departments involve me in work that isn't my job"

3.1.6 Data Collection Method: Observation

The researcher had no prior experience in working with social-purpose organisations and had no prior knowledge of *Ukufunda* in particular. Therefore a requirement was to observe first-hand, the experience and behaviour of the participants in their own setting (Cassell & Symon, 2004). Consequently observation, was identified as an appropriate data collection method for this study.

Eberle relates to Husserl (2013) and points out that "*If I perceive, for instance, a bird in my garden I can observe it with great attention and see it fairly clearly; if I glimpse it only hastily, my perception of that bird remains rather blurred and vague. My different kinds of attention obviously constitute a different phenomenon*" (p.3) . It is for this reason that the approach of observing individuals during a collaboration setting e.g. team or cross-departmental meeting as well as one on one interviews proved to be a powerful research strategy. Observing individuals in their collaboration settings provided insights to what Eberle (2013) discusses as the noema in the properties of the cogitatum; whilst exploring depth during the one on one interviews, elucidated the "noema- the properties of the perceived" (p. 12) .

The Observation method therefore allowed for subtle nuances, that can only be identified through observation, such as changes in body language to be included in the research.

Importantly, the observation meetings orientated the researcher to the manner in which different teams engaged with one another. They further provided insight to what leaders prioritised and how staff responded to these.

The researcher opted to apply the “observer-as-participant” identity for this study (Waddington, 2004). Practically, that translated into the researcher sitting in on meetings, locating herself as much as was possible separately from the team, e.g. sitting at the back of a room rather than at the boardroom table itself. The researcher’s goal was to be as inconspicuous to the participants as possible, focused on simply recording and noting what was observed without judgment.

The researcher observed eight different meetings which enabled her to observe interactions between approximately seventy-five people. Four were team meetings and four were cross-departmental collaboration meetings. Three of these meetings included participants via video conference. Table 7: Observation Sessions below provides a profile of these meetings.

Table 7: Observation Sessions

Team Name	Aim / purpose of the meeting	Number of attendees	Date & Duration of meeting
Training and Planning Meeting	This was an adhoc cross departmental meeting. During the meeting the two Training Coordinator’s presented their training plan. The following departments were represented at the meeting: Programmes; Communication and Marketing; Monitoring and Evaluation; Support Services; Finance and the Executive. Each department was expected to provide input from their perspective to ensure viability of the plan. This meeting was chaired by the MD.	13 including 1 via video conference	Date: 8 November Time: 14:00-16:00
Communications & Marketing	Responsible for positioning of the <i>Ukufunda</i> brand and also managing certain events related to the campaign. All team members were Cape Town based. This meeting was chaired by the Head of Department.	6	Date: 12 November Time: 10:00-10:45

Monitoring and Evaluation	Established to meet the need for accurately reporting on targets for key external stakeholders. Two team members were located in KwaZulu-Natal and a third in Johannesburg. This meeting was chaired by the Head of Department.	10 including 3 via video conference	Date: 13 November Time: 14:00-15:35
Programmes	Responsible for the implementation of the campaign. The vast majority of this team is based in the communicates which they serve. Only three staff members were based in Cape Town. This meeting was chaired by the Head of Department.	2	Date: 16 November Time: 10:00-10:28
Support Services	Responsible for Human Resource Management, Information Technology, Logistics and Support, Office Coordination and Reception (for all here offices). This team is all based in the Cape Town office and travel to the other two on a need basis. This meeting was chaired by the Head of Department.	7	Date: 12 November Time: 11:00-12:00
Operations meeting	This forum was newly established by the newly appointed General Manager. The purpose of the meeting (and forum) is to facilitate broader ownership of the <i>Ukufunda's</i> campaign implementation plan. The following departments are represented on this forum: Programmes; Communication and Marketing; Monitoring and Evaluation; Support Services; Finance and the Executive. This meeting was chaired by the Senior Communications Officer. Note the role of chair is rotated between members of this forum.	7	Date: 21 November Time: 10:00-12:23
Staff meeting	This was a newly established meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to create a touchpoint where all staff come together in the office or via video conference. An update is provided by the Managing Director (MD), feedback on specific projects that have broad staff appeal e.g. medical	boardroom full, people on video from different regions (7	Date: 23 November Time: 09:00-10:00

	<p>aid benefit; update on transformation stats i.e. the numbers on how the <i>Ukufunda</i> campaign is transforming lives of children and communities; year-end function. This is also an opportunity for the MD to motivate staff.</p> <p>This meeting was chaired by the MD.</p>	<p>diff video conference screens).</p>	
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In addition to the above, the researcher used opportunities such as sitting in the reception area, sharing a desk in the communal office area, using the staff kitchen, and waiting in meetings rooms as further opportunities to observe how staff at *Ukufunda* interacted with each other. These observations were recorded manually (handwritten) as well as electronically through voice notes and loaded onto NVivo. The key focus of these notes where to capture the potential emergence of a behaviour pattern or prompt the researcher to clarify an observation during the interview process.

The researcher’s primary interest was to observe how participants related to each other during these meetings. Here, interpersonal dynamics where observed between staff members at similar levels of influence to each other; between staff and leaders irrespective of who was addressing the other. Another area of interest was the level (e.g. high, medium, low contributor) and nature of contribution (e.g. responder, initiator, asks questions, supporter) made by a participant.

The researcher developed a template whereby a key was assigned to each of these areas of interest. Furthermore, the researcher used a drawing to depict the room in which the observation took place and mapped each participant onto the drawing. These techniques as depicted in Figure 6 below, proved to be useful from both a data collection and data analysis point of view.

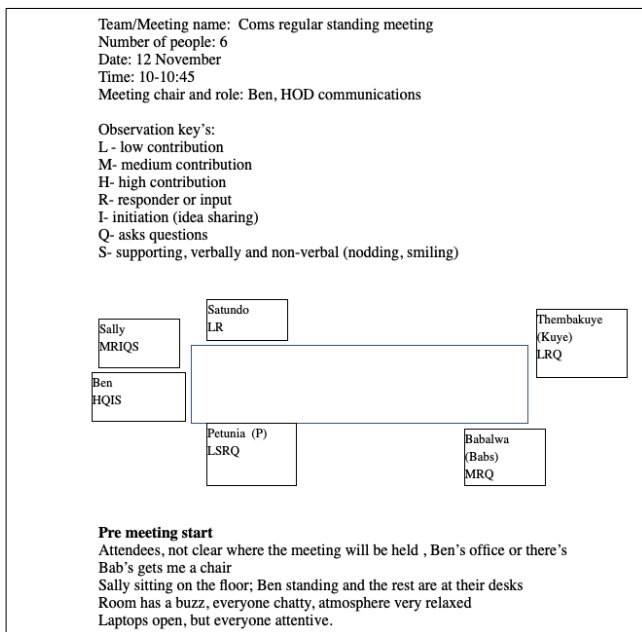


Figure 6: Sample of Observation template

Encouraged by (Waddington, 2004), the researcher included her subjective assessment of the team atmosphere as highlighted in the figure above. These were noted at the onset of each meeting, during and at the close of the meeting. Following Eisenhardt (2016), the diagrams were hand-drawn, the notes of the meeting were handwritten, and the entire meeting was voice recorded. These notes and diagrams were then typed up electronically and loaded onto the research tool NVivo for further analysis.

3.1.7 Data Collection Method: Interviews

As discussed, the main aim of the research was to examine individuals' *experiences* during collaborations, accordingly, gaining their self-driven perspective was crucial. Consequently, qualitative research interview, whose goal is to see the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee and to understand how and why they have come to a particular perspective (King, 2004) was a suitable approach. The following characteristics of a qualitative interview were also of pertinence to the organisation setting within which the research was conducted (King, 2004):

- a) Low degree of structure applied by the researcher/interviewer.

- b) A preponderance of open questions (examining *self-efficacy*; *optimism*; *resilience* and *trust*).
- c) A focus on specific situations in the world of the interviewee e.g. collaboration experiences pre rapid growth compared with post rapid growth. The “specific situation” in this study was a social purpose organisation.

The researcher’s examination of individual experiences during collaborations, provided the qualitative data required to conduct an empirical analysis of a phenomenon (Flick, 2018b). In line with this, the researcher noted the importance of anticipating what information she would actually be able to collect, in the setting studied, using particular observational or other methods, and how this information would contribute to her understanding of the issues she was examining (Maxwell, 2018).

It is worth noting, that the researcher recognised the word “experiences” could be interpreted in numerous ways by participants. This had the potential to create confusion and potentially stress for the participants as well as make analysis of the data unwieldy. Consequently, in order to achieve clarity and focus during and post the interviews, the researcher drew fields of positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), positive organisation behaviours (POB) and positive psychological capabilities (PsyCap) (Luthans, 2002; Luthans et al., 2007) to frame the word “experiences” for the purpose of this study. Accordingly, four interview questions were developed to explicitly probe the pre-determined constructs of experience i.e. *self-efficacy*, *optimism*, *resilience* (Luthans, 2002; West et al., 2009) and *trust* (Chowdhury, 2005; De Jong & Elfring, 2010; Vangen & Huxham, 2003; Wildman et al., 2012). Furthermore, a key goal for the field research was to keep the language used during the one-on-one interviews (and other engagements with the research partner) accessible as advised by (King, 2004). This was particularly important in a South African context where there are eleven official languages. The researcher was therefore sensitive to the fact that English would be a second language for a number of the participants interviewed. Thus, following Bevan (2014), who puts forward that questions be asked in the vocabulary and language of the individual being interviewed, the researcher applied the following framing to the experience constructs examined:

- a) *Self-Efficacy*: Meaning the extent to which individuals’ feel they can execute courses of action required to deal with specific situations. Simply put: “I can do this”. *Self-Efficacy* was examined at an individual level.
- b) *Optimism*: Meaning the belief that individuals’ have that they can influence/control outcomes and their success. Simply put: “It will work out my way”. Optimism was examined at an individual level.
- c) *Resilience*: Meaning the ability to “bounce back” and rebound from setback or failure. Simply put: “It will be ok”. *resilience* was examined at an individual level.
- d) *Trust*: Meaning the influence of trust on how individuals collaborate and who they collaborate with. *Trust* was examined at team level, including collaboration with partners, peer group, leaders.

These constructs were positioned with participants at the onset of the interviews and questions were developed around them as illustrated in Table 8: Interview Questions below.

It is important to note that *self-efficacy*; *optimism* and *resilience* were examined at individual level while *trust* was examined at team level and included collaboration with partners, peer group and leaders.

Table 8: Interview Questions

	Description	Notes
Interview questions		
Opening	How long have you worked at <i>Ukufunda</i> ? Have you always worked in the social sector? (if no, which other sectors and what are the standout differences for you).	To put the participant at ease and establish their lifeworld and context (Bevan, 2014), as well as enable the researcher and interviewee to feel at ease with one another (Cassell & Symon, 2004).
Establishing collaboration narrative	Can you talk about your role and the types of collaborations you are involved in? What do you think is important during a collaboration in your environment?	
Framing experiences	The literature around collaboration suggests that there are three constructs/things that influence our experiences during collaborations. These are: <i>self-efficacy</i> - I believe I can, <i>optimism</i> – it’s going to go my way and <i>resilience</i> – that bounce-back factor. I’d like to explore these from your perspective.	To frame what the researcher means by the word experience (West et al., 2009)

	Are you comfortable with those definitions? Is there any aspect I should clarify more?	
Examining experiences via <i>Self-Efficacy</i>	How would you describe your self-efficacy under normal circumstances? Now, think through a collaboration scenario, how do you see it being affected during collaborations?	The researcher valued flexibility within the interview process over rigorous application of the sequence of these questions or the framing of them as presented here (Bevan, 2014; Flick, 2018a).
Examining experiences via <i>Optimism</i>	How would you describe your <i>Optimism</i> under normal circumstances? Now, think through a collaboration scenario, how do you see it being affected during collaborations?	
Examining experiences via <i>Resilience</i>	How would you describe your <i>resilience</i> under normal circumstances? Now, think through a collaboration scenario, how do you see it being affected during collaborations? Can you describe how do you deal with potential failure, setbacks or conflicts to your work?	
Examining experiences via <i>Trust</i>	How have you experienced trust during your collaborations?	
Close	If you think about collaborations and your experiences around collaborations, is there something that we haven't spoken about that you're thinking, I wonder why Kay didn't ask about this?	
		Purpose: To provide an opportunity for the participant to highlight glaring omissions with regard to the discussion of their experiences during collaborations. (Cassell & Symon, 2004)

Following on from how West et al. (2009) approached the discussion on team level positive psychological capacities, the researcher applied the sequence below to the examination of “individuals’ experiences” during team-level collaborations during the interviews.

- a) *Self-Efficacy* – This had the unexpected benefit of rendering the participant with an opportunity to share more about themselves at the early stages of the interview process. At the onset of the interviews, some participants initially presented themselves as diffident of discussing their views on what was broadly recognised to be an organisation challenge i.e. working in silos. These participants used phrases such as:

“I’m not sure what I can say that will help you with this big problem we have.... I am not at a level that can influence” (MC, Monitoring & Evaluation Assistant, 2016)

or

“I do think there are a lot of people here that are scared, they are scared to say what they think, they are scared to say what they believe”. (TN, Senior Communications Officer, 2013).

Interestingly, these participants visibly gained more confidence in engaging with the interview questions once they realised a) that the subject matter was themselves and b) it was their individual experiences that was object of the research.

- b) *Optimism* and *resilience* – The conversation created a solid foundation from which to explore both *optimism* and *resilience*. Each construct was probed independently, however the sequence varied i.e. whether *optimism* or *resilience* was examined, based on the participants natural dialogue flow.
- c) *Trust* – This construct was deliberately explored as the final construct to determine the significance of the preceding three constructs as influences on an individuals’ collaboration experience. The merit of this decision was confirmed during the interviews where the researcher noted the relative weighting that participants applied to *trust* as an influencer to their collaboration experiences.

Flick (2018) argues that a guiding idea of qualitative research is the appropriateness of methods, theories and approaches as a principle for selecting methods of data collection and for how they are applied. He further states that appropriateness can refer to giving room for the experiences and perspectives of the participants (e.g. in the way we ask them or conceive our observations).

Thus, flexibility within the interview process was favoured over rigorous application of the sequence method above. Consequently, the natural flow of a participant’s response to an interview question was not interrupted, in order to allow for the phenomenon being examined to be fully exposed. This enabled insights that were material to the research question, but not necessarily one of the four constructs above, to emerge. In this way the different modes of appearance of individuals’ *experience* were explored as posited by the phenomenological method (Bevan, 2014).

As discussed in the pilot section above, the researcher conducted a brief pilot on the interview questions. In line with the caution by Miles and Huberman (1994), it became apparent during the pilot, that there was a material risk of collecting vast quantities of data which did not necessarily provide insights to constructs being examined. Given that the focus of phenomenological study is to accurately describe and thematise an experience in a systematic way (Bevan, 2014), the researcher identified the need to develop a theoretical structure to frame the research question (McArthur, 2014). Accordingly, the researcher developed the Collaboration Experience (ColEx) framework in December 2018 (please see figure 20: ColEx framework in Appendix 4). The primary purpose of ColEx was to provide a visual and navigational guide to the constructs being examined during the interviews. The ColEx framework had the benefit of supporting the researcher during the interview process itself i.e. keeping track of what was examined and what was not. It also proved to be a valuable tool when coding during the data analysis phase. It must be noted that the interviews were often characterised by high emotional content as participants navigated through their experiences during collaboration efforts. While this was in line with the expectations of the Phenomenology research method (Bevan, 2014), the reality and impact of experiencing this with the participant was underestimated by the researcher. In these scenarios, the framework was a particularly useful tool to re-focus both the researcher and participant.

A key priority for the researcher during the interviews was to provide clarity and focus to the examination of and discussions on “individuals experiences”. Furthermore, this had to be done in the context of team-level collaborations.

Participants were interviewed over the period 30 November 2018 to 8 February 2019. The average duration of the interviews was between forty-five and sixty minutes, with ten interviews between sixty and seventy minutes. Each of these interviews were voice recorded, with the researcher taking detailed handwritten notes. The handwritten notes focussed on non-verbal communication; notes that highlighted the relationship between the constructs being examined; data triangulation notes based on what the researcher had already observed with the participant in a meeting or in some instances what another participant had observed or shared. The hand-written notes were thus not a verbatim recoding of the interview. Miles and

Hubberman (1996) reflect that the researcher attempts to capture data on the perceptions of the participants “from the inside” through a process of deep attentiveness, of empathetic understanding and suspending of bracketing preconceptions about the topic discussed. It was therefore appropriate for the researcher to draw diagrams to clarify her understanding of what was being shared, and then reflect these back to the participant with a comment such as “*Can I check that I have understood what you have just shared*”. The sample of one such diagrams is illustrated below. These notes were used during the coding process to test interpretation of the interview extract being coded and it’s thematic allocation or placement (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

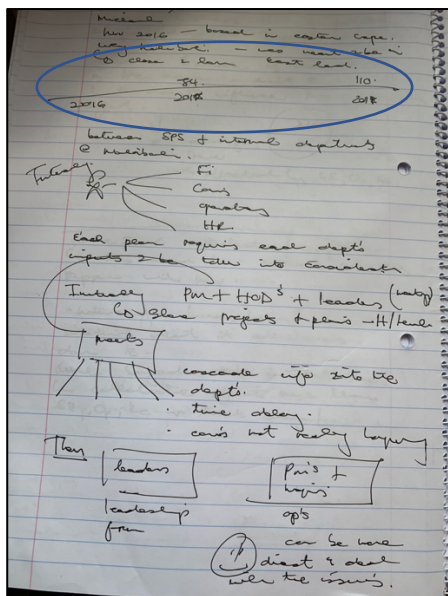


Figure 7: Sample of diagram developed during interview

It is worth noting that a key finding of the study was the emergence of *growth*, and in particular the “Impact of Growth” as an *influencer* to individuals’ experiences during collaboration. Interestingly, the researchers journal of hand-written notes, depicts a timeline in almost all interviews to reflect participants “Then and Now” narrative. It is this narrative that initially pointed the researcher to the idea that *growth* was an influencer to collaboration experiences. This is highlighted in blue in the sample diagram above.

3.2 Sampling

The study was designed to be conducted in a single setting. Therefore it was important that the target organisation was “information rich with a view to answering the research question” (Schreier, 2018). A further important consideration was to achieve diversity and variation across a representative sample group. Accordingly, the researcher determined that purposive sampling would be an appropriate strategy (Maxwell, 2008; Schreier, 2018). Following a process of investigating suitable options and together with support from an institution (i.e. the D School) associated with the University of Cape Town’s Graduate School of Business, the researcher identified *Ukufunda* as the target organisation.

According to *Ukufunda’s website*, since its inception in 2012, the organisation had impacted the lives of 140 998 children through 4 839 reading clubs, in 9 provinces through the 22,456 people they had trained. Further, they employed one hundred and seventy full-time staff in 2018 and therefore represented a case that was “information rich” with diversity across the organisation, thereby purposive sampling as the appropriate strategy. It is worth noting, that convenience sampling was also a viable secondary strategy due to the partnership enjoyed between GSB, the D School and *Ukufunda* as well as the location of *Ukufunda’s* head office in Cape Town (Cassell & Symon, 2004).

As discussed above, a key goal was to achieve diversity and variation across the sample group. Therefore, consideration was given to tenure with the organisation, gender, race, age and role and geographic location of the participant group. Following a brief by the researcher, a group of fifty-four individuals were identified by the General Manager and Head of Monitoring and Evaluation as candidates for participation in the study. Of this group the survey was issued to forty-nine individuals. Of this group, twenty individuals responded to the survey. The researcher invited all twenty individuals to participate in a one-on-one interview. A further fifteen individuals were invited to be interviewed. These individuals were targeted based on creating balance between the criteria above as well as access and availability (Schreier, 2018). A key priority was to achieve a representative sample of the single case (Yin, 2013). Accordingly, data was collected from thirty-three participants across departments.

Table 9: List of Respondents below, illustrates the range and diversity achieved in the list of the final interview group. Please note that in the interest of maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, their names have been excluded from the list.

Table 9: List of Respondents

Department	Role/ Title	Date joined	Comment
Management	Managing Director	2015	Management
Management	General Manager	November, 2018	Management
Research & Innovation Team	Head of Research & Innovation	May, 2017	Head of Department (HoD)
Research & Innovation Team	Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist	May, 2018	Has just started a few months ago; male; team has grown
Research & Innovation Team	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer (SPS)	2013	Has worked in 2 different departments (programmes, research & innovation) and recently moved from programmes to R&I. Works in Margate office and has been in the organisation for a long time
Research & Innovation Team	Monitoring & Evaluation Assistant	2016	Has worked in the communications department before
Research & Innovation Team	Monitoring & Evaluation Manager	April, 2018	Recently joined the team
Research & Innovation Team	Call Centre Operator	2014	Has been an LM (programmes team) before becoming a callcenter agent (communications team, now R&I team)
Research & Innovation Team	Call Centre Operator	June, 2017	Has worked in 2 different departments since she has been here, M&E and HR
Research & Innovation Team	Call Centre Operator	March, 2018	New to the organisation, works across departments
Research & Innovation Team	Data Entry Clerk (National)	2017	Works across different departments
Communications	Head of Communications	June, 2016	HoD, white male
Communications	Senior Communications Officer	2013	Has been at Ukufunda for a very long time
Communications	Digital Strategist	2016	Works across different departments and with external partners
Communications	Traffic Production & Communications Coordinator	November, 2016	Works across different departments and with external partners
Communications	PR & Events Coordinator	March, 2017	Works across different departments and with external partners
Programmes Story Powered School (SPS)	Programme Manager: SPS	November, 2016	Works in Margate office
Programmes Story Powered School (SPS)	Programme Supervisor: SPS	January, 2017	Works in Margate office
Lesedi Letsatsi	Provincial Support Coordinator (PSC) Lesedi Lesatsi	April, 2018	Heads up a special project, recently joined the team, male
Programmes DGMT	Programmes Manager: DGMT	February, 2013	Has been at Ukufunda for a very long time
Programmes DGMT	National Systems & Administration Coordinator	April, 2016	Male, works a lot with other departments
Programmes DGMT	Training Coordinator	January, 2017	Gauteng based
Programmes DGMT	Provincial Support Coordinator (PSC) Western Cape	June, 2018	Was with Ukufunda previously from 2014-2015 Western Cape based
Training and Content	Head of Training and Content	November, 2018	New to the organisation, works across departments
Support Services	Head of Support Services	September, 2016	HoD -retrenched working out notice period
Support Services	Support Services Manager	February, 2016	Works across departments
Support Services	Logistic & Support Coordinator: DGMT	January, 2017	Works across different departments and with external partners
Support Services	Office Coordinator Head Office	May, 2017	Has worked in different roles always works across departments
Support Services	Human Resource Manager	August, 2017	Works across different departments and with external partners
Finance	Head of Finance	November, 2016	HoD-retrenched working out notice period
Finance	Accounts Clerk	2016	Works across different departments
Finance	Finance Assistant	August, 2017	Works across different departments

3.3 Data Analysis Methods

This section discusses the overarching approach adopted to data analysis in this study. It then expands case study as the research design, the two pilots on survey and interviews and then each of the following data collection methods: secondary data; survey; observation and interviews.

Miles and Huberman (1994) outline eight data analysis techniques that can be applied from early in data collection through to later. They believe that early analysis helps the researcher to cycle back and forth between thinking about existing data and generating strategies for collecting new and better data. They further recommend computer use (for entering data, coding search and retrieval, displays and concept building); data management (which includes coding); time planning and agreements with research participants on expectations, as all being important in the management of qualitative research. A key message from Miles and Huberman (1994) is to avoid the often likely scenario, where a researcher ends up with thousands of pages to analyse post data collection. Both Maxwell (2008) and Eisenhardt (2016) agree on benefits of overlapping data analysis with data collection. Eisenhardt highlights the advantage of not only giving the researcher a head start in analysis but, more importantly, allowing researcher to take advantage of flexible data collection.

As discussed in the data collection section above, the application of four different data collection methods resulted in vast amounts of data collected during the course of the study. Consequently, the process of developing the Research Findings narrative and writing the case study itself, required that data be systematically dissected, rearranged, organized, and interpreted (Staa et al., 2012). The data analysis process consequently involved a continuous process of reduction and reconstruction (Van Staa et al., 2012) applying techniques aligned to those suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994).

As part of the securing consent to conduct research at *Ukufunda*, the researcher committed to presenting key findings to their leadership team. During the process of reduction and reconstruction, the researcher became aware of two distinct perspectives: one which focused on what was important in the findings from the perspective of *Ukufunda*; and one that represented the researcher's perspective and goal of answering the research question. Both these perspectives however were rooted in the findings of the study itself. This was in line with Staa et al.'s (2012) view that in qualitative case studies the interest is intrinsic: The researcher is aiming to understand what is important in a case from within, as opposed to from the perspective of outsiders, such as fellow researchers.

Eisenhardt (2016) put forward that detailed handwritten notes, the use of diagrams and drawings; voice recordings and using tools such as spreadsheets or NVivo for coding be used

for data analysis. Supporting this and in line with the Miles and Huberman tradition of case study analysis (Staa et al., 2012), the researcher applied the technique of reduction of qualitative data in visual representations such as graphic representations tools e.g. using MS PowerPoint and Apple's Keynote, tables and data maps e.g. using NVivo, spreadsheets e.g. using MS Excel. These analysis tools were appropriately matched to the type of data collected.

3.3.1 *Data Analysis: Overarching approach*

Throughout the research process, the researcher applied the principle of observe, reflect and meaning making which can be likened to what Bevan (2014) refers to as the phenomenological reduction approach. The researcher sought to understand context through analysis of secondary data, as well as formal (e.g. meetings) and informal (e.g. while sharing a desk in an open office) observations. Attention was also applied to capturing the researcher's reflections immediately after an interview. This was captured either through a handwritten or electronic voice note. Each interview was transcribed by a third party. The researcher applied the discipline of *listening* to each interview recording while simultaneously *reading* the transcript in order to ensure accuracy of the transcript. This enabled the researcher to edit the transcripts for accuracy, produce memo's to note relationships that were developing between data from the different data collection methods applied and begin the coding process (M. A. Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The figure below illustrates the different memos created within NVivo during the data analysis process.

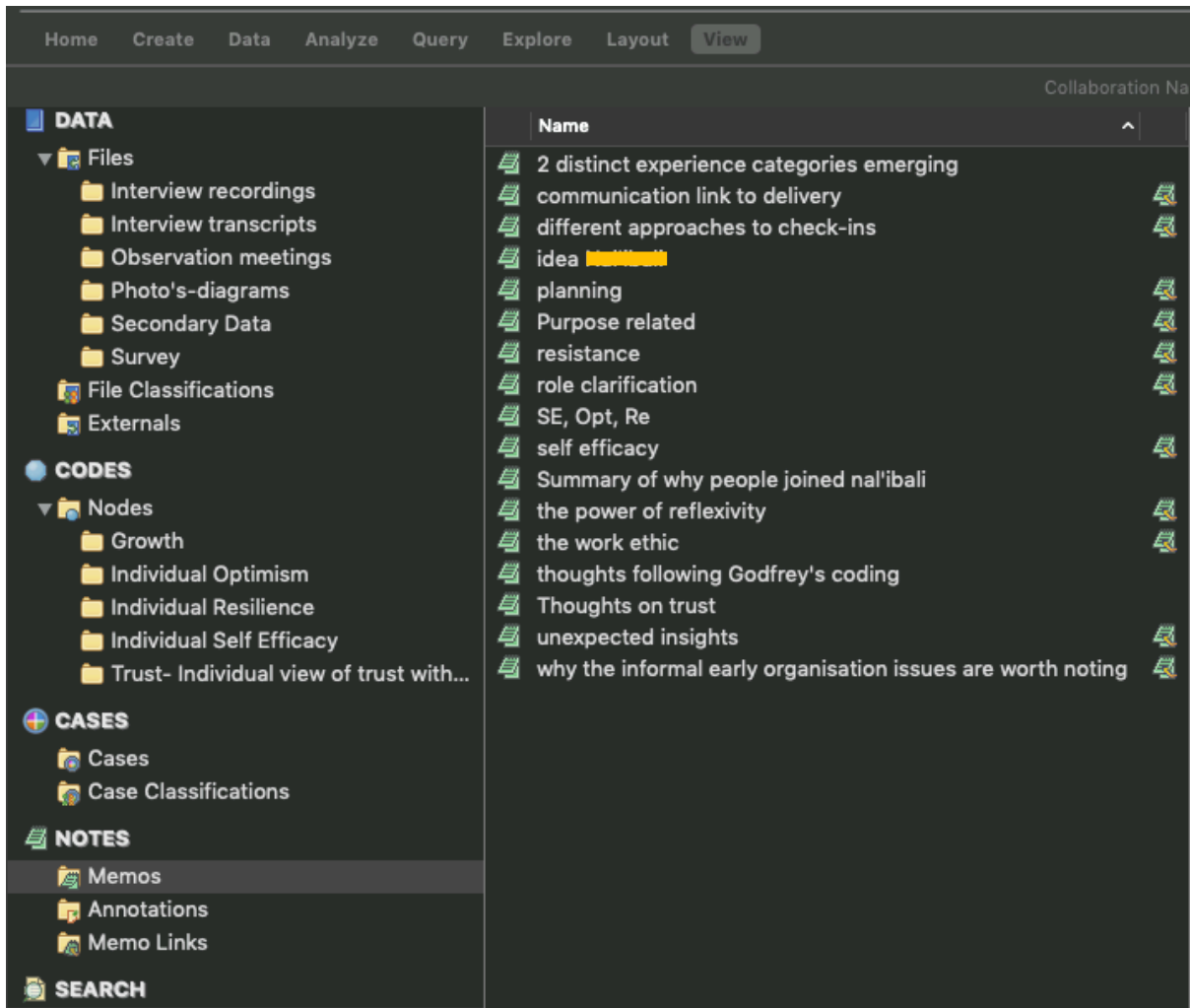


Figure 8: Memo's

Importantly, this approach was in support of the data triangulation process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Accordingly, the researcher frequently paused to reflect on her own handwritten notes from the interview, notes from the observation meetings and in some instances the researcher was prompted to research secondary data to further contextualise what a participant shared during the interview. These additional reflections were captured in a MS word document as a memo and loaded onto NVivo.

NVivo was used for data analysis and the coding of the interviews. Given that the interviews were structured around examining four specific constructs, these constructs were used as primary codes (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). However, during the coding process and in following Bazeley and Jackson's advice, participants reflections that did not relate to *self-efficacy*, *optimism*, *resilience* nor *trust* were coded thematically. This process resulted in the

emergence of what was initially thought to be a fifth construct. This construct was initially coded as *culture*. However, post the second cycle of coding and during the process of developing the storyline, the researcher cycled back and recoded *culture* to *growth*. Importantly, *growth* was recognised to be a *influencer* to individuals experiences during collaboration to more accurately reflect the meaning of what participants shared (Saldaña, 2016). Thus, the first cycle of coding was followed by a review of the primary codes and the underlying/secondary codes as part of the second cycle coding (Saldaña, 2016).

It is worth noting that during the second cycle coding phase, the researcher continually asked, “*What is the story that is unfolding here?*”. As “responses” to this question emerged, the researcher further triangulated this data with her interview notes which contained graphical representations of what was discussed , the interview transcripts, reflection notes and secondary data (Saldaña, 2016) asking “*Is this what was really said?*”. In this way the researcher aimed specifically to ensure the integrity of the data captured was maintained during the coding process (Musson, 2004). This resulted in a process of ordering and reordering the codes in order to better reflect the “unfolding story”(Saldaña, 2016). Figure 9: Illustration: Coding tree structure below, is an illustration of one of the first and second order coding structures that emerged during the second cycle coding using NVivo. For a comprehensive list all the first order and second order codes as well as the number of references that participants made to these, please see below.

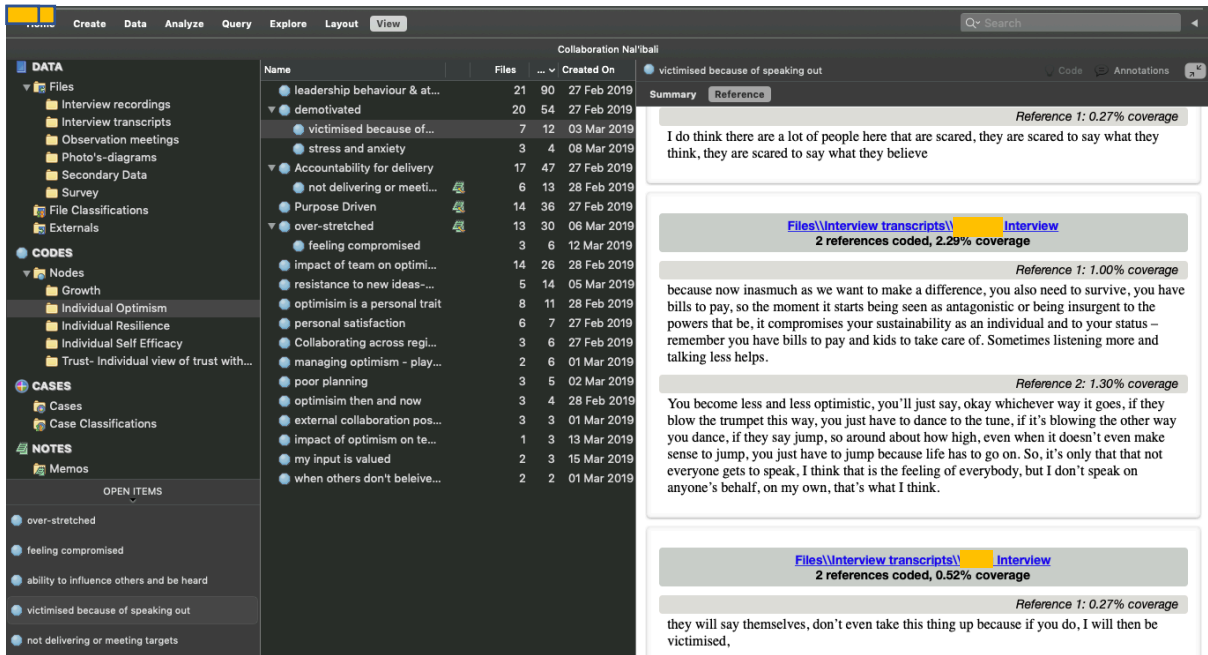


Figure 9: Illustration: Coding tree structure

The Miles and Huberman tradition entails the use of matrixes, charts, and other forms of graphic representation (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Van Staa et al., 2012). While maintaining a focus on applying their key principles of the use of visual aids, the researcher opted instead to use MS PowerPoint and later Apple's Keynote as well as the data maps and query tools within NVivo to visually depict the storyline that was unfolding (Saldaña, 2016). The figure below illustrates the primary data map that was developed. This map served as the basis for developing the storyline in MS PowerPoint. This triggered a further iterative process where the researcher cycled back and forth between the unfolding storyline, the codes and the data, resulting in changes to the data maps (Saldaña, 2016), until the researcher was satisfied that integrity between what was shared, observed and depicted was maintained (Rapley & Rees, 2017).

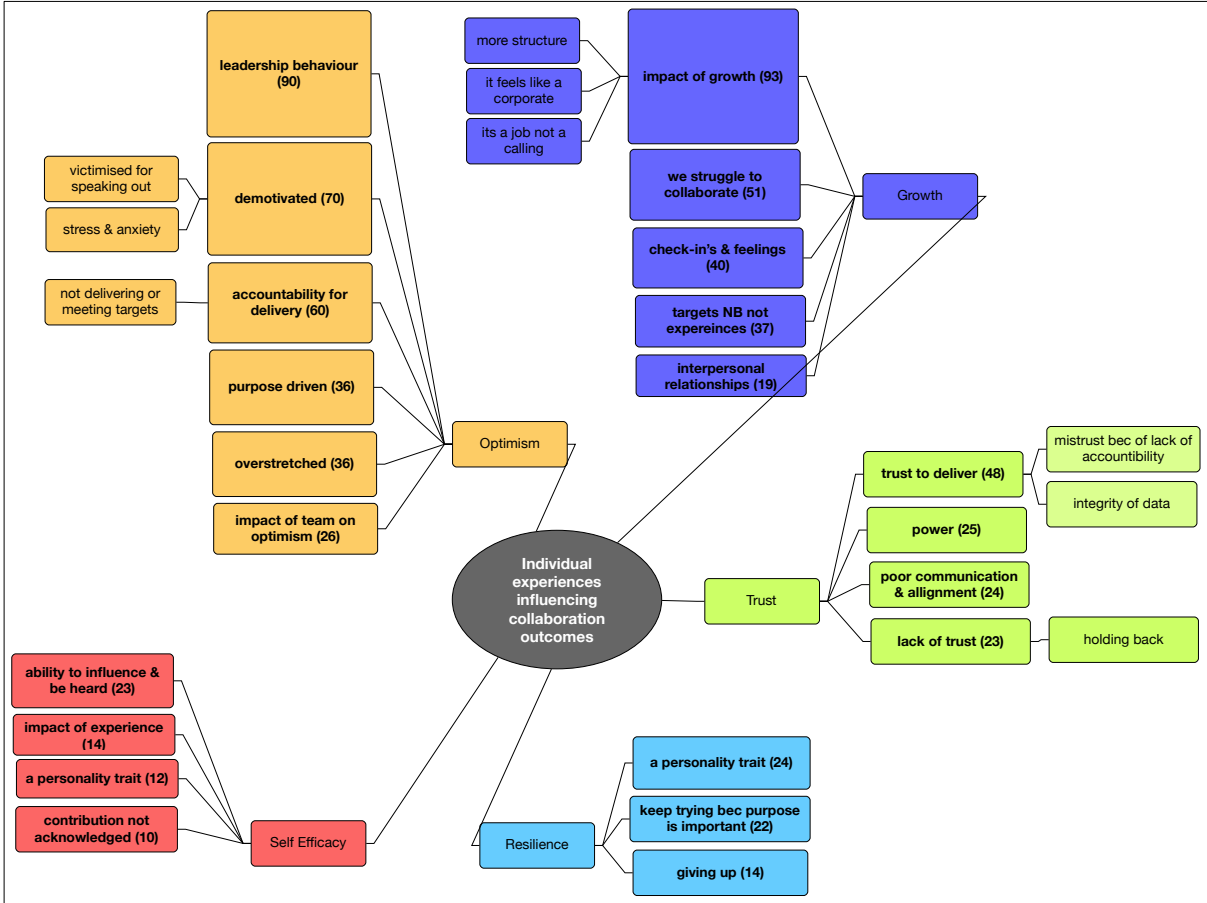


Figure 10: Data Map

Huff (1999) advises on the circular and reciprocal relationship of writing and thinking in order to improve one’s capacity to think through complicated issues. While the researcher related well to this, a third relationship was key for her i.e. “tell” - the act of verbally engaging on what was emerging during the data analysis process. The researcher used the visual tools above, to share and soundboard her research process and progress with her supervisor as well as other third parties, whilst ensuring that confidentiality and anonymity of participants was protected.

These conversations were invaluable in supporting the researcher to continually probe for the distinction between what was merely observed versus *extracting insights* from the data and research experience with the view of finalising the research narrative and findings. This research process is reflected in the diagram below.

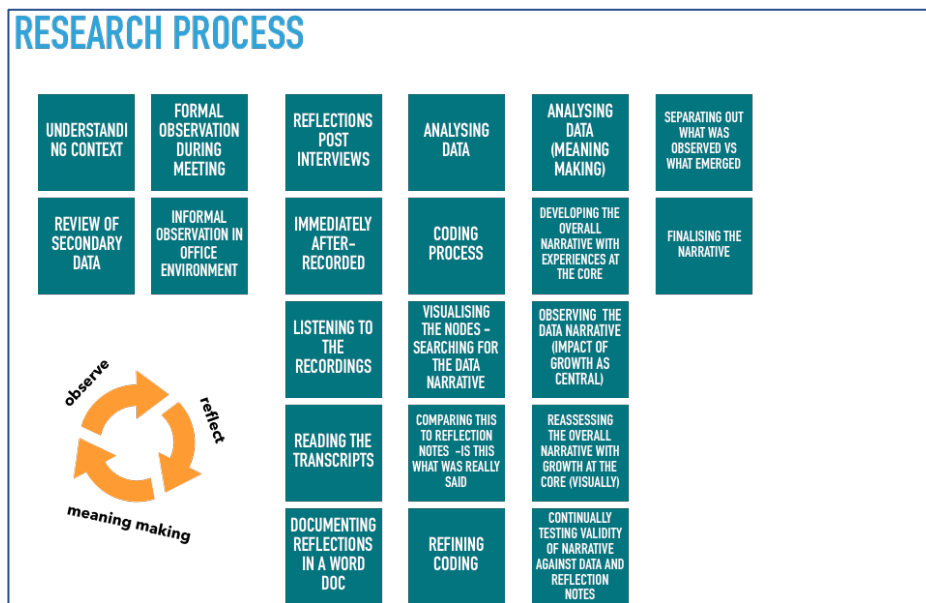


Figure 11: Researcher's analysis process

The sections below discuss the data analysis method applied for each of four data collection methods used. Please note in the interest of document flow, in this section, data analysis on interviews are discussed now, followed by the discussions on secondary data, survey and finally observation.

3.3.2 Data Analysis: Interviews

The researchers goal during the data analysis of the interviews was to systematically thematise the experiences shared by participants (Bevan, 2014). As discussed above, the researcher examined four specific constructs during the interviews: *self-efficacy*, *optimism*, *resilience* and *trust*. It was during the coding process however, that the researcher noted the prevalence of the words “then” or “before” and “now” in the transcripts of the interviews. The researcher noted that participants were drawing a distinction between experiences during collaboration prior to the onset of rapid growth within the organisation and post that growth. As discussed above, in cycling back to her journal of hand-written notes, the researcher noted the depiction of a timeline in almost all interviews. This reflected the participants “Then and Now” narrative and ultimately resulted in the inclusion of the “*Growth*” primary code or construct. This was a crucial and unexpected finding of the study – discussed in detail in the Research Findings chapter.

The analysis of the interview data revealed what participants believed most influenced their experiences levels during collaborations: *self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, trust and growth*.

Table 10: Codes and participant references below, provides a summary of the a priori codes (constructs) and secondary codes (key influencers). It also reflects the numbers of references that were made for each secondary code.

It is important to note that only those secondary codes that attracted the most references by participants are included in the table below. In some instances, this is the top four secondary codes as is the case with code. However, in other instances the number and nature of references were significant enough (Saldaña, 2016), that more secondary codes were included as is the case with *optimism* below. This decision was taken to create a balance between maintaining a sharp focus on answering the research question and ensuring that rich data and insight from participants was not compromised and inadvertently excluded from the findings (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

Table 10: Codes and participant references

Construct (i.e. a priori code)	Key Influencer (i.e. secondary code)	Number of references by participants
<i>Growth</i>	Impact of Growth	93
	We Struggle to Collaborate	51
	Check-Ins and Feelings	40
	Targets NB not Experiences	37
	Interpersonal relationships	19
<i>Optimism</i>	Leadership Behaviour	90
	Demotivated	70
	Accountability for Delivery	60
	Purpose Driven	36
	Overstretched	36
	Impact of Team	26

<i>Trust</i>	Trust to Deliver	48
	Power	25
	Poor Communication	24
	Lack of Trust	23
<i>Self- Efficacy</i>	Ability to be heard and influence	23
	Impact of experience	14
	Personality trait	12
	Contribution not acknowledged	10
<i>Resilience</i>	Personality trait	24
	Keep trying because purpose is important	22
	Giving up	14

3.3.2.1 Use of Visual Tools

Miles and Huberman (1994), put forward that most analysis is done with words. They advise that the words can be organised to permit the researcher to contrast, compare, analyse and bestow patterns upon them. As discussed above, a considerable amount of data was collected from the different data collection methods applied. As a result, the researcher recognised that in order to begin to glean the narrative from the coding process, visual aids such as those available within NVivo would be required.

Accordingly, the researcher produced and examined a range of visual depictions: Sunburst and Treemap diagrams which represented a comparison of the number of references of secondary codes; Word frequency cloud diagrams to highlight words most frequently used when answering a question; Word Treemaps to illuminate high frequency word e.g. “People”. The researcher produced diagrams such as these during the analytical journey and followed the process of “describe, compare, relate” (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). For illustrative purposes only, a sample set of each diagram type that was developed is depicted in *Appendix 4: ColEx framework*

The figure below depicts the ColEx framework. A framework developed by the researcher to support her, i.e. keep track of what was examined and what was not, during the interview process with participants.



Figure 20: ColEx framework

Appendix 5: Sample set of visual aids .

This process, albeit time consuming, enabled the researcher to develop an intimacy with the data, (Miles & Huberman, 1994) which ultimately led to the development of an overall data map discussed in *Data Analysis: Overarching approach* above.

It must be noted that these diagrams played an important role in answering the researcher's question: "*What is the story that is unfolding here?*". However it was ultimately through reflexivity that the meaning and value of each was revealed (Finlay, 2012).

3.3.3 *Data Analysis: Secondary data*

The process followed for the analysis of secondary data is best described as iterative. As discussed above, the first round of analysis was focussed on orientating the researcher to the target organisation. This was important as the researcher had little or no prior exposure to the organisation. However, during the analysis process, a further review of secondary data was conducted in order to contextualise and triangulate data what was emerging from the interviews.

The analysis of secondary data was particularly useful when validating the emergence of *growth* as an influencer to individuals' experiences. As discussed above, growth was initially coded as *culture* during the first cycle of coding. However, post the second cycle of coding, during the process of refining the storyline and writing up the case study itself, the researcher became concerned that the primary code *culture* did not accurately reflect the underlying codes. To obtain clarity, the researcher again reviewed the staff survey conducted in June 2018, which was analysed as part of secondary data. This provided valuable information on job satisfaction; working environment and conditions and organisational culture. She then drew a comparison between the key messages from that survey and what her data map above depicted. The researcher then analysed the organisations strategic plan (which was part of secondary data) and noted that a number of the strategic priorities listed related to *growth*. The secondary data on *growth* pointed to the growth in impact and reach of the organisation. The data collected during the interviews (reviewed as transcripts of the interviews) also highlighted *growth* as key influencer to the organisation. However, in the later instance the researcher noted that the participants were describing the impact of organisational growth i.e. the number of staff, offices and regional footprint. On reviewing to her handwritten interview notes (Saldaña, 2016) and

the researcher noted the recurring depiction of the “Then and Now timeline” as illustrated in *Figure 7: Sample of diagram developed during interview*. It is through this iterative process, matched with a cyclical analysis of the secondary data, that the researcher was able to determine that a primary code called *growth* would more accurately reflect what was emerging from the study. The analysis of secondary data thus provided to be an invaluable tool to the researcher.

3.3.4 Data Analysis: Survey

As noted in the data collection section, the researcher opted to Survey Monkey to develop the online survey. This had the advantage of accessing its built-in analysis tools. A sample of the analysis conducted on one of the Collaboration Survey’s questions is illustrated in the figure below.

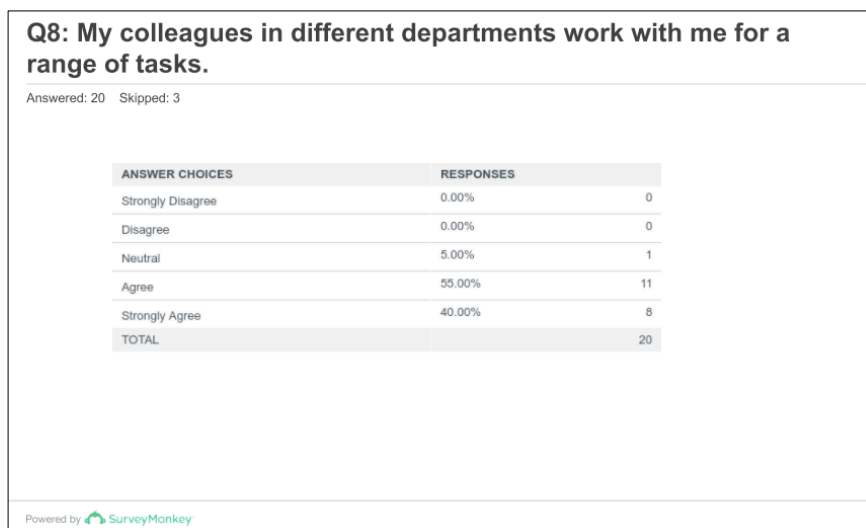


Figure 12: Sample depiction from Survey Monkey

Following an analysis of the responses to the survey, the researcher noted that consistently, participants responded positively to questions related to their collaboration activities with colleagues. This was inconsistent with the concerns raised by the leadership of *Ukufunda*, who believed a significant challenge within the organisation was that “staff had started to operate in silo’s”.

During the one-on-one interviews it was apparent that staff were experiencing significant challenges during collaborations. On reflecting on these discrepancies, the researcher noted that the five-point scale survey, did not facilitate sharing of data related to collaboration *experiences*. Rather it gathered data related to collaboration occurrences. Therefore, from the perspective of remaining sharply focused on the research question, the results of the survey were deemed insufficiently useful to the examination of individuals experiences during collaborations. These results have therefore been excluded from the research findings.

It must be noted however, that the stated purpose of the survey was primarily to create an opportunity for participants to familiarise themselves with the research topic in an economical manner. This purpose was well served, as participants required little to no introduction to the research topic during the observation meetings nor the interviews.

3.3.5 *Data Analysis: Observation*

As discussed in the data collection section above, the researcher's goal was to *describe* what she observed in the setting and provide a social context for how participants engaged with one another (Marvasti, 2014). However, as noted by Wästerfors (2019), it is impossible to "just observe" and further by Marvasti, who posits that observer is always implicated in the act of observing. Consequently, the researcher discovered that her own experience during the observation meetings were important and legitimate sources of data to be analysed (Cassell & Symon, 2004). Accordingly, the researcher's recordings and reflections made after meetings reflected a degree of sense-making, on participants collaborative behaviour toward the group or any other specific individual. In this way the researcher was effectively engaged in what Marvasti, calls Constructionist Analysis i.e. understanding how facts are made meaningful by the people in the field.

Finlay (2012) describes reflexivity as a research practice that involves explicit, self-aware reflection and analysis toward increasing richness and integrity of understanding. She further posits that more than being a tool to improve the quality, rigor, and validity of research, reflexivity can be used to expose relational and ethical dilemmas that permeate the entire research process. In line with this, the researcher became increasingly aware of the dynamics between individuals (Finlay's (2012) relational dilemma's), the atmosphere in the

room (e.g. strained or relaxed), the non-verbal signals of high and low levels of engagement from one observation meeting to another (e.g. making eye contact versus working on a laptop and only responding to question directly asked) (Cassell & Symon, 2004; Marvasti, 2014). The researcher purposefully noted her subjective assessment of the team dynamics at the onset of each meeting, during and at the close of the meeting. This increasing awareness resulted in the researcher recording questions to probe for further clarity during the interviews. In this way the data collection process was inadvertently intertwined with aspects of data analysis.

Following Eisenhardt (2016), the researcher elected to transcribe her handwritten notes into electronic format. This process facilitated a review of the observation meeting notes. This afforded an opportunity for data triangulation against observations from other meetings that the participants were part of, as well as what was beginning to emerge from the review of secondary data, in particular the staff survey as recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994).

It is important to note that the observation meeting recordings were a first line of analysis as the researcher reflected on what she had observed and, following Cassell and Symon (2004), experienced. The researcher followed a process of listening to the recordings, reading the typed-out notes and reflecting on the graphic depictions made during these observation meetings and listening to the recorded questions she made after each meeting. Through this process the researcher was able to identify the nature and frequency of contribution that participants made during collaborative meetings. Prior to conducting an interview, the researcher reviewed her observation notes to orientate herself to the specific participants behaviour during an observed meeting. This enabled her to engage with participants with more specificity and context on their collaboration experiences (Eberle, 2013). The researcher was then able to refer to these observations during the one on one interviews with participants and clarify what she observed. A further advantage was that she was able to identify and explore any discrepancies between how participants described themselves during collaborative engagements and what she observed of them during these engagements. This proved invaluable in examining their *self-efficacy*, *optimism*, *resilience* and *trust* levels and how these influenced their approach to collaboration efforts. In this way the researcher overlapped descriptive and constructionist analysis in order to make sense of the observations in general (Marvasti, 2014).

3.4 Research criteria – addressing rigour, validity, reliability

Concerns and criticisms related to rigour, validity and reliability in particular, within qualitative studies abound (Long & Johnson, 2000; Smith, 2011) despite efforts of researchers such as Cassell and Symon (2004) to raise the profile of qualitative research as a credible alternative to quantitative research. In reviewing the methodological literature on what reliability and validity mean in qualitative studies, it is clear that there is a requisite for rigour to be pursued so that findings may carry conviction and strength. In this regard, “validity has been found to be the quintessential element of qualitative research as it shares the same meaning and terminology as traditional (quantitative) approaches” (Long & Johnson, 2000, p. 35), but having greater significance within qualitative studies.

Following Gioia’s tradition, and to some degree Eisenhardt’s, this study favoured the constructivist approach of favouring depth, meaning extracting the essence of the experience of individuals (Gioia et al., 2013). This choice was made over pursuing “breadth” which is more in line with variance theorizing (Ragin, 1999) where reliability is traditionally regarded as relating to the degree of consistency or dependability of data (Long & Johnson, 2000). Accordingly and in line with Maxwell (2008), “the main concern with this study is not with eliminating variance between researchers in the values and expectations that they bring to the study but with understanding how a particular researcher’s values influence the conduct and conclusions of the study” (p. 243). Therefore, in this study, issues of validity and rigour are paramount and are discussed below.

3.4.1 *Rigour and Validity*

The sections above outline a rigorous process of data collection, analysis and triangulation of secondary data, survey data, observations and interviews (Bevan, 2014; Flick, 2018a; Marvasti, 2014; Maxwell, 2008, 2018; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2013). These processes enabled the researcher to continually engage questions on such as: “How might your results and conclusions be wrong? What are the plausible alternative interpretations and validity threats to these, and how will you deal with these? How can the data that you have, or that you could potentially collect, support or challenge your ideas about what’s going on? Why should we believe your results?” (Maxwell, 2008, p. 216).

It is through following these processes, that the researcher was able to gain confidence on breadth and accuracy of the data set as well as its interpretation as called for by Maxwell (2008) and numerous others. It must be noted however that it is not only through the processes above that rigour and validity is achieved. As outlined by Finlay (2012), this is also supported by applying the process of reflexivity throughout the research processes, for example by recording personal reflections post the observation meetings and interviews, and then using that data during the triangulation processes.

Accordingly, it is argued that the ability to answer the research questions, and also to deal with plausible validity threats was foremost in the researchers mind (Maxwell, 2008). This is further evidenced by the due consideration that was given to framing and wherever necessary reframing of the interview questions and dealing with validity treats such as researcher bias, and the effect of the researcher on the setting or individuals studied. The researcher noted from both Maxwell (2008) and Cassell and Symon (2004) that bias refers to ways in which data collection or analysis are distorted by the researcher's theory, values, or preconceptions. Given that the researcher was motivated to conduct this study based on her experience with collaboration in the business environment for over twenty years, she noted how important it was to understand how she could potentially influence what participants shared. Accordingly, to address these potential biases, the researcher applied open-ended study-specific questions to provide openings through which participants could contribute their insiders' perspectives, with little or no limitations imposed by more closed-ended questions (Chenail, 2011).

It must be noted that the examination of participants experiences resulted in a focus on perspective of the participant. It was thus important to follow an approach that was sufficiently flexible to allow the participant to share their story in a manner that was comfortable for them. As discussed above, the researcher used her self-developed ColEx framework as an interview tool to ensure that all constructs were explored, without deterring from the participants natural flow of dialogue. It is worth noting that the tool, coupled with the decision to record the interviews enabled the research to give the interviewee her full attention (Bevan, 2014; Gioia et al., 2013; Maxwell, 2018). Accordingly and importantly the researcher was able to observe the therapeutic effect of being attentively listened to by many participants (Chenail, 2011). As a result, the researcher navigated through probing questions with great care and attention to the participants emotional state. It is worth noting that a neutralising factor to researcher bias was that the researcher had no knowledge or experience in working with in the sector in which

Ukufunda operated, nor the organisation itself, nor any of the participants as cautioned by Chenail (2011).

Notwithstanding the techniques above, the researcher recognised that in her own pursuit of rigour in her study, she would need to acknowledge that both the participants and researcher ultimately contributed toward answering the research questions. The participants contribution was that of “knowledgeable agents,” who knew what their experiences were during collaborations and could explain their thoughts, intentions, and actions (Gioia et al., 2013). The researcher’s contribution was to determine patterns in the data during the analysis process (for example the coding process) to enable concepts and relationships that might escape the awareness of the participants (Eisenhardt, 1989; Maxwell, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994), such as the impact of *growth* on collaboration experiences, to emerge. Furthermore, the researcher took particular care to not presume nor impose *her* prior experiences or insights on collaboration efforts on the participants in the form of explanation for understanding or explaining participants’ experience (Alvesson, 2003; Finlay, 2012). Rather, the researcher relied on the Collaboration Survey to orientate the participants to the research topic. Thus, a well-considered effort was made during data collection as well as during the analysis phases to ensure that participants’ voices were prominently and accurately reflected in the reporting of the research study (Gioia et al., 2013).

It is worth noting that a significant indicator to the reliability and validity of the study occurred with the target case itself. Following a presentation of key findings of the study to their leadership team, the researcher was asked to engage further with them at their annual strategy breakaway and at another special feedback session with their full complement of staff. This reflected an important “test-point” of the validity of the issues uncovered as well as the reliability of the process followed during the study. It must also be noted that the researcher’s supervisor played a key role in ensuring that the data was collected with rigour and used productively.

Finally, the study conducted, proved to be suitable for yielding ‘thick descriptions’ and therefore has lent itself well to generalization in the sense of transferability (Schreier, 2018).

3.5 Limitations

Cassell and Symon's (2004) comment that quantitative researchers do not call their research "quantitative", they simply call it "research". The latter is often viewed as a subsidiary method and as discussed above, thereby indicating a value judgment against qualitative methods drawing in concerns that relate to validity, reliability and dependability. Having outlined the reasons for selecting qualitative research above (a credible and best fit method to meet my research goal), it is this researchers opinion that the "issue of the politics of research practice" (Cassell & Symon, 2004; P. 2) is in all likelihood the biggest limitation to applying qualitative research method.

3.5.1 Limitations- Survey

Applying the survey as a data collection method presented a number of challenges at the very early stages of the research.

The survey was initially targeted to be open for two weeks. However, after one week, of the forty-nine participants invited to participate, only twelve had responded to the survey. After four weeks, despite reminders via email, only twenty participants responded to the survey. In reflecting on this response rate post data analysis, the researcher's view is that while disappointing, the response is unsurprising given the challenges experienced within *Ukufunda* in the time leading up to the study.

A further limitation relates to the design of the survey. The five-point scale survey did not sufficiently facilitate sharing of data related to the research question i.e. collaboration *experiences*. Rather it gathered data related to collaboration *occurrences*. Accordingly, the results from the survey itself did not provided insight to the research question (Maxwell, 2008) and was therefore been excluded from the research findings.

An additional limitation was the length of the Collaboration Survey. With the benefit of hindsight and experience in working through data analysis, it is researcher's opinion that the forty-four-item survey could have been reduced to ten-fifteen questions and yielded much more valuable insights to individuals collaboration experiences.

3.5.2 *Limitations- Observations*

The researcher's dependency on the research partner to identify appropriate meetings to observe were a key limitation of this method. At the time of conducting the field research, regular meetings were a relatively recent introduction to the *Ukufunda* culture. As a result, so-called standard practices and procedures with regard to logistic management around meetings were not yet in place. Accordingly, there were a number of meetings that were cancelled or rescheduled with the researcher only becoming aware of this when she arrived to observe a particular meeting. This had a negative impact on time and travel for researcher.

A further limitation relates to the timing of the observation's meetings. These meetings were scheduled after the introductory mail from the Head of Monitoring and Evaluation, but before the survey was administered. As a result, participants to the study had yet to be identified and only two individuals within *Ukufunda* fully appreciated what the researchers aims were. Accordingly, a number of meetings that may very well have been useful to attend, were not identified at that early stage.

3.5.3 *Limitations- Interviews*

Notwithstanding the collaborative efforts between the researcher and the *Ukufunda*'s Head of Monitoring and Evaluation team to determine an appropriate sample group, a key limitation of the study was access to field staff within the Programmes team. This team is the largest team within the organisation, employing approximately one hundred and twenty staff members. Their point of view is insufficiently represented in the study above, with only 24% of all participants stemming from that team. These staff members are located predominantly in rural areas. Phone signals were unstable and access to wi-fi for skype interviews limited. Four interviews were abandoned due to these challenges.

In addition, reliability of staff with regard to responding to requests to be interviewed was a challenge. The impact of this is that the important perspective of an individual's experiences

during collaboration, when based remotely from the main centre's (Cape Town, KwaZulu-Natal and Johannesburg), were not adequately represented in the study.

Interestingly, at the onset of the field research, the researcher anticipated that participants would have concerns related to their reputation if they participated in the study i.e. how they could be perceived by managers and their peer group following their participation in the research. The researcher considered this to be a potentially limiting factor. Furthermore, the researcher anticipated that the organisation itself is was unlikely to be completely transparent with respect to any concerns regarding their effectiveness as an organisation. Neither was the experience of the researcher. Rather, the leadership team at *Ukufunda* expressed a keen interest in the outcomes of the study (discussed in the Research Findings chapter). To mitigate their risk, the researcher was required to sign a non-disclosure agreement in addition to the Ethics clearance from UCT. Surprisingly, participants shared their experiences and feelings openly during their interviews. Consequently, a number of interviews were characterised by high emotional content and expression as participants navigated through their experiences during collaboration efforts. Chenail's (2011) view that the effect of being attentively listened to may be therapeutic, may account for this.

It must however be acknowledged that conversations that relate to experiences, and emotions, hold the risk of creating vulnerability for the participants (Bevan, 2014). The researcher was aware of this risk and therefore applied deep attentiveness, empathetic understanding and suspending of bracketing preconceptions (Matthew B. Miles, Michael Huberman (1994)). The researcher was nonetheless affected by the degree to which participants shared private feelings. After a number of interviews, the researcher found herself, feeling drained and experiencing sadness. Cassell and Symon (2004) highlight the importance of self-care, during qualitative research. Accordingly, the researcher sustained a daily yoga practice, engaged with her support structure including her supervisor to soundboard progress, experiences and concerns.

3.5.4 Limitations- Secondary Data

No significant limitations were experienced in applying this method. However, it is worth noting while it was useful to review secondary data to establish background and context of the

target case, the real value of secondary data occurred during the data analysis phases where the researcher triangulated data collected in the field with secondary data.

3.5.5 *Limitations- Single Case*

The most significant limitation of conducting the single case study was that the researcher was unable to further test or replicate her key findings by conducting studies with a second, third or even more organisations. Thus, opening her study to criticism that the emergence of *growth* as most influential to individuals' experiences during collaborations as aberrant. On the question of the extent of generalisation and transferability of the findings, it must be noted comparison of findings with other social organisations was beyond the scope of this study and is a possibility for future study.

3.6 Ethics

Ethical clearance to conduct the study was obtained from UCT prior to the onset of field work. Accordingly, confidentiality and anonymity of the organisation and participants names as well as any other party that was named during the interviews were protected. This was communicated to participants, via a consent form which was included in the email invitation to participate in the Collaboration Survey. These forms were signed by the participants and either emailed back to the researcher or provided in hard copy format. The researcher retained all consent forms. Where a participant did not sign a consent form, a copy was provided, and completed prior to the interview. Miles and Huberman (1994), advise that poor consent usually results in poor data. Accordingly, at the beginning of each interview, the researcher verbally clarified that confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed. The researcher further advised each participants of her obligation to present key findings of the study to the leadership team of Ukufunda. She clarified that no name or association of a name with a comment/quotation or team, would be shared during this presentation. Accordingly, honesty and trust (Miles & Huberman, 1994) was maintained and all quotes shared with the leadership team did not included any reference to the name of a participant or their team.

Further, as discussed above, *Ukufunda* required that the researcher sign a non-disclosure agreement prior to any interaction with their organisation.

Miles and Huberman (1994), highlight research integrity and quality as a key ethical consideration in a qualitative study. Their concern relates to the study being conducted carefully, thoughtfully and correctly. The researcher was continually aware that her research findings, method and approach's validity would be tested directly with the research partner when she met her obligation to present her findings to their leadership team. While debate did ensue during both presentations', the nature of the debate did not relate to questions of reliability and validity, rather they centred on how the leadership team wished to engage on the findings. Finally, the feedback shared by the Head of Monitoring and Evaluation (please refer to Appendix 3), confirms that the research partner believed the study to be reliable, valid and useful.

4. Research Findings

As discussed in the Methodology section above, this study applied four different data collection methods: secondary data; survey; observation meetings; one-on-one interviews.

4.1 Context: Research Partner

The research partner organisation, *Ukufunda*, is a national reading-for-enjoyment campaign to spark children's potential through storytelling and reading. It was launched in 2012 by founding partners, PRAESA (the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa) and the DG Murray Trust. According to *Ukufunda*, their campaign is built around the logic that a well-established culture of reading can be a real game-changer for education in South Africa. They believe that children who regularly read and hear engaging stories, in languages they understand, are well equipped and motivated to learn to read and write.

4.1.1 *Ukufunda's Strategy*

Ukufunda's strategy and approach are to partner with parents, caregivers and community-based organisations who are already reading and telling stories to their children. The organisation also works at building a larger community of people across South Africa who are interested in and passionate about storytelling, reading and writing with children. *Ukufunda* believe their role is to support and develop these communities to find more ways to root reading and writing habits in children's daily lives. The goal: To build a nation of powerful readers and storytellers.

4.1.2 *Scaling up*

Ukufunda identified the need for a largescale, national approach to attain their mission at scale and intensity. Their intention is to be significant enough to tip the scales against what they have identified as the looming crisis posed by the nation's low literacy levels.

During the first quarter of 2017, the organisation received a significant allocation of funding from USAID (United States Agency for International Development). From a campaign perspective, the grant was game-changing in that it would enable *Ukufunda* to scale and deepen its operations at primary schools in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal over a three-year period. The funding was directed to a project that ambitiously targeted seven hundred and twenty primary schools in two provinces and aimed to reach approximately one hundred and forty thousand children directly, sixty-four thousand children indirectly, and fourteen thousand, six hundred and forty adults!

4.1.3 Organisation Change

In line with attaining this ambitious target, structural changes within the organisation were required. Accordingly, during this period the organisation grew from a complement of thirty-five full-time employed staff in 2016 - who were all located in one office, to one hundred and seventy full-time employed staff in 2018 - who are located across three provinces (Western Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal).

Furthermore, significant effort was made to professionalise the organisation during this period through the introduction of new systems and processes. These related to the functions of Human Resources, Logistics, Procurement, Finance and Marketing. No longer were staff allowed to simply verbally advise a line manager of the intention to take leave or travel to another city. Now, forms needed to be completed and authorised prior to any leave or travel. Furthermore, in order to meet the Funders stipulated requirements, a Monitoring and Evaluation function was introduced. No longer could staff verbally provide feedback on activities with their target communities. Now, staff based in rural areas or informal settlements were required to timeously capture and upload data in line with new formal business processes.

In many ways a consequence of growth was that *Ukufunda* had effectively developed two distinct organisation identities: a) an external facing one focussed on attaining scale and implementing the campaign promise i.e. *outward looking* and b) an internal facing one focussed enabling the growth required by professionalising the organisation i.e. *inward looking*.

The staff predominantly engaged in the *outward looking* focus and activity was their Programmes team (incl. Content and Curriculum), the Call Centre (who are part of the Monitoring and Evaluation team), some members of the Communication and Marketing team⁶ and members of the leadership team e.g. Managing Director (MD), Head of Monitoring and Evaluation, Head of Programmes, Head of Communication and Marketing. The staff predominantly engaged in the *inward-looking* focus and activity was their Support Services team (including Human Resources and Logistics coordination), the Finance team, some members of the Communication and Marketing team⁷ and the Monitoring and Evaluation team. The team structure and the breakdown of their inward compared with outward focus is illustrated in Figure 13 below.

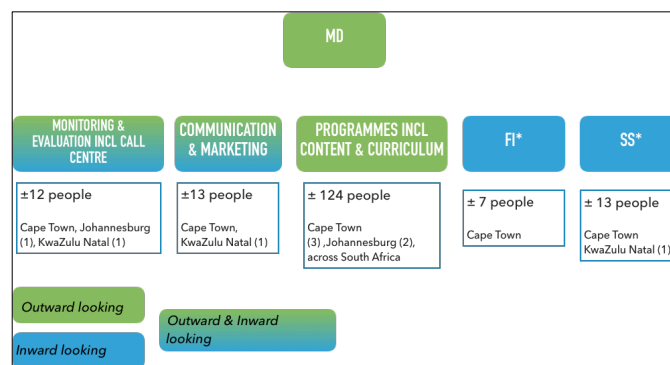


Figure 13: Ukufunda team structure

4.1.4 Collaboration identified as an internal challenge

By the first quarter of 2018, the organisation had started to experience increased levels of staff turn-over with many key individuals who were part of the founding team resigning. Furthermore, concerns related to job satisfaction had begun to surface. As part of their response to concerns raised, a staff survey was conducted by an independent third party in June 2018 to probe: Job satisfaction; Working environment and conditions; Organisational culture; Medical Aid; Year-end function.

⁶ This was task dependent.

⁷ This was task dependent.

Following the outcome of the staff survey, their conversations with staff and the key priorities for the organisation going forward, the *Ukufunda* leadership team were able to pin-point key challenge for the organisation. They determined that a consequence of the exponential growth experienced during the period 2017-2018, was that different departments and teams had started to work in silos⁸. Consequently, “*improving how we work across silo’s*” (in other words collaborate) was identified as a key focus area. In addition, the leadership team identified that due to their significant outward focus in growing the campaign, a gap had emerged with respect to an inward focus toward the organisation itself. Accordingly, in consultation with their Board, a new role General Manager Operations (GM), was created. The mandate of the GM was described as “looking inwardly at the organisation and improving how staff work together”. The GM had no staff directly reporting to her and reported directly to the MD. The role of MD continued to have an outward focus predominantly in positioning *Ukufunda* as the reading campaign of South Africa. Managing key stakeholder relationships to achieve this goal was a key priority. Another key focus was managing Funders expectations and requirements.

4.1.5 *Ukufunda as a research partner*

Ukufunda’s strategy and implementation approach is partner-based. They provide a platform to bring stakeholders together to strengthen existing and collective efforts to change children's lived experiences of literacy. They believe that by “rolling up our sleeves together”, real progress can be made to root reading-for-enjoyment practices into the daily lives of children, their caregivers and communities.

⁸ Working in silos: “A mind-set present in some companies when certain departments or sectors do not wish to share information with others in the same company. This type of mentality will reduce the efficiency of the overall operation, reduce morale, and may contribute to the demise of a productive company culture. <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/silo-mentality.html>”

Consequently, achieving efficacious collaboration with stakeholders is at bedrock of *Ukufunda*'s success.

The organisation has a broad range of stakeholder groups. Their external stakeholders include NGO's and literacy organisations, corporate partners, media and materials partners, programme partners (these include government departments and foundations), initiating and funding partners. Internal stakeholders include:

- a) full-time, office-based staff in three provinces: Western Cape, Gauteng and KwaZulu Natal.
- b) full-time staff who work with the campaign's implementation partners located in rural areas across South Africa. These staff members work at partner sites and from their homes.

As highlighted in the discussion above, collaboration among internal stakeholders was pin pointed as a key challenge for the organisation in third quarter of 2018. Furthermore, at the time of engaging *Ukufunda* as a potential research partner, the newly appointed GM, was interested in obtaining fresh insights to support her efforts to enhance collaboration across the organisation. Fortuitously, this created a fertile environment for a study on examining how individual experiences, during team-level collaborations, influence the outcome of collaborations to commence in November 2018.

4.2 Framing collaboration experiences

A key priority for the researcher was to provide clarity and focus to the examination of and discussions on "individuals experiences". Furthermore, this had to be done in the context of team level collaborations. To support this goal and as discussed in depth in the Literature Review chapter, the researcher opted to apply four constructs to the word "experiences": *self-efficacy*; *optimism* (at an individual level); *resilience* (at an individual level) and *trust* (at team level, including collaboration with partners, peer group, leaders). These effectively defined "individual's experiences" for the purpose of the research.

4.2.1 Refining the original framing

As discussed earlier, the study was phenomenological in nature. It was thus not unexpected that in course of the study, a fifth construct emerged. This construct was coded as *growth*. While the definition applied to the initial four constructs were informed by the literature review process, in the case of *growth*, it was the participants themselves who from the perspective of their individual experiences, elucidated what constitutes *growth* at *Ukufunda*. Participants highlighted “Impact of Growth; We struggle to collaborate; Check-In’s and Feelings; Targets important not experiences and Interpersonal relationships”, as key influencers to their collaboration experiences. Furthermore, participants identified “Impact of Growth” to be *the* most significant contributor to their experiences during collaboration, with ninety-three references made to this node alone as illustrated in the table below.

Table 11: Growth

Construct	Key influences identified by participants	# of ref’s by participants
<i>Growth</i>	Impact of Growth	93
	We Struggle to Collaborate	51
	Check-Ins and Feelings	40
	Targets NB not Experiences	37
	Interpersonal relationships	19

Similarly, participants, through the lens of their individual experiences, provided further depth to the what constitutes *self-efficacy*, *optimism*, *resilience* and *trust* at *Ukufunda*. Participants highlighted Ability to be heard and influence; Impact of experience; Personality trait; Contribution not acknowledged as key influencers to *self-efficacy*. Leadership Behaviour; Demotivated; Accountability for Delivery; Purpose Driven; Overstretched; Impact of Team were highlighted as key influencers to *optimism*. Personality trait; Resilience and Purpose; Giving up were highlighted as key influencers to *resilience*. With Trust to Deliver; Power; Poor Communication; Lack of Trust as the key influencers to *trust*.

These key influences on collaboration experiences are depicted in the diagram below. The black solid lines indicate a parent child coding relationship. It must be noted however, that throughout the study an interconnectedness between key influencers was noted. This is expected because individuals did not experience constructs in isolation of each other. For example, the red dotted lines in the figure below indicates the relationship between “check-in’s and feelings” as discussed by participants in the context of *growth*, with key influences on *optimism*. It is also pertinent to note that while the four experience constructs - *self-efficacy*, *optimism*, *resilience* and *trust* all relate to individual psychological constructs, *trust* is also a team-based construct and growth as discussed in this study, is at the organisational level. These and other such relationships are examined in the sections below as the inter-connectedness between the key influencers are noted and discussed.

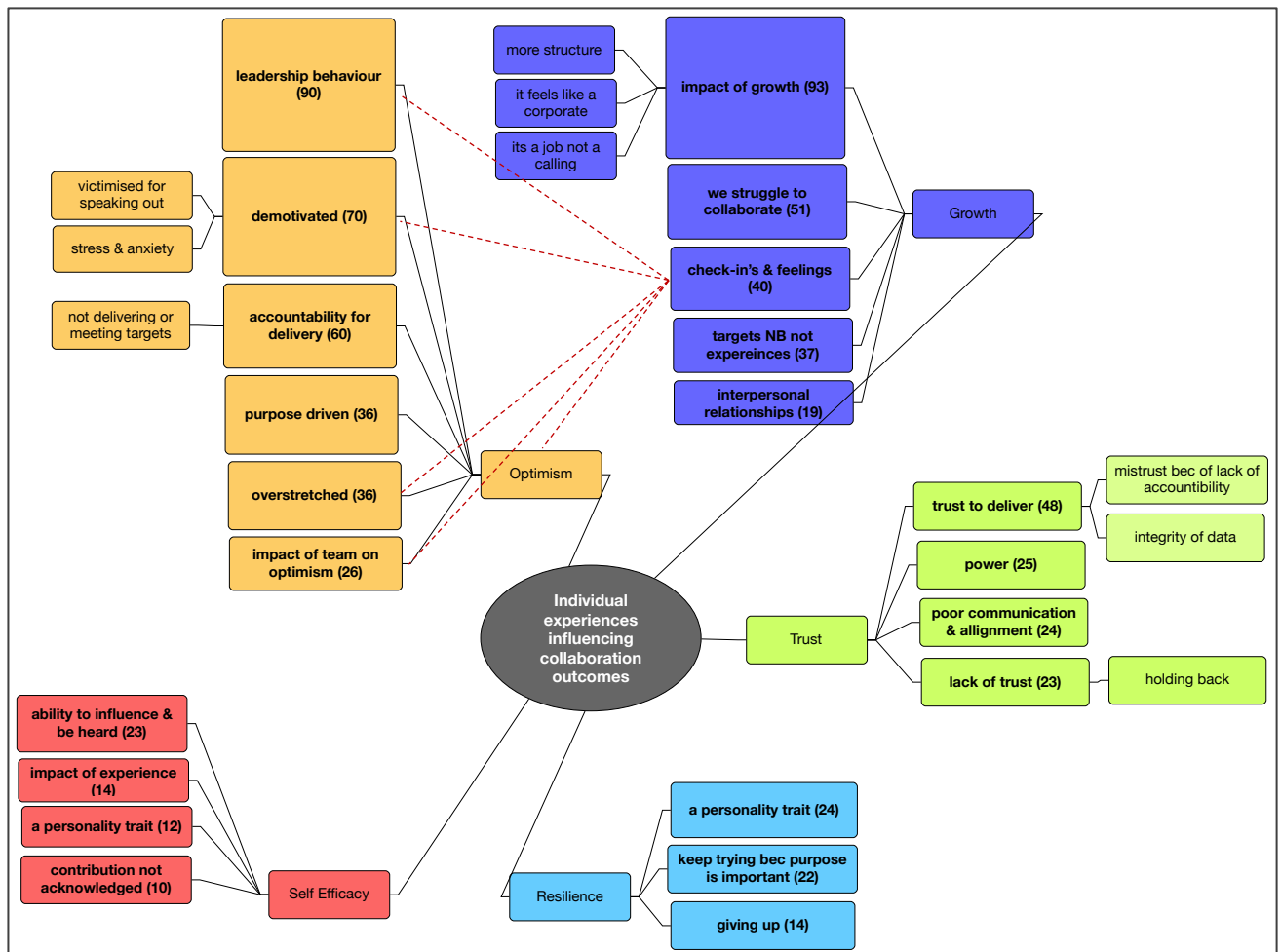


Figure 14: Key influencers to collaboration experiences

4.3 Growth

4.3.1 *Impact of Growth: Then and Now narrative*

Throughout the thirty-three interviews conducted, participants consistently applied a then and now narrative as they discussed their experiences during collaboration. This was so, irrespective of when the participants began working at *Ukufunda*, and irrespective of whether they functioned at a leadership or staff level. “Then” was used to refer to the pre-rapid-growth (PrRG) period i.e. prior to 2017. “Now” was used to describe the post-rapid-growth (PoRG) period. It became apparent that *growth* was a mainspring in the life of the organisation. The discussion below will illustrate how growth influenced the footprint of the *Ukufunda* campaign, the size of the organisation, the nature of the skill-set needed within the organisation, leadership behaviour; collaboration experiences of staff from both the “then” and “now” organisation and the basis upon which trust is developed.

During her interview, a participant reflected on what was possible in the “then” smaller organisation compared to the “now” bigger organisation, she highlighted:

“We stopped everything. We stopped everything for a week, and we all sat with a Diversity Specialist and we... took the time. We could talk about all of these different issues that we were experiencing. Now the idea of even stopping for half-a-day becomes really difficult to even think of.” (KK, Managing Director, joined 2015).

This statement accurately reflects the sentiment of staff who joined *Ukufunda* PrRG. It also illuminates the gap that has emerged within the organisation- stopping, talking and reflecting are no longer possible. The impact of this is most apparent in the discussion on *optimism* below where the practice of “Check-In’s” is discussed across three teams.

When describing what it felt like to be part of the organisation during the transition from “then” to “now”, one participant shared:

“some people were leaving, lots of people were coming in and then there was already that bit of, okay what is this now? What are our values? What are we turning into? Can we even define what we stand for, even our culture manifesto?”

(CR, Communication Coordinator, 2016).

These experiences amplify the effect of *growth* from both a leadership and staff perspective. What leaders were able or prepared to do “then”, was different to what occurs in the “now” organisation. For example, the current reality at *Ukufunda* is that it is only possible for teams, in isolation of each other, to engage on culture related matters. This “departmental” approach is common practice in large organisations, and for staff joining PoRG. However, for staff who joined the smaller organisation PrRG, this mode of engaging has resulted in many participants feeling disconnected from the organisation. These participants’ organisational memory reflects a small family type organisation, where they knew everyone who worked in the organisation, they trusted each other implicitly, where leaders regularly checked-in with staff on a face to face basis. This is expanded on further in the discussion on *optimism* below. It is however important to note that while these participants reported feeling aligned to the campaign growth goals and they did not feel aligned to the emerging culture of the organisation. In many ways they have struggled to find a home for their identity within the new organisation.

Simultaneously, those participants who joined the organisation post-rapid growth, reported feeling frustrated with the “then” narrative within the organisation. They describe their collaboration efforts as often hampered by resistance to or slow adoption to the changes needed for the larger “now” organisation to be effective. One participant shared:

“You would feel that when you are trying to introduce something new or hold people to respect the systems, but then you would feel that people would have that sense of who are you to change or change such behaviour that we’re used to or perhaps why now or why you?” (OA, Data Entry Clerk, 2018)

Another participant highlighted:

“It becomes about which group you are part of. The for-change or not-for-change group...it all depends on when you came into the organisation.” (MO, Finance Assistant, 2017).

These participants shared that in response to the resistance they experienced, they either opted to take on the collaboration task themselves, thereby increasing their workload significantly. Alternatively, they simply opted to disengage rather than endure conflict during collaboration efforts.

The findings point to a tension that has developed within the organisation: The efforts to create more structure in line with the objective to professionalise the organisation, is largely driven by staff who joined *Ukufunda* as the organisation was preparing for rapid growth. These individuals have skillsets and experience in implementing systems, processes and organisational structured needed to support a growing organisation- i.e. they predominantly inward looking. Their efforts are largely met by resistance, by staff who predominantly have an outward focus and who operate in the field implementing the campaign promise. These participants experience what can best be described as a sense of loss and frustration:

“It’s a change that is not soothing in a way – the organisation is becoming more corporate than an organisation and then when I sit on my own, I’m like okay – it feels like, you know it feels like a corporate more than the actual NGO. And then I ask myself, but do I still belong here...” (TE, Programmes and Administration Coordinator, 2016).

It is also worth noting that in examining the roles of the participants who joined PrRG compared with PoRG, 57.14% of participants staff responsible for implementing new organisational rules (e.g. formalising systems and processes) are from the PoRG group. Meaning 57.14% are actively driving the “now” narrative. Interestingly, 41.17% of staff who joined PrRG are part of the *outward looking* teams. Meaning 41.17% of staff that are actively driving the “then” narrative is from the PrRG group.

This analysis highlights how the narrative pendulum is swinging from “then” to “now”. It may further account for how the organisational narrative has been extended into an “us” and “them” culture narrative.

4.3.2 *Growth: Check- In’s and Feelings*

During one-on-one interviews, it became apparent that while participants understood and accepted the framing of collaboration experiences as discussed above, they likened the word “experiences” to feelings. Participants discussed “feelings” and the degree to which these were engaged with, i.e. feelings are considered important and are talked about, as part of the *growth*

Then and Now narrative. Consequently, is it unsurprising that participants identified “Check-In’s” and Feelings” as an aspect of the *Ukufunda* culture that was affected as the organisation transitioned from PrRG to PoRG. One participant shared:

“We went from sitting in the same office and just sharing information, problem solving and talking about our feelings even, to having meetings to do these things. I understand why, but the meetings were all about what we needed to do, not how we were doing... not a personal check-in... So, you definitely share different things and you think carefully about what you do share” (FC, Head of Support Services, 2016)

As part of their response to the rapid growth and meeting the demands associated with it e.g. being more efficient with time management, scheduled meetings replaced the adhoc style of engagement that participants had become accustomed to. Effectively, in the PoRG environment, the platform for expressing feelings were now the same platforms at which staff and leaders engaged on targets and goals. However, the emphasis and focus of these platforms was on targets. One participant shared:

“I don’t even think they notice sometimes (how we are feeling), because the eye is always more on the outcome – how it got there? not how are we doing?”

(CM, Traffic Production & Communications Coordinator, 2016)

Another participant shared:

“It becomes more of a just another business to be honest, just us collecting information, it’s not necessarily focussed to, I don’t know, just working with people’s experiences on a personal level, how do you feel?” (CE, Accounts Clerk, 2016)

The review of the data related to “Check- In’s and Feelings” highlighted that a consequence of not “working with people’s experiences” is that their feelings don’t get “checked-in” - they remain unattended with the individual and consequently influence their collaboration experiences. This has resulted in some participants holding back during collaborations and others simply not sharing insights and experiences (as was evident in during the observation of meetings), because they simply don’t believe that sharing these will result in any change to how the collaboration is approached. One participant shared:

“People don't talk about their feelings in formal spaces because it doesn't drive any change within the organisation.” (UN, Digital Strategist, 2016.)

During their interview, three of the six leaders interviewed highlighted a “check-in” practice as a mechanism to help identify barriers to meeting targets and working together. They believed that by creating a platform for staff to share feelings, they created an environment in which the team were able to better support one another to achieve goals and targets. One of these leaders shared:

“In this department we are open, you are free to keep your own beliefs, but we are so open we discuss each and every situation and we accept people. ... The more we know about who you are, what you are, how you are fleeing, the better we can work together to achieve our goals. We respect that, just like we respect our work - that is what we do” (DD, Head of Finance, 2016)

It is important to highlight that the impact of the “check-in” practice on participants *optimism* levels cannot be overlooked. Therefore, the check-in practice is further examined section 4.5 below in the context of *optimism*.

4.4 Self-Efficacy

4.4.1 Definition used

At the onset of the study, the researcher framed *self-efficacy* as the extent to which individuals’ “feel they can execute courses of action required to deal with specific situations” (F. Luthans, 2002; West et al., 2009). Simply put this construct examined the degree to which participants felt “I can do this”. During the interview’s participants were prompted to describe their *self-efficacy* levels and were then asked what influenced this.

4.4.2 Self-Efficacy and Collaboration Experiences

Self-efficacy was the first construct explored during the interviews. Interestingly, this had the unintended benefit of creating an opportunity for participants to share more about themselves at the early stages of the interview process. As noted in the Research Methodology section, participants visibly gained more confidence in engaging with the interview questions once they realised a) that the subject matter was themselves and b) it was their individual experiences that was object of the research. Participants identified Ability to be heard and influence; Impact of experience; Personality trait; Contribution not acknowledged, as the key influencers to their collaboration experiences. This is illustrated in the table below.

Table 12: Self-Efficacy

Construct	Key influencer’s identified by participants	# of ref’s by participants
Self- Efficacy	Ability to be heard and influence	23
	Impact of experience	14
	Personality trait	12
	Contribution not acknowledged	10

Surprisingly, *self-efficacy*, compared to *optimism* and *growth* was found to have a marginal impact on participants experiences during collaborations. Participants highlighted “Ability to influence and be heard” to be most influential to their *self-efficacy* levels during collaborations.

It is worth noting that as with *optimism* above, *participants* inextricably linked, but to varying degrees, Ability to be heard and influence; Impact of experience; Contribution not acknowledged, with attitudes and behaviour of leadership.

Interestingly, participants linked their “Ability to influence and be heard” as contributing positively to their overall levels of *self-efficacy* as well as *optimism* within the organisation. Meaning, where they believed they were able to voice their opinions, these participants were more confident that they were able to influence approach, processes, and even decisions. Furthermore, these participants reported positive experiences with their leaders. They also described themselves as having high levels of ownership for delivery i.e. their self-reported levels of “accountable for delivery” were high.

One third of the participants who highlighted “ability to influence and be heard” as most influential to their *self-efficacy* presented themselves confidently as highlighted by this participant:

“I ...feel like I have a lot of influence over ultimate outcomes partly as a function of being in a senior role, partly as a function of having been with the organisation for quite a long time and proven my value”. (LI, Head of Monitoring and Evaluation, 2017)

However, it is important to recognise that other participants highlighted being able to voice opinions did not necessarily equate to an “ability to influence”. In fact, for these participants their inability to influence resulted in mounting stress levels. On discussing her frustration with having identified and communicated an issue, one participant highlighted:

“Some of the things that we deal with and like over and over again like a stuck record. You think does no-one want to believe me? So that definitely had an impact and I became quite anxious at work as well.” (FC, Head of Support Services, 2016)

These participants reported experiencing a loss of confidence (i.e. *self-efficacy*) as well as feeling demotivated with reduced levels of *optimism*. They were notably withdrawn during the observation meetings. During these meetings the participants only responded to questions asked and rarely volunteered input. They demonstrated themselves as disengaged by working on their laptops while being talked to, sitting with arms folded and looking down during meetings, avoiding eye contact. These individuals also presented themselves as feeling disempowered as highlighted by one participant who on reflecting on her relationship with her collaboration partners shared:

“Recently I asked myself if I am losing face with the people who talk to me and it almost feels like, it almost feels like ja I suppose I’m unreliable on their side, because I’m really sitting with a lot of insight and yet I can’t influence and do something about it.... Now I’ll tell them, why do you tell me this, it’s useless, what do you want me to do with this. So what’s my worth to them?” (QM, Training Coordinator, 2016)

Concerningly, members of the leadership team appear to be aware of the impact of “ability to be heard and influence” on.

“I don’t think people feel as empowered as how senior management would like them to be”. (CS, Head of Communications & Marketing, 2016).

A noteworthy observation is that these participants described themselves as previously enjoying high levels. They believed they possessed the necessary experience, skills and passion in order to make a positive contribution to the mission of “*Ukufunda*”. Yet, under the circumstances described above, they opted to do the bare minimum as illuminated by a participant who shared:

“Over time then you get to a point where like, actually in this collaboration my voice is not heard, so whether I believe I can or not it doesn’t make a difference, therefore I’ll take a back seat”. (QU, PR & Events coordinator, 2017).

As discussed in the section on *growth – Then and Now*, the sentiment of “taking a back seat” was shared by other participants who believed it the preferred course of action, rather than experience conflict during collaborations.

It may be argued, that when participants discussed how impacted their collaboration experiences, they were also discussing their *resilience* levels. Participants drew a clear distinction between what was core to them as individuals (e.g. “*I am a sure person*”) and the impact of the environment/organisation on them. From their perspective, the environment could alter how positive or hopeful they felt, but it ultimately could not impact their belief in themselves i.e. their *self-efficacy*.

A key finding therefore, was that while *self-efficacy* as a construct did influence how individuals approached collaborations, it did not in itself, influence the collaboration experience nor outcome. Instead external factors to the individual, such as the degree to which they were able to influence and be heard, influenced their collaboration experience. This in turn influenced their contribution to collaborations and therefore the collaboration outcome for *Ukufunda*.

The analysis of the data related to *self-efficacy* points to a collaboration insight: Where individuals believe their voice is heard and they are able to influence either at a planning,

implementation or decision-making level, their *optimism* levels tended to be higher. However, where participants felt their “voice was not heard”, their *optimism* levels were negatively impacted.

Contrary to expectations, the finding is that rather than *self-efficacy* being negatively affected, *optimism* was negatively impacted which in turn negatively impacted collaboration outcomes. Importantly, from the perspective of the participants within this study, while their levels of *self-efficacy* could be compromised based on their experiences during collaborations, it would ultimately remain unaltered.

4.5 Optimism

The discussion on *growth* above, highlights how the culture within *Ukufunda* changed during, and post the transition from PrRG to PoRG. In this section, the impact of *optimism* on individuals’ experiences during collaboration, is unpacked.

4.5.1 Definition used

At the onset of the study, the researcher identified four constructs⁹ to frame individuals’ experiences during collaborations. *Optimism* was defined as the belief that individuals’ have that they “can influence/control outcomes and their success” (Luthans, 2002; West et al., 2009). Simply put this construct examined the degree to which participants felt “It will work out my way”. During the interviews, participants were prompted to describe their *optimism* levels and were asked what influenced this in the context of collaborations.

4.5.2 Optimism and Collaboration Experiences

⁹ *Self-Efficacy, Optimism, Resilience and Trust*

Interestingly, *optimism* emerged as the most coded constructs of the four initially explored. This is visually illustrated in Figure 14: “Key influencers to collaboration experiences” above. As depicted, participants described this construct as the most significant contributor to their experiences during collaborations. They believed that leadership behaviour; feeling demotivated; being purpose driven; feeling overstretched; impact of team; accountability for delivery were all key influencers to their *Optimism* during collaboration experiences. This is illustrated in the table below.

Table 13: Optimism

Construct	Key influences identified by participants	# of ref's by participants
<i>Optimism</i>	Leadership Behaviour	90
	Demotivated	70
	Accountability for Delivery	60
	Purpose Driven	36
	Overstretched	36
	Impact of Team on Optimism	26

It is important to note that in exploring individuals’ *optimism* levels, neither leadership behaviour nor actions, were explicitly probed by the researcher. Rather, this narrative emerged during 67.7% of interviews of the total interview group, including members of the leadership group themselves. Consequently, the discovery that participants highlighted “leadership behaviour” as the most significant contributor to their *optimism* levels, was unanticipated. Furthermore, it is important to note that during their interviews, participants inextricably, but to varying degrees, associated feeling Demotivated; feeling Overstretched; Impact of Team and Accountability for Delivery with the attitudes and behaviour related to leadership. In addition, the data revealed that “Accountability for Delivery” was highlighted by participants as being at the root of the other influencers to Optimism. Therefore, rather than create an all-encompassing cluster called “Leadership”, the researcher believed that the richness of the data and findings related to *optimism*, would be best illuminated through a discussion on “Accountability for Delivery”.

“Check-In’s and Feelings” as they related to the “Then and Now” *growth* narrative has been discussed above. However, as noted earlier, the impact of the “check-in” practice on participants *optimism* levels cannot be overlooked and is therefore best expanded on further in this section on *optimism*. It is also important to note that as observed during three of the seven meetings, at *Ukufunda*, the “check-in” practice is leadership driven. Therefore, a discussion on the impact of the “check-in” practice is well located here.

The findings on *Optimism* is therefore discussed through the lens of:

- a) ***Accountability for Delivery***: Selected to highlight the materiality and impact of “Accountability for Delivery” on *optimism* for both staff and leaders, as well as its impact on collaboration experiences.
- b) ***Check-In’s***: Selected to highlight the impact of the practice on individuals’ *optimism* within a team setting and collaboration experiences.

4.5.3 *Optimism - Accountability for Delivery*

One of the consequences of the rapid growth during period 2017-2018 at *Ukufunda*, was that meeting set targets were crucial to attracting and retaining funding. It was therefore perplexing as much as it was concerning that “Accountability for Delivery”, and within that “not delivering or meeting targets”, was highlighted as one the key influencers to individual’s *optimism* levels during collaborations.

The figure below provides a snapshot of participants experiences with respect to “Accountability for Delivery”. In analysing the data, the key issues that emerged was a failure to take ownership for quality delivery and integrity of data; blame shifting; poor planning and implementation. Most concerningly participants believed this was a pattern that developed during the rapid growth period.

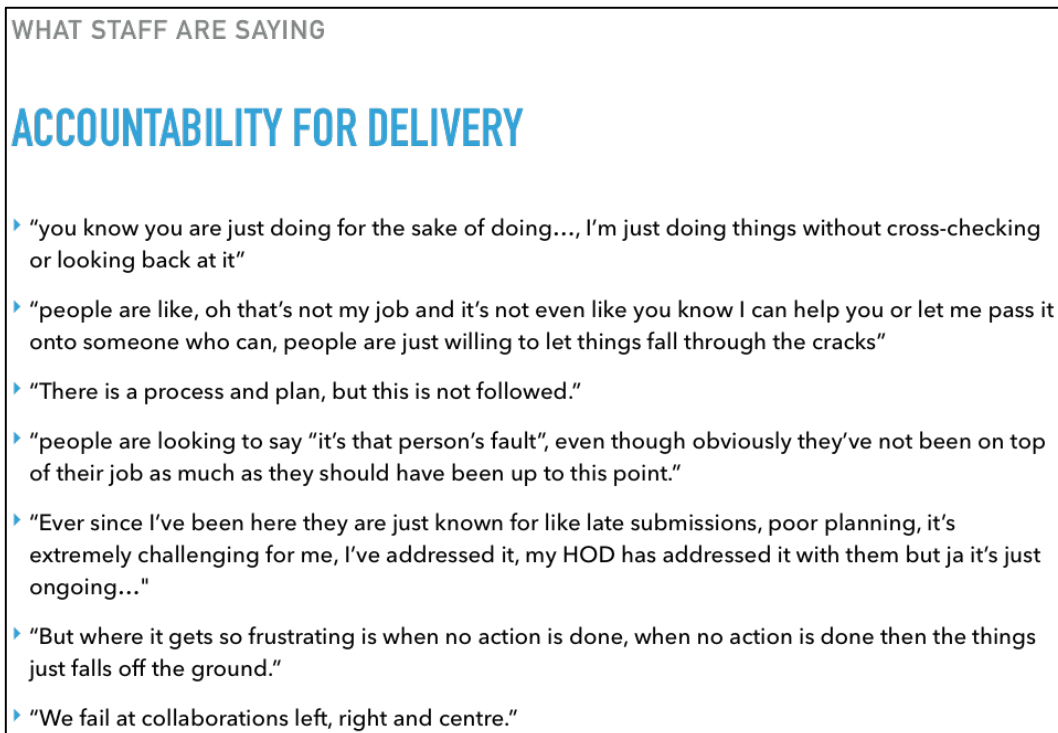


Figure 15: Extract of staff perceptions on Accountability for Delivery

The issues raised by participants above, point to negative experiences when attempting to collaborate and implement identified targets. The material question from the perspective the researcher as well as the organisation is: “What has contributed to a lack of accountability and delivery within *Ukufunda*?”

To better understand this, responses to the interview questions “When did you join *Ukufunda*?” and “What drew you to this organisation?” were analysed.

The responses of participants fell within one of the three categories below:

- Felt personally connected to the purpose of the organisation.
- Was an opportunity to fill a personal goal e.g. aligned to what they studied.
- Needed a job. The social good is a bonus.

Findings revealed that an individual’s motivation to join *Ukufunda* was different based on when that individual joined the organisation.

Of those participants who joined *Ukufunda* prior to the rapid-growth period (this date was marked as Feb 2017 based on when a significant inflow of funding occurred and what

participants regarded as the beginning of the growth period), 82.4% were motivated by purpose. While 17.6% of interviewed participants were motivated by the job opportunity. Of those participants who joined post the rapid-growth period 26.4% were motivated by purpose while 73.3% were motivated by the job opportunity i.e. a large, well-funded organisation represented security of employment and income. It is worth recalling that the objective of the analysis was to gain insight to “What has contributed to a lack of accountability and delivery within *Ukufunda*?”. Given this, “purpose motivated” included purpose of the organisation as well as purpose of the individual. This was distinguished from “job opportunity” where purpose, as defined here, was not a factor in a participant’s decision to join *Ukufunda*.

	joined	purpose-motivated	job opportunity-motivated
Pre Rapid Growth	53,1%	82,4%	26,4%
Post Rapid Growth*	46,9%	17,6%	73,6%

*PoRG from Feb 2017 at the onset on the growth based on significant inflow of funding.

Figure 16: Why participants joined Ukufunda

A key finding following a review of the data, was that participants noted a shift in organisational agenda from “purpose driven” to “target driven” as the organisation positioned itself for rapid growth. In discussing this shift and how it affected interventions with communities – the recipients of the *Ukufunda*’s services, one participant highlighted:

“It became less about people’s experience during an activity its more about how many people participated. It becomes more of a just another business to be honest, it’s just us collecting information”. (TE, Programmes coordinator, 2016).

An important finding is that this shift had significant implications for the *optimism* levels of those participants who joined prior to the rapid growth. These participants (82.4% of individuals interviewed), reported feeling disconnected from the organisation, with many of them expressing negative attitudes with the leadership of the organisation, the “new” direction of the organisation and how it impacted the way in which they worked and collaborated with each other.

Furthermore, these participants reported their resilience levels were negatively affected by their experiences during collaborations. While some, reported having “given up”, others reported that they would “keep trying because purpose is important”.

However, when asked if they would leave the organisation should a similar or better opportunity present itself, all these participants responded yes!

Findings revealed that these factors combined, all contributed to the sentiments expressed by staff in Figure 15 above. In fact, participants cited the following as the reasons for not delivering or meeting targets:

- a) **Top down approach to target setting:** Participants believed that unrealistic targets were continually set without input from individuals responsible for implementation. It is worth noting that neither the Programmes implementation team nor the broader Support Services team (including HR, Finance, Logistics, IT) were part of the decision-making forum where targets were set. Participant reported that prior to the rapid growth period, they experienced a collaborative approach to decision making and planning regarding which interventions will be held, where, and with how many people. These meetings included representatives from the programmes team, sometimes community members themselves, and the Support Services team. The current practice however, is that a small group of people set targets - the implication of which is best captured by a participant who shared:

“we are setting targets that might not be realistic because there are certain aspects that we might be missing. Each (key person) needs to be brought in for us to come-up with a decision. But now, it’s like we have already committed ourselves and we now come back to those who implement and that’s when the implementers might raise that noise that we can’t do that but we already committed – so we have to make it happen.”
(DD, Head of Finance, 2016).

- b) **Mutual disrespect:** A habit of what can best be described as disrespect between *outward looking* staff (Programmes implementation team) and *inward-looking* staff (involved in providing support services) had developed following the move to professionalise the organisation through the implementation of new businesses processes and systems.

“I find that, and it’s always- from day one ever since I’ve been here, they are just (Programmes team) known for like late submissions, poor planning, it’s extremely challenging and stressful for me. I’ve addressed it, my HOD, she has addressed it with them, but ja... it’s just ongoing. It’s like they demand, and we must just deliver.” (TS, Logistic & Support Coordinator, 2017).

- c) **A job, not a calling:** Many participants, particularly those who joined PrRG, experienced declined levels of ownership and support for the overall delivery/implementation of *Ukufunda*’s mission. The shift in organisational agenda as discussed above as well as diminished levels of *optimism*, *self-efficacy* were all contributing factors. This was evidenced, by participants opting to only contribute what they believed to be their job and taking a “back seat” as one participant shared. This is aptly captured by another participant who said:

“It’s like we are shifting from the intention (the original purpose) - we are not so strong about what makes us unique anymore.” (UN, Programme Manager, 2013)

- d) **Trust:** Participants highlighted the relationship between low levels of trust to deliver and low levels of trust in the integrity of data.

“If you’re a Literacy Mentor your incentive is to say I trained a large number of people this quarter because that’s what you’re held accountable to. And sometimes what people are reporting in the teams and what we’re reporting is different and then that can lead to conflict...and mistrust of people and the data they’re providing” (LT, Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, 2018)

Please note this is expanded on further in the section on trust below.

- e) **Leadership and accountability:** As highlighted in Figure 15 above, staff expressed frustration that Leadership were not holding people to account. Participants perceived that leaders were not acting consistently, transparently and decisively where individuals and teams failed to deliver and be accountable for delivery as highlighted by this individual:

“But where it gets so frustrating is when no action is done, when no action is done then the things just falls off the ground.” (TE, National Systems & Administration Coordinator, 2016).

These were concerning findings. Particularly so, in the context of the explicitly expressed focus on meeting targets¹⁰. Moreover, meeting targets is the basis upon which funding is secured. Simply put, if the organisation fails to deliver on agreed targets, then credibility with Funders may be compromised and at worst, funding may be withdrawn. Without funding there would be no means to deliver on the campaign promise and job security becomes a risk. This risk was well understood by all participants interviewed.

In order to make further meaning of what participants shared within the “Accountability for Delivery” node, the perspective of both staff and leaders is important. The figure below is a snapshot of what leaders shared on “Accountability for Delivery”.

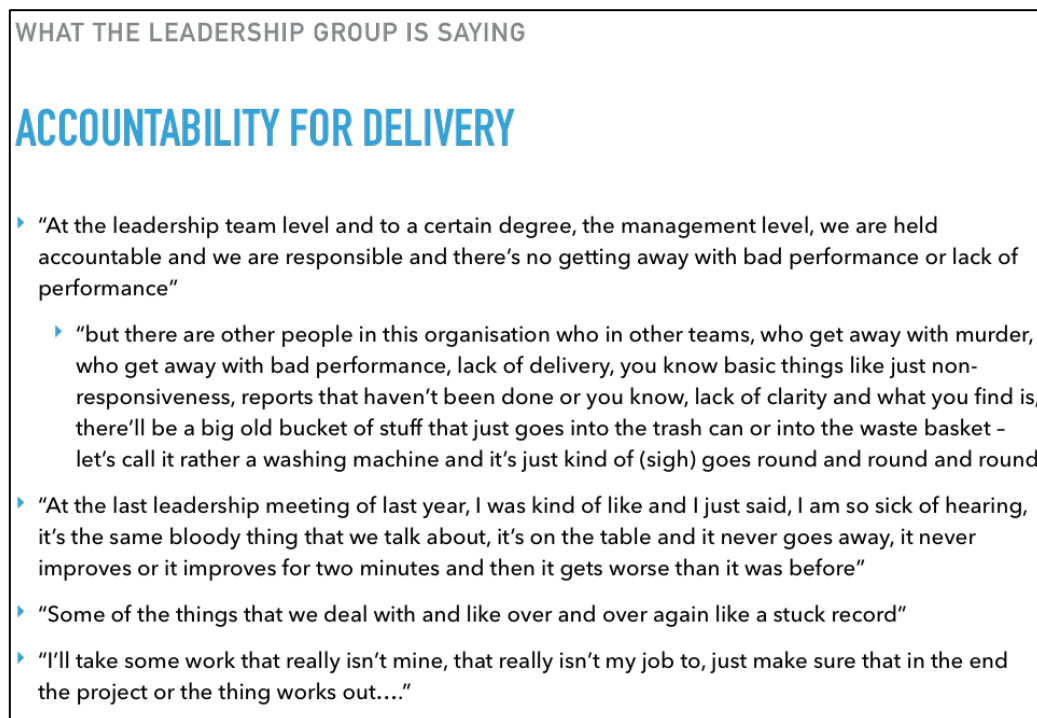


Figure 17: Extract of leadership perceptions on Accountability for Delivery

¹⁰ The targets and key performance indicators related to the targets are clearly outlined in the organisations Performance Dashboard and Strategic plan 2019-2023 which was the basis for attracting further funding. These documents were reviewed during the analysis of secondary data.

It may be argued that the follow-on question from “why” there are challenges regarding accountability and delivery, is “Who is taking responsibility for driving Accountability and Delivery?”.

The extracts above are from the interviews with participants at leadership level. They suggest an equal level of frustration as those expressed by staff. Furthermore, they point to an inability to effectively act on identified challenges or gaps within the organisation. While some in the leadership group have responded to the challenge of poor “Accountability and Delivery” by taking on more work themselves, others have simply stepped back saying “it’s not my team, it’s not my problem to solve”. The flaw in this approach is highlighted by one participant at staff level who highlighted:

“If it’s not the Managers job to address problems we’re raising and it’s not the HOD’s (Head of Department) responsibility, then who...”. (MC, Logistics and Support Coordinator, 2017)

It was clear to the researcher during both the formal and informal observations, as well as the interviews, that the leadership group were considerate in their manner and style of engagement with one another and with staff. They demonstrated notably that they care.

Therefore, a key question is: “Why have this group of intelligent, committed, hard-working and passionate individuals allowed the organisation to become “stuck” with behaviour patterns that inhibit collaboration across their organisation?”

A key insight from the interviews with the leadership team and managers suggests that the leadership group have expectations of staff, that do not match the maturity of the organisation. In addition, these expectations may not be commensurate of efforts to manage the transition from a small family type organisation, to a larger and more sophisticated one, on the back of rapid growth and significant pressure to deliver in order to retain funding.

This suggests that the leadership group may have underestimated the impact of growth on the culture of organisation and in particular “their way of working together” - basis against which individuals collaborate with one another.

The most striking observation to emerge, is that there appears to be a failure to fully address the impact of growth for staff who joined PrRG. Further, little to no evidence was found of

efforts create alignment between this latter group and staff who joined PoRG. It would appear that as the campaign gained momentum, more people were steadily brought on board to fill specific roles related to growth. In this way even though the functions that new staff were brought into were *inward looking* functions (e.g. related to support functions), the orientation of these individuals was *outward looking* toward the growth of the campaign. A tension has developed between these different orientations, across teams within the organisation. This has contributed to the negative sentiment expressed with regard to *growth, optimism, self-efficacy, trust* and to lesser degree *resilience*. These have in turn negatively impacted individuals' collaboration experiences across the organisation.

This finding is best captured by this quote from the Managing Director herself:

“We went from a very small organisation to a very big organisation...pushing really hard just to cope with that transition and in the process of that, other things that were core and central, got lost along the way...”. (KK, Managing Director, joined 2015)

4.5.4 Optimism - Check-In practice

Arguably the most unfortunate practice to have “*lost along the way*” is consistent Check-In’s. An initial analysis of the observation data revealed “Check-In’s” as the most notable and positive contributor to *optimism* levels in the workplace. Furthermore, where participants shared positive experiences of Leaders during the interviews, it related to the mindful practice of checking-in with individuals and teams to enquire how they were feeling. During the observation meetings, the researcher noted that this practice was conducted at the onset of a meeting where the convener of the meeting (a member of the leadership group in all observed instances), enquired if there was anything anyone wanted to share. The invitation to share related to their emotional state, family, work-load, gratitude was expressed, discomfort shared and also concerns raised - i.e. where “Inscaping” (Nilsson & Paddock, 2014) occurred. At the close of these meetings the convener then conducted a check-out. This was an invitation to raise any matter that had not been sufficiently discussed or for participants to share what they were thinking or feeling before the meeting was closed.

The impact of “Check-In’s” as it relates to leadership behaviour is best presented through the findings made during the observation of meetings¹¹ and the one-on-one interviews. As discussed in the Research Methodology section, the researcher observed seven different meetings. The “check-in” practice was conducted in three of the seven meetings by two different leaders. One such meeting was a team meeting, where the Head of Department chaired the meeting and conducted the “check-in”. The other two meetings were collaboration forums. In one of these, staff from different teams participated in a workshop style meeting with thirteen participants, to provide input to the organisations overall training plan. The other meeting was a staff meeting and included approximately sixty staff members from *Ukufunda*. The Managing Director chaired both these meetings and conducted the check-in practices at both. It is also worth noting that some staff joined both these meetings via video conference¹².

In order to illuminate the impact of the “check-in” practice on staff’s *optimism* and their collaboration experiences, the researcher has opted to discuss three of the seven meetings observed. These were selected because they shed light on the different dynamics between leaders and staff member/s – dynamics which significantly impacted staff members collaboration experiences as shared during the one-on-one interviews. It is worth noting that each were regular team meetings¹³ and chaired by the Head of Department (HOD). The table below provides a snapshot of the profile of these teams.

Table 14: Team Check-ins and Optimism

Team Name	Key focus of team and Observation prior to start of meeting.	Number of attendees	Date & Duration of meeting	Check-In practice conducted
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¹¹ As discussed in the Research Methodology section, this was one of four data collection methods applied in the study.

¹² A detailed breakdown of the observation meetings can be found in the table “ Schedule of Observation meetings” in the Research Methodology section.

¹³ Regular team meetings were introduced in late 2018 in response to the outcomes of the staff survey, conducted by an external independent third party.

Monitoring and Evaluation	<p>Team focus: Established to meet the need for accurately reporting on targets for key external stakeholders. Two team members were located in KwaZulu-Natal and a third in Johannesburg.</p> <p>Observation prior to start of meeting: This meeting was held in the boardroom. Prior to the start of the meeting, the researcher observed that those staff joining via video conference, were already online. There was an exchange of greetings, laughter and banter as the Cape Town based team walk into the meeting. There was also banter amongst the Cape Town team themselves. The researcher noted that the group felt very fluid with each other, with conversation flowing easily.</p> <p>The chair of the meeting was the head of that department (HOD). She who wrote an agenda on the white board as the rest of the team settled, checking that this was visible on the video conference.</p>	10	Date: 13 November Time: 14:00-15:35	Yes
Programmes	<p>Responsible for the implementation of the campaign. The vast majority of this team is based in the communities which they serve. Only four staff members were based in Cape Town.</p> <p>Observation prior to start of meeting: This meeting was held in the Programmes office. Prior to the start of the meeting, both individuals remained seated at their desk. They sat in silence, not engaging with one-another. The Head of Department continued working on her laptop, while the other participant looked down, with his hands on his lap, as he waited for the meeting to begin. Their laptops were both open. There was no collegiality visible during this meeting and no banter shared between the team members.</p>	2	Date: 16 November Time: 10:00-10:28	No
Communications & Marketing	<p>Responsible for positioning of the <i>Ukufunda</i> brand and also managing certain events related to the campaign. All team members were Cape Town based.</p> <p>Observation prior to start of meeting: Prior to the start of the meeting, the team members did not appear to be</p>	6	Date: 12 November Time: 10:00-10:45	No

	<p>clear as to where the meeting would be held and if in fact the meeting would be held at all. During the meeting team members sat at their desks, while the manager sat on the floor and the head of department stood at the door. The team members laptops were open, but everyone was attentive and talking comfortably with one another.</p>			
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4.5.4.1 *Optimism - positive impact of check-in practice*

The positive impact of the check-in practice of is best highlighted by sharing the findings of the observation of the Monitoring and Evaluation team.

The HOD began the meeting with a check-in and framed it as “How do you feel about having regular meetings? Is there anything anyone wants to bring up”? One individual volunteered a point of the view and the rest of the team followed suit. While not all participants shared something during the check-in, the observation was that all team members looked at ease. As items were raised, the chairperson added them to her agenda on the whiteboard. The total duration of the check-in was approximately six minutes.

During the observation of this meeting, the researcher noted that the team was able to move through all their meeting objectives in a structured and productive manner. The team demonstrated high levels of interest in the contribution of other team members, asked questions, shared ideas and remained visibly engaged throughout the meeting. It is worth noting that participants did not use their cell phones nor start working on their laptops during the meeting.

As may be anticipated, the collegiality among the members of this team was visibly high at the onset of the meeting. This was further confirmed during the researcher’s informal observation of the teams’ interactions with one-another where team members hugged each other when greeting, and jokes were shared at the water cooler and in the staff kitchen. Furthermore, all nine members interviewed from this team highlighted the positive impact of the team on their individual *optimism* levels during the one-on-one interviews.

It is important to note that participants who were part of this team also reported feeling over-stretched and experiencing stress and anxiety. However, these participants discussed the

positive impact that support from their team and its leader had on their ability to manage their workload and ask for assistance. They reported that their *optimism* levels remained high despite sometimes feeling over-stretched as articulated by this participant:

“We had the team meetings and the check-ins and trying to find out how people are. When we have these meetings, we try and give each other support in any way that we can and try to tell each other that there’s no-one alone. We are eleven, so if anyone feels that they are sinking or they are not okay on that particular day, people can take it and then try to sort it if they can. But people need to know that they are not alone – I think that assisted me.” (NC, Call Centre Agent, 2017)

When asked how she felt about the need to collaborate with a new member of staff, one participant from this team remarked:

“I don’t feel threatened by that or anything. I know I can help and share my knowledge and if there is a problem, my team has my back”. (MC, Monitoring and Evaluation Assistant, 2016).

It is worth noting that the practice was also conducted at the close of the meeting as a “check-out”. The following are some examples of what was shared during the check-out:

“I said my peace and I feel good”. Note this participant had raised a concern during the check-in. (TR, Call Centre Agent, 2018)

“I feel safe as part of this team”. (TN, Call Centre Agent, 2013)

“the meeting shows that of you have a problem there are people you can ask for assistance and support”. (MC, Monitoring and Evaluation Assistant, 2016).

The findings from both the observation and one-on-one interviews of members of this team, reveal the positive impact that check-in’s have on their collaboration experiences. Members of this team reported that were able to manage their stress and workload. The practice further contributed to positive experiences during collaboration within the team. It may be argued that because the check-in practice created an environment where a participant’s voice was heard, it also positively influenced their and their confidence to collaborate across teams.

4.5.4.2 Optimism - negative impact of no time for check-in practice

It is worth noting that where participants reported low *optimism* levels related to feeling victimized for speaking out; high levels of stress and anxiety; lack of support and feeling over-stretched, they were consistently part of teams where no “check-in” practice existed. The negative impact of no check-in practice is best highlighted by sharing the findings of the observation of the Programmes team as well as the Communication and Marketing team.

The HOD of the Programmes team, began the team meeting by reading out the agenda from a handwritten note. She did not enquire if there were further items the other team member would like to include. This meeting can best be described as a Question and Answer (Q&A) session, with the HOD asking questions and team member responding systematically to each agenda item raised. In this meeting, the team member only responded to questions asked, he did not volunteer any information or provide feedback/comment on any point raised unless specifically asked.

It is interesting to note, that the Head of the Department shared a motivational quote at the end of the team meeting.

While observing this team, the researcher noted that both individuals appeared to be competent, focused and share a commitment to dealing with the issues presented. Yet, they did not engage with one-another as a unified team, nor did they appear to be at ease. It appeared that the only connection these individuals shared was the deep commitment to delivery.

This observation was confirmed during the one-on-one interviews where the HOD shared:

“I’ve set very high expectations of what we should be able to deliver with the capacity that we’ve got and perhaps capability as well and systems - so yeah everyone works incredibly long hours”. (UN, Programme Manager, 2013)

The need and expectation of working long hours relates directly to the rapid growth experienced over the period 2017-2018. As the staff complement and regional reach grew, so too did the need to professionalise business processes and systems i.e. organisational rules. A consequence for this team has been:

“You’re not always the most liked person on the planet because you're implementing governance and processes”. (TE, Programmes and Administration Coordinator, 2016).

This coupled with the heavy workload with little time to check-in on how team members are coping, have resulted in individuals within this team (including those interviewed but not present at the team meeting above), feeling demotivated and exhausted.

“I was kind of overwhelmed with the amount of work that needed to be done...I’m overwhelmed and now what? I’m not sleeping at night” (TE, Programmes and Administration Coordinator, 2016).

Importantly, each participant interviewed from the boarder Programmes team highlighted “Purpose” as the reason why they persevered despite the difficult working conditions. During their interviews these participants highlighted that understanding the “why” behind their work inspired and motivated them.

“The people who are here, in my team cared, they cared about the kids and network we were setting up. They cared about the experience of the field workers and what was happening on the ground” (UN, Programme Manager, 2013).

The key insight from this team meeting, is that despite the deep connection to their work purpose, over time, the workload of the leader and the team appear to have negatively impacted any deep connection that the team once shared. The result is that the team are visibly exhausted, frustrated and in some instances anxious. This has undoubtedly influenced their collaboration experiences within their large team as well as with colleagues from other departments. As on participant highlighted during her interview:

“We felt the pressure and we were tired; we were drained as well and sometimes when things are not happening the way you expect, they were sort of like disappointments. You don’t know what to do because people are people, we would not even deal with performance issues, we would even stop dealing with their personalities as well...” (ND, Programme Manager, 2016).

This statement highlights how the relationship between “impact of growth” and “accountability for delivery”, “leadership behaviour” and “check-ins” developed at *Ukufunda*. The concerning finding is that as the campaign grew, leaders and staff alike were so focussed on the demands of growth that they neglected both self-care and the care for colleagues. Furthermore, the campaign itself appeared to become more important than the team itself. This would account for the slow creep of the culture of poor “accountability and delivery” discussed above. It would also account for why staff believed that meeting targets became more important than experiences at *Ukufunda*.

While the Monitoring and Evaluation team reflect, the positive experience that check-in’s have on participants feeling supported and able to deal with stress and high workloads, the Programmes team exemplify impact that focussing on delivering the campaign promises and not experiences of staff ,has had on team moral and their ability to deal with the demands of growth. This team have simply not found time, or perhaps lost time, for check-ins with one another.

4.5.4.3 Optimism - negative impact of check-in practice not valued

A third team worth examining in the context of *optimism*, is one where the HOD, openly rebuked the check-in practice.

The researcher observed that the atmosphere among the Communications and Marketing team members during their team meeting appeared informal and relaxed. She was therefore surprised by the negative sentiment shared by members of this team during their one-on-one interviews. It was only after the interviews of the team, coupled with a second review of the observation notes from the team meeting, did the researcher note the impact of no check-in practice on the *optimism* levels of individuals within this team.

During his interview, the HOD of this team admonished the practice of “check-in’s” . He highlighted:

“ When I started here, every meeting started like that (with check-in’s) and it used to drive me insane – it was all about feelings and about everyone sort of thanking

everybody to your left and then to the ones to your right and it drove me crazy”. (CS, Head of Communications & Marketing, 2016).

However as highlighted by a member of this team:

“There is no room to say I'm struggling, it's not working. You get told it's your KPI's and so you just get it done , you just get it done, you just get it done!” (QU, PR & Events Coordinator, 2017).

Another participant highlighted the impact of not having a platform, within the team environment, to challenge and debate:

“Because if you're going to question, then we have a problem. You don't want to create a problem, you don't want to be a problem – definitely – so you often ask, how far do you want me to jump, okay this is how far you wanted me to jump, okay yes, so it's either yes ma'am, yes ma'am, yes ma'am or yes sir, yes sir, yes sir or whatever?” (UN, Digital Strategist, 2016.)

work environment from all participants interviewed, citing inability to influence and be heard as a key issue. Participants described “loosing face” with colleagues in the Programmes team (their primary internal client with whom they are required to collaborate) as a result of their inability to influence and be heard within their own team.

One participant highlighted:

“This was my third year doing WRA for example – third year and I promise you, what was highlighted at the end of 2017 and what was highlighted at the end of last year, there are still similar challenges we face this year. I'm like but we've talked about this, why are we still sitting with the same thing?” (QU, PR & Events Coordinator, 2017).

This is a concerning finding because it points to a leadership style and behaviour that while appearing to be relaxed and informal, is experienced as closed and inflexible by team members. This has resulted in members of that team feeling disempowered to act on information shared with them from colleagues from other departments. The consequence is that these team members, many of whom can only accomplish their work through collaboration, believe that they have lost credibility with their collaboration partners both internally and externally to the

organisation. Furthermore, their self-efficacy is compromised as highlighted by one participant:

“Every day I need to regroup and some days it’s okay, you kind of carry on and do it and get on with it and some days, it really knocks my self-confidence over and my self-esteem”. (UN, Digital Strategist, 2016.)

As with the Programmes team, members of this team cited “purpose” as key influencer to why they persevere:

“Despite the difficulties, I still appreciate being part of an organisation that does work and speaks to what I think is meaningful, even if it’s not as personally or as individually meaningful as I have experienced it in the past”. (TN, Senior Communications Officer, 2013).

It must be noted, of the six individuals that were part of this team onset of the field research in November 2018, four had resigned by the end of the first quarter of 2019. The remaining two staff members are the HOD and a Manager. The latter shared during her interview, that she would leave the organisation should another opportunity present.

The dynamic within this team, as observed during their team meeting and one-on-one interviews, highlights the relationship between “leadership behaviour” and “check-in’s” and its impact on the team’s *optimism* levels. It also highlights how, through their inability to “influence and be heard”, individuals may be perceived as not being sufficiently accountable for delivery by other teams. This has a negative impact on the collaboration experiences for both teams.

4.5.4.4 Summary of impact of check-in practice on Optimism

The data collected during the observation meetings as well as the one-on-one interviews, revealed a stark contrast in *optimism* levels between participants from the three teams.

The absence of a “check-in” practice with the Programmes and Communication and Marketing teams, points to how “leadership behaviour” can negatively impact *self-efficacy*, *optimism* and even *resilience* levels of individuals. This in turn goes some way in explaining how individuals who are highly motivated by Purpose, become demotivated, withdraw during collaborations and as a result compromise the attainment of collaboration goals or targets. Furthermore, the absence of “check-ins” with these teams appears to have also impacted “accountability for delivery”. In the Programmes team the “check-in” practice would have created a platform for discussions on the high workload, impact on performance and “accountability for delivery”. In the Communications and Marketing team the “check-in” practice would have created a platform for team members voice to be heard especially as it relates to expectations of internal collaboration partners.

Importantly, it is worth noting that the participants from the Monitoring and Evaluation team, established a positive relationship between the “check-in” practice as part of “leadership behaviour”, motivation, ability to manage stress and high workloads and . This positively influenced their attitude and approach to collaborations and the attainment of collaboration goals or targets. This finding points to what may be a best practice worth establishing consistently across teams at *Ukufunda*.

4.6 Resilience

4.6.1 Definition used

At the onset of the study, the researcher framed *resilience* as the ability to “bounce back and rebound from setback or failure” (Luthans, 2002; West et al., 2009). Simply put, this construct examined the degree to which participants felt “It will be ok”. During the interview’s participants were prompted to describe their *resilience* levels and were then asked what influenced this.

4.6.2 Resilience and Collaboration Experiences

Participants believed that Personality trait; Resilience and Purpose; and Giving up were the key influencers during collaboration experiences. This is illustrated in the table below.

Table 15: Resilience

Construct	Key influencer's identified by participants	# of ref's by participants
Resilience	Personality trait	24
	Resilience and Purpose	22
	Giving up	14

Interestingly, *resilience* emerged as the least coded construct of the four initially explored. Participants described this construct as having the least influence on their experiences during collaborations.

The most noteworthy finding with respect to this construct was that participants highlighted “personality trait” as the highest influencer to *resilience*. A number of participants discussed the role that experiences in their personal lives, played in developing as articulated by this participant:

“I’m a very strong person, just from where I come from and the things I’ve done to be where I am and how I’ve had all these challenges in my life and I’ve just constantly pushed through”. (CG, Provincial Support Coordinator, 2018)

Interestingly, individuals’ experiences within the organisation, either during collaborations or with their managers did not appear to negatively affect participants levels of . Where participants did feel compromised during collaborations, they highlighted purpose as being influential to their willingness to “keep trying”. The latter was poignantly highlighted by a participant who shared:

“When someone says but it can’t be done, you can’t get this book there. I am going to try and find some solution, even if I die trying and I don’t come right, at least I know I want to make a way for that to happen. I’m going to try my best for those kids waiting for those books.” (MI, Support Services Manager, 2014).

A concerning finding however, was the number of participants interviewed that had simply given up trying to influence collaborations and outcomes. This was despite their levels, their expressed commitment to the underlying purpose of the organisation and their structural level of influence and authority within the organisation. One participant shared:

“There are so many, internal issues that are demoralising - how things are happening, how decisions are made, and you feel like I don’t want to be part of this, I’m very sorry, I have to make sure that I depart ”. (UN, Programme Manager, 2013)

As discussed earlier, the researcher had noted that some participants were visibly reserved and disengaged during meetings. When this observation was probed during the one-on-one interviews, these participants, discussed a distinction between what was core to them as individuals e.g. *“a very strong ability to bounce back”* and the impact of the environment/organisation on them. From their perspective, much like above, the environment could alter how positive or hopeful they felt, but it ultimately could not impact their ability to recover from setbacks i.e. their resilience.

It is important to note that while some participants opted to exit the organisation, others chose to remain. Concerningly, participants in the latter group had entered a mode of doing what was *required*, rather than what was *possible* as highlighted by one participant:

“While I’m here then I’m going to do my job...but I will also work out my exit plan, take time to just figure out what my next steps are career-wise.”

(MO, Finance Assistant, 2017).

From the perspective of *resilience*, this participant believed *“I will be ok...but not here”* and was able to achieve detachment with the organisation.

Other participants were less successful at decoupling their experiences and appeared to be distressed and emotional during their interviews as highlighted by this participant:

“The resilience washed away, I was done, you know I was done fighting, I was done trying to push for this...”. (OM, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, 2013).

A number of these participants shared after the interview, that talking about their *resilience* gave words to feelings they were experiencing but which they could not articulate. One participant made contact a week after the interview and requested that I share the transcript with her, because *“it felt therapeutic to talk about these bottled up feelings”*. She believed that in listening to herself talk about her feelings she would be able to remind herself how resilient she really was and find the energy to continue to do the work she came to *Ukufunda* to do.

This was an unexpected discovery. From a data analysis perspective, *resilience* may at first glance appear to have minimal impact (relative to the other constructs explored) on individuals experiences during collaborations. However, from a phenomenological research point of view, the experiences shared by the participants clarified why some participants had become disengaged and no longer contributed to collaborations with the same energy and zest as they had when they first joined the organisation. It points to an important area of dialogue between staff and their line managers and the human resource strategies of the organisations, particularly as they pertain to retention of staff.

4.7 Trust

4.7.1 Definition used

At the onset of the study, the researcher examined the influence of *trust* on *how* individuals collaborate and *who* they collaborated with.

4.7.2 Trust and Collaboration Experiences

It is worth noting that *trust* was deliberately explored as the final construct to assess its comparative weighting against *self-efficacy*; *optimism* and *resilience* as influences on the collaboration experience.

Participants believed that Trust to Deliver; Power; Poor Communication; Lack of Trust were the key influencers to their *trust* levels during collaboration experiences. This is illustrated in the table below.

Table 16: Trust

Construct	Key influencer's identified by participants	# of ref's by participants
Trust	Trust to Deliver	48
	Power	25
	Poor Communication	24
	Lack of Trust	23

Participants identified “Trust to Deliver” as most influential to their levels of *trust* during collaboration experiences and outcomes. Interestingly, the constructs “Power”, “Poor Communication” and “Lack of Trust” were all identified as close to equal in their weighting as influencers to *trust*. Furthermore, they had comparative levels of influence (or weighting) as “Ability to Influence and be Heard”¹⁴ within the *self-efficacy* and “A Personality Trait”¹⁵ within the *resilience* and “Impact of team on Optimism”¹⁶ within the *optimism*.

While it is concerning that “Trust to Deliver” was identified as the most influential to participants levels of *trust* during collaboration experiences and outcomes, it is not surprising. This is especially given how significant a-influence “Accountability for Delivery” was found to have on participants *optimism* levels. As with “Accountability for Delivery”, the

¹⁴ Ranked most influential to collaboration experiences within the Self-Efficacy code.

¹⁵ Ranked most influential to collaboration experiences within the Resilience code.

¹⁶ Ranked sixth most influential to collaboration experiences within the Optimism code.

prominence of “Trust to Deliver” is concerning because the ability to deliver effectively on *Ukufunda*’s campaign promise, is the basis upon which funding is obtained.

Of greater concern, is that participants highlighted questions on the efficacy of the data collected¹⁷. This data is the basis for measurement and reporting to key external stakeholders such as the Board and Funders. Some participants linked this concern to workload and degree to which staff are over-stretched following the rapid growth experienced. One participant highlighted:

“The organisation is getting suffocated and it can't deliver with the integrity it needs to - the checks and balances are not in place; it's just chasing all the time.”

(DD, Head of Finance, 2016).

Another participant linked “mistrust due to lack of accountability” to the “Accountability for Delivery” node within the *optimism* construct:

“...It's just really hard to work with, because experience has shown that you go to meetings and you agree on certain outcomes and the next steps. But it just never happens, and things don't change”. (KK, Managing Director, joined 2015.)

Most concerning is the response from leadership is to take responsibility for delivery, rather than hold staff accountable for delivery. This is highlighted by this participant who discussed frustrations with getting the Call Centre to perform a task :

“What I'll do is take it on myself because I don't trust every other person – it's bad, it's really bad actually”. (LI, Head of Monitoring and Evaluation, 2017).

The study has shown that this strategy is unsustainable and ineffective. The leadership group reported feeling exhausted, overstretched and frustrated. Staff reported feeling suspicious of leaderships agenda, disempowered and not trusted as highlighted by this participant:

“I don't function well when somebody must do all the thinking for me”.

¹⁷ Depicted as “Integrity of data” within the “Trust to deliver” in Figure 2 above.

(TP, Call Centre Agent, 2018).

Trust had been compromised for leaders as well as staff within *Ukufunda*.

As discussed earlier, at the time of consenting to the research, the leadership team had identified “working in silo’s and collaboration” as a key organisational challenge. They had not identified *trust* as an issue. It is interesting to note that four months post the completion of field research, the leadership team had diagnosed that communication and trust were now the key challenges their organisation was facing.

4.7.2.1 *Trust, Mistrust and Organisational Drivers*

The researcher was perplexed by the degree to which compromised *trust* as discussed above, presented itself within *Ukufunda*. The researcher assumed that if staff are strongly aligned to the purpose of a social organisation, then high levels of *trust* would be enjoyed. The further assumption was that this would be particularly so during collaboration efforts toward a common social goal. The researcher’s own work experience in profit driven organisations, was that alignment of performance indicators or targets were the primary drivers for collaboration. Opportunity rather than *trust* were typically the drivers for collaboration. Thus, the findings on *trust* above, were all the more puzzling.

To better understand this phenomenon, it is worth reflecting on the analysis of why staff joined the organisation, see figure above. “Purpose” was highlighted as the primary motivation of 82.4% of staff who joined *Ukufunda* pre-rapid-growth. However, “Job Opportunity” was identified as the primary motivator for 73.6% of staff who joined post-rapid-growth. This number however needs to be seen in the context of a much large organisation. One could argue that in an addition to the factors raised above, another “*Impact of Growth*” is that the drivers of staff employed PoRG at *Ukufunda* were different to those who joined PrRG. The staff employed PoRG were employed to support the needs of a rapid growing organisation. Furthermore, at PoRG stage, clear targets related to growing the campaign were clarified and

part of the organisational narrative¹⁸. Accordingly, it may be argued that for the PoRG participants, meeting targets were key drivers for collaborations.

These findings must be considered in junction with the concerns raised earlier, regarding inadequate management of the transition from a small family type organisation into a larger one. The study reflects a further consequence of not managing the transition process effectively: The *basis* upon which individuals within *Ukufunda* establish *trust* with one another is different. It is therefore unsurprisingly that a purpose vs targets narrative could be observed that is similar in nature to the “us” versus “them” narrative.

Where at first glance there appears to be alignment on the campaign promise of *Ukufunda*, the conversations on *trust* have exposed a fracture within the organisation that has negatively impacted collaboration experiences.

4.7.3 Examining trust – the problem of perception...

During the interview phase (but pre data analysis), *trust* appeared to be most influential to individuals’ approach to collaboration. In all thirty-three interviews, participants highlighted *trust* as a factor that over-rode any of the preceding three constructs as influencing their experiences during collaborations. Meaning, where *trust* was compromised, participants believed that *self-efficacy*; *optimism* and *resilience* levels became less significant in influencing how they collaborated. The preliminary finding, therefore, was that *trust* emerged as having the most influence on an individual’s collaboration experiences. Some participants, following their interviews (either immediately thereafter or days later), remarked how the interview process had clarified for them, important and significant trust was to their collaboration experiences. For example, one participant remarked post all interviews:

“The feedback I’m getting is that most people have been surprised by the degree to which trust has surfaced as important to collaborations. It seems we may be making

¹⁸ Blogs on the website dating back to 2017 confirm – Reviewed as part secondary data analysis.

assumptions about the trust levels within the organisation.” (LI, Head of Monitoring and Evaluation, 2017).

However, following the data analysis phase, it became evident that *trust*, while contributing to collaboration experiences, was not the most influential. Impact of Growth was!

The variance between the anticipated findings post interview and the findings post data analysis is curious. It is interesting to note that during the interviews, participants perceived *trust* as the most important construct. They described *trust* as having a dominant influence over the preceding three constructs as highlighted by one participant who said:

“When I can’t trust, then that’s when I can just give you that much, I will not give you the full version of me”. (QL, Programme Supervisor, 2017)

These sentiments were conveyed through emotive body language. For example, the quoted participant had pushed her chair back and put her hand up in front of her and then folded her arms when discussing how lack of trust resulted in her holding back. Participants further reported that *trust* was effectively embedded in everything they did and was perceived to be intertwined with their experiences during collaborations. This would account for the relative even-weighting of the three *trust* nodes discussed above- they were perceived to be equally important to collaboration experiences.

It must also be acknowledged that another reason for the perceived magnitude of the *trust* construct in influencing collaboration experiences, is the researchers very own experiences during the interviews. The researcher absorbed both the verbal and non-verbal cues during the interviews. As a result, the manner in which participants engaged on the issue of *trust*, left a significant imprint on the researcher and her perception post interviews of the weighting of the *trust* construct.

Herein, lies a key lesson from both a research and organisation management point of view: It is in the composite of reflecting on non-verbal cues as individuals talk through experiences (e.g. for the researcher during interviews and observations and for the manager through check-in’s) and the review of data (e.g. for the researcher during analysis and for the manager during

performance reviews) that a holistic picture emerges- one that is closer to the real truth than any perceptions that develop by looking at one and not the other.

It is for this reason that the researcher remains convinced that despite the findings post data analysis, *trust*, remains one of the most important influences on individuals' experiences during collaborations.

5. Discussion of Findings

The purpose of the study was to “*examine individuals’ experiences during team-level collaborations within an organisational setting*”. Individual experiences were examined through the lens of four constructs: *self-efficacy*; *optimism*; *resilience* and *trust*. The researcher was further interested to learn if these experiences influenced the way individuals approached collaborations.

As discussed in the Research Findings chapter above, the study exposed that constructs *optimism* and *trust* were found to markedly contribute to an individuals’ experience during a collaboration, while *self-efficacy* and *resilience* did so to a lesser degree. Each of these constructs are discussed below. This is then followed by a discussion on *growth* and a summary of the discussion on findings.

5.1 Self-Efficacy

The study found that for twenty three of the thirty three participants interviewed across all levels of influence in the organisation, including members of the leadership committee, *self-efficacy* was influenced by extraneous factors of the “ability to influence and be heard” and the “impact of (their) experience” during collaborations. Additionally, the findings related to *self-efficacy* were in part influenced by participants view that this construct was core to their personalities or “styles”(Schulman et al., 1993) for example:

“I have a high degree of self-efficacy in life in general” (LI, Head of Monitoring and Evaluation, 2017)

Accordingly participants highlighted both internal and external factors (Richardson, 2002) that were material to their *self-efficacy* during collaborations. It is worth noting that *self-efficacy* has been linked to control and choices (Avey et al., 2011; Luthans, 2002; Scheier & Carver, 2009). This in turn influenced learning and creativity which as West et al. (2009), highlighted resulted in positive outcomes for example during problem solving and sharing of ideas during collaboration engagements. However, as noted by Bandura (2012), the participants of this study, described the impact of their “voice not heard” resulting in them *choosing* not to

contribute in Xⁿ collaboration mode, responding only to what was requested of them i.e. X collaboration mode. Accordingly, the participants of this study, experienced a distortion between their personality style (Schulman et al., 1993), their self-belief of capability (I can contribute in Xⁿ collaboration mode) and their response to extraneous factors (I won't contribute in Xⁿ collaboration mode) (Bandura, 2012). This distortion would further account for participants view that while the environment could alter how confident or hopeful they felt *at a given point in time*, it ultimately did not alter (either positively or negatively) their belief in themselves (i.e. *self-efficacy*) nor their ability to recover from set-backs (i.e. their *resilience*) (Richardson, 2002).

It is most interesting to note that the findings discussed above, matched with Scheier and Carver's (2009) inclusion of the notion of control, suggests that an individual can potentially isolate certain aspects of their experiences related to *self-efficacy* (and potentially *resilience*) during collaboration. Meaning, an individuals' behaviour during collaborations is not necessarily a true indicator of how confident (or resilient) they actually are. This finding challenges Patel et al.'s (2012) view that task team members who are involved in collaborations, can predict each other's behaviour and thereby positively influence communication and manage demands related to workload. The findings of this study, suggest that these "predications" (Patel et al., 2012) can be inaccurate as participants' may not be as confident or hopeful as their work teams perceive, thereby contributing to the complexity and multiplicity that leaders need to manage during collaborations (Vangen & Huxham, 2003). This finding in itself is a strong argument for why it is important for leaders and teams to engage in "check-in's" (observed during the study) or Inscaping (Nilsson & Paddock, 2014).

What is not clear from this study, is to what degree there is a conscious effort by the participant to suppress their feelings of *self-efficacy* and *resilience* during a collaboration effort and furthermore, what the impact of that may be on collaboration processes and outcomes. This would be an area for examination in future studies.

5.2 Optimism

Importantly, the study exposed how central, participants experiences of leaders were to their *optimism* during collaboration efforts. Furthermore, it is interesting that participants

highlighted the relationship between their *optimism* and the very pragmatic and arguably essential requirement of any organisation: “accountability for delivery”(Kearns, 2016). Participants further illuminated how the presence and absence of “check-in” practices, as well as the manner in which individuals’ feelings were engaged with within the organisation, influenced their optimism during collaboration. This phenomenon is in line with Scheier & Carver's (2018) view that *optimism* is situation-specific and importantly that one experience can be distinct from another. Accordingly, an argument can be made that despite the general positive interest that managers expressed toward their employees during their one on one interviews, their behaviour, as reflected through the presence or absence of conducting “check-in” practices, had either a positive or negative effect on how *optimistic* their staff members felt during collaborations. It further bolsters the notion that “Inscaping” (Nilsson & Paddock, 2014) requires a conscious and deliberate effort. Interestingly, only eight of the thirty three participants interviewed believed that *optimism* as a *personality style* (Schulman et al., 1993) was an influencer to their collaboration experiences.

Furthermore, the study supports Scheier and Carver's (2018) notion that optimists tend to focus on the causes they identify for the outcomes that they experience. This may be through seeking responses to questions such as: Are the people around me and my leaders accountable for delivery? (Kearns, 2016; Strathern, 2000) Does my leader enquire about my experiences during collaborations? (Le et al., 2018; Rebelo et al., 2018) Am I victimised when I speak out?

As discussed above, the study exposed the significant impact of rapid growth particularly as it related to the emergence of a “then and now” narrative. The study further illuminated that participants from the “then” era, described feeling doubtful about the future direction and focus of the organisation (i.e. target versus purpose focussed). While the participants of this study did not describe engaging in off-task thinking as anticipated by Scheier and Carver (2018), they did highlight feeling demotivated as a result of “feeling victimised for speaking out” which in turn contributed to increased levels of stress and anxiety in the workplace. In fact, twenty of the thirty-three participants of this study reported feeling demotivated and less optimistic. These participants’ experienced a shift from thinking of their work as a “calling” to thinking about it as a “job”, which in turn resulted in at least fourteen of these participants reporting that they felt like “just giving up” Scheier and Carver (2018). This is a concerning finding when taking into account that optimists tend to disconnect themselves from what they consider negative events Newman et al. (2014). This is particularly interesting when

considered with the data in Figure 16: Why participants joined Ukufunda”. This data highlights that during the period of, and post rapid growth, 76.3% of participants interviewed had joined the organisation because they were motivated by the job opportunity versus only 26.4% who were motivated by purpose. *Growth* it would appear, contributed toward optimists disconnecting themselves from the organisation agenda and limiting their contribution toward collaboration. It further resulted in the attraction of a different profile individual into the organisation (as highlighted in Figure 16 above), and it can be argued, together with the shift in organisation focus from purpose to target driven, contributed toward a fundamental change in organisation make-up and culture over a short period of time. While the impact of *optimism* on organisation culture was not specifically examined during this study, it would be an area worth further enquiry during future research.

Finally, it is interesting to note that the findings above suggest that *optimism* during collaborations, at an individual level, is not necessarily based on shared beliefs and expectations within a team (West et al., 2009) and neither is it based on individuals’ self-identify (i.e. their personality) (Schulman et al., 1993). Rather, the findings support the notion that “experience construct” *optimism*, is an “emergent phenomena” (Scheier & Carver, 2018, p. 1083) that is extraneously influenced by factors such as those illuminated by the participants of this study i.e. “Accountability for Delivery” and “Check-In’s”.

5.3 Resilience

The findings related to *resilience* were most likely influenced by the propensity of twenty four of the thirty-three participants interviewed, who operate across all levels of influence within the organisation, to self-described this construct as “core” to their personalities as well as their personal and interpersonal strengths. It is worth noting that this particular construct was forged through participants personal response (Luthans et al., 2019; Newman et al., 2014) to high risk situations (Richardson, 2002) or following set-backs in the context of their personal lives, as acutely described by this participant:

“my father died when I was 6 years old in 1991, I was raised by a single parent earning R250 per month – I’m the last born of 3 brothers, born and grew-up in a poor district environment, born in Gugs moved to Philippi, strictly a Township boy, a Township man,

however you want to put it, (I have) been swimming against the tides since day one. ... (I have) a very strong ability to bounce back” (CG, Provincial Support Coordinator, 2018)

The participant above highlighted *resilience* as an internal quality. However, *resilience* may equally be an external quality (Richardson, 2002), for example related to the purpose of the organisation. The deep connection that participants, particularly those who joined pre-rapid growth, had with the core purpose (external quality) of the organisation, played a significant role in their ability to sustain in the face of frustration, exhaustion and sacrifice of personal time. When discussing *resilience* as an influencer to their experiences during collaboration, participants made twenty-four references to “Personality Trait” and twenty-two to “Purpose”. Effectively, these participants believed that their ability to bounce-back from what they were feeling and continue to contribute to collaborations, was anchored in who they were *and* what they believed in i.e. their individual personality, their learned behaviour due to their life circumstances, and their social motivations e.g. purpose.

Importantly, the study highlighted that irrespective of where *resilience* stems from, as human beings we are fallible. Accordingly, rebounding beyond homeostasis (Richardson, 2002) or being able to improvise (Coutu, 2002) may, under persistent strained circumstances (such as those experienced during rapid growth), no longer be possible. This view is sharply conveyed by this participant, and shared by twelve others interviewed who conveyed that they had reached a stage where they were “giving up”:

The resilience has washed away, I was done, you know I was done fighting, I was done trying to push for this, I decided you know what, it’s time for me to go and explore new challenges (OM, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, 2013).

Thus one of the commonly regarded traits of resilient individuals – having a firm grasp of reality (Richardson, 2002) – can result in individuals assessing their circumstances, determining the degree to which they believe they can influence it, and then opting to exit the organisation. Thus, one could reasonably infer, that resilient individuals may operate in X^n collaboration for a more sustained period than those with high *self-efficacy* and *optimism*. However, when they do “give up” as described up above, their withdrawal during collaboration is notable and visible to others as the researcher personally noted during the observation

meetings (see discussion in Methodology chapter above). It is worth noting that the staff turnover over the period 2018-2019 is discussed in Chapter 4 Research findings above. However, it is worth noting that during the period of this study (from the initial observation meetings to the writing up of these findings), twelve of thirty-three participants interviewed had voluntarily resigned- one of these was the CEO who had joined the organisation in 2015. A further nine individuals from the study participant group were retrenched – two of whom operated at a leadership level (the Head of Support Services and the Head of Finance).

Interestingly, no conclusive evidence was gathered during this study to indicate to what degree resilience influenced participants to choose to operate in a X or Xⁿ mode collaboration mode. However, it was found to be a key influencer to participants decisions to remain with or exit the organisation. While the relationship between staff-over and *resilience* was not specifically examined in this study, it's implications for staff retention strategies would be an area for future examination.

5.4 Trust

As discussed in the Findings chapter above, the study highlighted how *trust* was interwoven across all examined aspects of individuals' experiences during collaborations. Academic literature has long considered *trust* to be vital for the effective functioning of work relationships (Costa et al., 2018). In line with Salas et al. (2009) and Vangen and Huxham's (2003) emphasis on *trust* and interdependence between parties, participants of this study highlighted how *trust* can be compromised once a misalignment occurs between individual drivers e.g. purpose driven and organisational drivers e.g. target driven. Given the considerable research on *trust*, particularly interpersonal and team trust (Costa et al., 2018), this findings in itself is not significant.

It is worth noting however, that in the case examined, compromised trust and misalignment of individual and organisational drivers was a dynamic experienced by both staff and leaders. Furthermore, it contributed to the divisive establishment of an “us” versus “them” narrative - thereby confirming the notion of interdependence between parties who are required to trust (Vangen & Huxham, 2003). This narrative, which is in line with Chowdhury's (2016) view of how complex knowledge is shared, was most influential in participants deciding what to share

and with whom during collaborations. Further, this narrative was in turn aligned to the organisations “then” (pre rapid-growth) versus “now” (post rapid-growth) narrative which the researcher observed throughout the thirty-three interviews conducted. In the case examined, differences in market norms and social norms (Ariely, 2010) were also observable. Those individuals who joined pre-rapid growth were largely driven by purpose, while those individuals who joined during and post growth demonstrated alignment to the target driven agenda of the organisation. It is also interesting to note that fifteen of individuals interviewed, joined the organisation post rapid growth and were recruited to either support or implement a new project (which was the basis for the funding received). These individuals demonstrated a short-term mindset and were motivated by own personal goals – being part of an organisation implementing social agenda, was considered a bonus. Accordingly these participants are likely to demonstrate what Antikainen et al. (2010) refer to as negligible or conditional trust. Thus, following (Sambrook et al., 2014) an argument can be made that the misalignment among participants on organisation drivers not only affected trust development within the organisation, but also levels of employee engagement. An additional consequence of this “misalignment”, is that individuals found themselves having to collaborate with people they may not agree with, like or even trust (Kahane, 2017).

Together, these factors conceivably contributed to the high levels of stress and anxiety that participants described experiencing when reflecting on their *optimism* during collaborations as well as the impact it has had on their lives outside work (April & Schörger, 2017; Schreier, 2018). Thus the findings of this study support the notion that *trust* has various dimensions (Zolfaghari, 2014) and is accordingly interwoven with the other constructs examined during this study.

5.5 Growth

While the interesting and complex influence of *trust* on individuals’ experiences is acknowledged, it is the unanticipated emergence of a *growth as an influencer to individuals’ experiencers during collaboration* that proved to be the most important finding of the study. “Impact of Growth” in particular, was identified as being the most influential to individuals’ experiences during collaborations and is consequently intertwined in the discussions above.

The literature on *growth*, together with findings of this study, point to a “agenda-shift-pattern” from a founder agenda to a funder agenda (see Figure 18 below). This shift-pattern can be characterised by the need to compete for funds (William, 2012), the impact of funders demands on organisation agenda (Galaskiewicz et al., 2006), the effect of a focus on external growth versus organisational development to support growth (Greiner, 1989; Kramer, 2005), the importance of reporting on agreed targets with funders in order to secure future funding (Vangen & Huxham, 2003) and the value of effective communication linked to individuals performance and measures (William, 2012). Where, the later, in particular, has not been effectively managed, then the findings of this study show that a misalignment and tension emerges within the organisation that is divisive in nature: pre-rapid-growth versus post rapid growth. This tension relates to organisation agenda, leadership behaviour and *trust*.

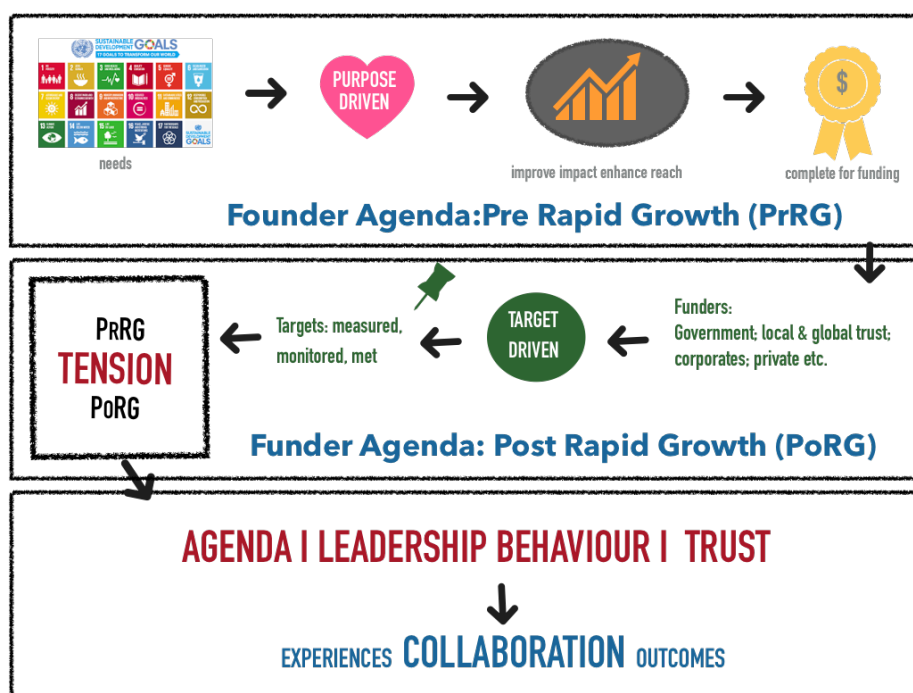


Figure 18: Agenda-Shift-Pattern (source: researcher developed)

The participants believed their organisation was impacted in the following ways:

- a) **Organisational agenda:** from predominantly purpose-driven to predominantly target driven.

- b) **Leadership Behaviour:** leaders responding to the challenge of creating the balance between inward looking efforts and the big drive to be outward looking (Galaskiewicz et al., 2006; Kramer, 2005; William, 2012).
 - a. Examples of inward-looking efforts in this study included time spent on check-in's; managing the change process and a determined focus on professionalising the organisation.
 - b. Examples of outward looking efforts in this study included prioritising targets versus experiences of both staff and the recipients of *Ukufunda's* services.
 - c. Furthermore, embedding the practice of Leaders holding each other and staff accountable for delivery.
- c) **Trust:** the basis upon which *trust* was developed between those who joined pre-rapid-growth compared to those who joined post-rapid-growth.

The findings of this study suggest that the leadership group may have underestimated the impact of *growth* on the culture of organisation and in particular their “way” of working together. It is the researchers view that there has been a failure to fully address the impact of *growth* from an organisation development (Kramer, 2005; William, 2012) perspective. Consequently there have not been clear and consistent messages (Greiner, 1989; Mcdonald, 2000) to staff who joined pre-rapid-growth as well as those who joined post-rapid-growth on the future direction of the organisation. This has in turn contributed to the misalignment discussed earlier which in turn informed the negative sentiment expressed with regard to *optimism, self-efficacy, trust, culture* and to lesser degree *resilience* which have negatively impacted collaboration attempts across the organisation.

5.5.1 Accountability

The factors discussed above and in particular those related to the relationship with funders, point to the importance of and ever-increasing focus on managerial efficiency (Poole, 2007) and accountability (Kearns, 2016). Accountability Strathern (2000) argues, is “part of the general fabric of human interchange” (p. 4). It therefore interesting, and arguably most concerning, that the participants of this study highlighted “accountability for delivery” and within that “not delivering or meeting targets” as the third most influential to their *optimism*

during collaboration as well as being influential to *trust* development (Strathern, 2000). The participants of this study concur with McDonald's (2000) view that transparency on measures, could result in increased collaboration between departments. In reflecting on the views expressed by both staff and leaders, it would appear that meeting the demands of growth, including securing future funding and target setting occurred in a closed system, where not even the Head of Finance was privy to what informed the setting of targets. He shared:

“Setting of the targets is done by a small group of people who do not get input from the areas who have to deliver the targets and by people who do not have experience of working in the field.” (DD, Head of Finance, 2016-2019)

Consequently instead of targets being used as a tool to get staff motivated and feel responsible for their personal contribution to the team's success (Costa et al., 2018), they were viewed as extraneous to the teams. From the perspective of the participants this resulted in failure to take ownership for quality delivery; lack of confidence in the integrity of data (which was being used for reporting to the Board and funders); blame shifting between individuals and sometime between teams; poor planning and implementation. Furthermore, participants reported feeling disconnected from the organisation, with many expressing negative attitudes with the leadership of the organisation, the “new” direction of the organisation.

The issue of “accountability” has been discussed at length in the context of *optimism*. However, it must be noted that accountability and measurements were not specifically examined in this study and are accordingly emergent themes. Future studies should examine the triadic relationship between *Growth*, *Collaboration* and *Accountability*.

5.5.2 Summary

As is evidenced by the discussion above, this study highlighted that individuals' experiences during team-level collaborations within an organisational setting are interwoven with each other. These are further interlinked with internal organisational influencers such as *growth*. For example, *growth* impacts leaders, who influence *optimism*, which is influenced by how accountability for delivery is managed and considered, which influences *trust*, which influences the degree to which individuals either lean in toward or hold-back during collaborations. This finding is supported by the literature. For example, *self-efficacy*, *optimism*

and control are constructs that are believed to overlap each other (Scheier & Carver, 2009), while Richardson (2002) highlights that a common trait found amongst resilient adults and children is *self-efficacy* or self-esteem.

Furthermore, in order to meet the external objective of collaborations (i.e. those related to meeting the targets of the organisation), the study exposed that insufficient attention was placed on creating internal platforms for example the check-in practice, for individuals to engage with each other and their leaders. Finally, and possibly the starkest finding of the study is that the organisational tension that developed between the *outward looking* drive towards increasing organisational impact, and the *inward-looking* focus on meeting the organisations developmental needs, had far reaching consequences for individuals experiences during collaboration efforts.

This would suggest that the triadic relationship between collaboration experiences, trust and accountability may be worth further examination (outside of this study).

6. Conclusion, Future Directions and Recommendations

The study examined *individuals' experiences in the process of team-level collaborations within an organisational setting*. In so doing, the researcher sought to highlight the need and importance for conveners of collaboration efforts, to be as concerned with individuals' experiences during collaborations as they are with the mechanisms and outcomes of collaboration efforts.

The study revealed that while individuals' experiences were considered important by the leaders within the case examined, they were largely ignored during collaboration efforts. As a result, individuals' experiences were not considered important inputs to collaboration efforts. Furthermore, individuals' experiences were not considered influential to the attainment of collaboration outcomes nor to the attainment of specified *organisational* targets and goals. This is not unexpected given the demands that leaders and collaboration conveners themselves are faced with (Vangen & Huxham, 2003) as they seek to rise to the challenges associated with the perform and outperform context that many organisations operate in.

However, leaders need not bear this burden alone. The study has illuminated how participants themselves can provide the key to unlocking the full potential of the collaboration effort. However, this requires the leaders themselves to create safe and conducive environment for this to occur. While Nilsson & Paddock (2014) describe Inscaping as means to achieve this, this study has revealed that the practice of "Check-In's", as discussed above, facilitate the process where participants themselves unlock opportunities where the collaboration effort can outperform expectations. Creating this environment enables participants to operate in what this researcher has termed Xⁿ collaboration mode.

The figure below is based Khandelwal and Khanum's (2017) framework of PsyCap research illustrated in Figure 4 above. It depicts the findings of this study as they relate to the positive and negative, external and internal antecedents of individual's experiences during collaboration. It also depicts the positive and negative, individual level and to a lesser degree (because this was not a focus of this study) organisational level outcomes of individual's experiences as they have emerged from this study. The applicable experience construct (*self-efficacy, optimism, resilience, trust and growth* as an influencer), or a combination thereof, as

illuminated in this study, is listed for each antecedent type. For example, “Organisation agenda target driven (versus purpose)” was found to be a negative external antecedent influencing individual’ *self-efficacy, optimism and trust* levels. *Growth* as also identified a key influencer to this antecedent. Simultaneously, “Purpose of the organisation” was found to a positive external antecedent influencing individual’ *resilience and trust* levels. “My work is a calling” is an example of a positive internal antecedent influencing individual’s *optimism* levels. While, “My work is a job” was identified as negative internal antecedent also influencing individual’s *optimism* levels.

Overall, “Rapid Organisational Growth” was identified as an internal organisational influencer to individuals’ experiences and “Perform and Outperform” was identified as an external organisational influencer to individuals’ experiences. In turn, individual experiences, influenced “ Positive Individual level Outcomes” such as individual functioning in X^n collaboration mode. Examples of negative individual level outcomes include individuals’ “functioning in X or $<X$ collaboration mode; Disengaging from organisation agenda and Exiting the organisation” to name a view. Individuals' experiences were also found to influence positive organisational level outcomes such as “ X^n Collaboration outcomes; Innovation; Out performance” as well as Khandelwal and Khanum's (2017) “Retention and attendance and Effective change management”. “Inefficient collaboration outcomes (X and potentially $<X$ mode only)” is an example of negative organisational level outcomes of individuals experiences during collaboration.

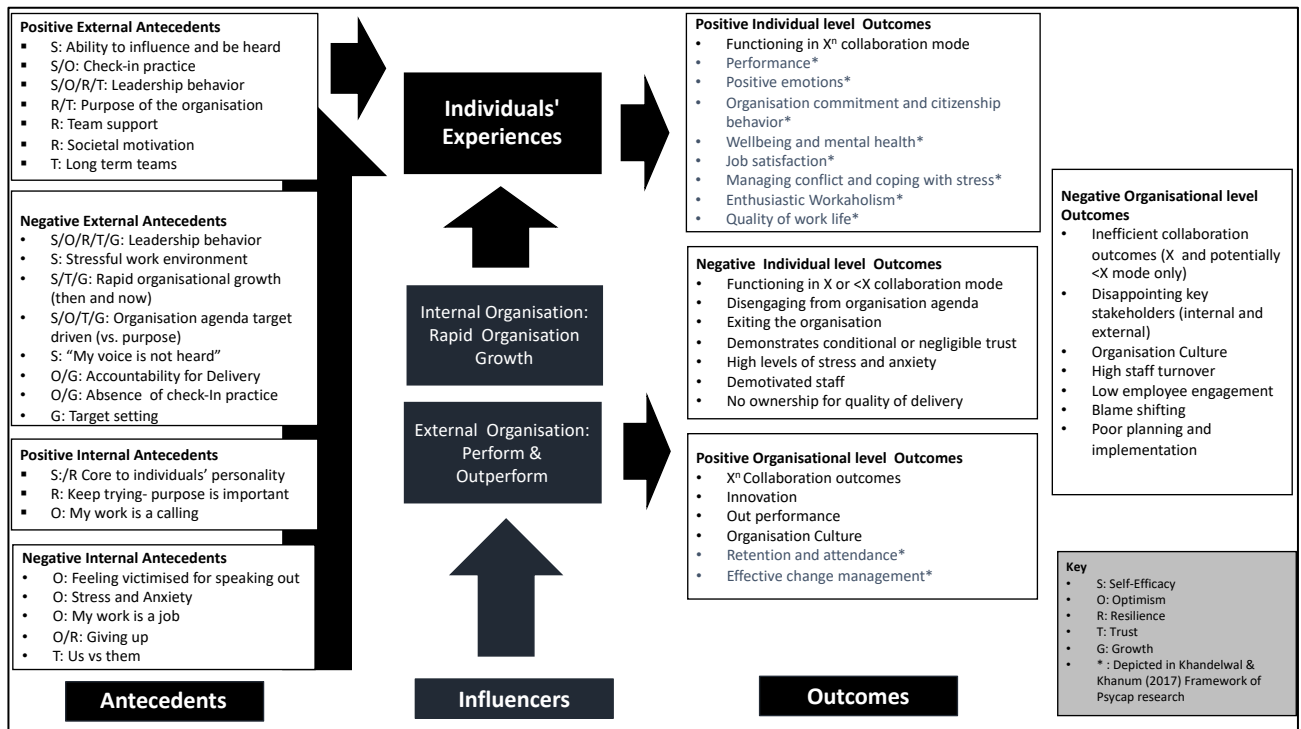


Figure 19: Framework for Individual's Experiences during Collaboration (developed by researcher)

6.1 Integrating collaboration theory and individuals' experiences

For those individuals who have been part of a collaboration, the findings above may not be alarming- in fact they confirm what many of us have experienced ourselves. The findings are however significant when considered in the context of the literature examined. The review of academic literature revealed that collaboration theory itself is a relatively new field of study. Prior to Wood and Gray (1991), no single theoretical perspective provided an adequate foundation for a general theory of collaboration (Colbry et al., 2014; Wood & Gray, 1991). During the period following Wood and Gray's work, collaboration theory was examined predominantly from an inter-organisational lens shifting toward intra-organisational and most recently has started to include the perspective of the individual and their experiences during collaboration efforts (Colbry et al., 2014; Kahane, 2017). Furthermore, it is important to recognise that collaboration efficiencies has attracted considerable attention (Kramer, 2005; William, 2012; Woodland & Hutton, 2012). There is no question as to how important it is that collaboration efforts yield their intended outcome (Colbry et al., 2014; Kahane, 2017). Individuals experiences, in the context of teams, have long been examined largely from the

perspective of organisation's behaviour, strategic management, change theory, positive psychology and positive psychological capabilities (Brief & Weiss, 2002; Harms & Luthans, 2018; Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006; Luthans, 2002; Luthans et al., 2007; Luthans et al., 2019; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Examination of individuals experiences in the context of collaboration theory however is sparse (Hansen & Nohria, 2004; Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017; Newman et al., 2014; Patel et al., 2012; Vangen & Huxham, 2003). It is worth noting that as with the literature related to individuals' experiences, literature related to collaboration has included discussions on team dynamics, and the importance of managing these during collaborations (Hansen & Nohria, 2004; Patel et al., 2012; Vangen & Huxham, 2003).

Accordingly, from an academic point of view, the research gap does not lie in our understanding that collaboration is essential, nor in our understanding of how important individual's experiences are. The research gap lies in the sparseness of literature that examines *individuals' experiences during collaboration* and how that may affect the attainment of organisation outcomes not only at a team level, but importantly, also at an organisation-wide level.

6.2 Understanding experiences does not equate to more team builds

In the case examined, participants from the Communications team for example, were directed to the organisations Human Resources department when they raised their experiences or feelings during collaboration activities. These participants believed that their manager did not consider their experiences as important inputs to achieving the so called "hard deliverables" of the team and the broader organisation (see "Optimism - negative impact of check-in practice not valued" in Findings chapter above). Yet, contradictorily, he endorsed proposals for off-site strategy and team build sessions aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of his and other teams.

Interestingly, within the same case, two stellar examples of how to create a safe space amongst partakers of collaboration was evidenced through two powerful suggestions. At the onset of a meeting, both convener and partakers responded to the first item on the meeting agenda: "Check-In". The associated suggestion was "Let's go around the room to share anything about where we find ourselves". This suggestion resulted in both private (e.g. "*I am feeling stronger each day, thank you all for your support*") and professional (e.g. "*I still feel really disappointed*")

that we did not delivery that report on time”) experiences being shared. These statements were delivered succinctly and received without any visible judgement. At the close of the meeting the final agenda item was “Check-Out”. Once more the associated suggestion was “Let’s go around the room to share anything about where we find ourselves”. This suggestion created the opportunity for partakers to share “ *I feel much more comfortable about what we need to do, but I still feel unsure about how I’m going to get this information from the field on time*”. In the case examined, this statement resulted in the team asking probing questions to better understand the concern and then making suggestions on how to address these. The teams that conducted the check-in and check-out practices effectively benefited from an open and transparent platform that helped each team member to feel understood, safe and supported in an environment driven by meeting targets and deadlines. Importantly, partakers of these meetings, reported feeling “my voice is heard” and conveners where able to get a clear assessment of what were the key issues that needed to be addressed within and across teams collaborating toward achieving an organisational goal.

Accordingly, from a practical point of view, the study has highlighted that achieving cohesion during collaboration, is not a call for conveners to conduct team building sessions to enable partakers to get to know each other. Rather, it is a call for conveners to develop active and deliberate tools to understand the experiences that individuals are having during collaboration efforts.

6.3 Experiences as a gateway to performance

The experiences examined within this study were specifically framed as: *self-efficacy, optimism, resilience and trust*. The conversations with participants of the study on how these experiences were impacted by or influenced during collaborations, exposed what underpins individuals’ performance during collaborations. These related to what information and insights individuals were prepared to share during a collaboration as well as how they shared this e.g. volunteering in a Xⁿ collaboration mode, versus responding to requests or questions asked directly of them i.e. function in a X and in some deliberately holding back which can be described as less than X (<X) collaboration mode. Effectively, these interview conversations created a platform for exposing the relationship between individuals’ experiences and their

performance during collaborations. Furthermore, the study has shown that when one assumes that “feelings” are dealt with elsewhere and not within the context of the collaboration, then the likelihood of these as contributors to collaboration “performance”, will be missed. Importantly, the study and conversations about experiences exposed the important issue of “accountability for delivery” - which is crucial to the organisations ability to achieve set targets and receive future funding.

In addition, the study exposed the tendency for leaders and collaboration conveners to prioritise the mechanisms of collaboration (e.g. the systems, processes, required technical inputs, identification of key role players, resource requirements etc.) in order to achieve its outcome. This tendency is echoed within academic literature (Hansen & Nohria, 2004; Hughes & Weiss, 2007; Patel et al., 2012; Woodland & Hutton, 2012). Woodland and Hutton (2012) for example, posit that a key attribute of organisational collaboration is that it goes through the predictable stages of assemble/form, storm/order, norm/perform, and transform/adjourn (p. 375). They identify questions to explore during each stage - **none** of these questions explicitly explore *individuals’ experiences* during collaborations. Further, it must be noted that while research on PsyCap (from which the experience constructs were drawn in this study), continues to develop, much opportunity still lies in exploring potential outcomes (Khandelwal & Khanum, 2017). This may for example include collaboration outcomes at an organisation level attained as a result of experiences at the individual level .

In conclusion, this study has highlighted that to focus our attention on the mechanisms and measures of collaboration as a means to attain its intended outcome, is to ignore the very essence of any collaboration - it is a human interaction¹⁹. Importantly, the study has shown how the much under-examined, within literature, and the much under-estimated, in practice, of understanding individuals’ experiences during collaboration, can yield insights of significant material value to organisations and their leaders (see Appendix 3: Letter from *Ukufunda*).





Accordingly, and as depicted in the table below, through research with a single case and a comprehensive review of literature, the study has explored the concept of X and Xⁿ

¹⁹ Technology based collaborations are specifically excluded from this definition of collaboration

collaboration mode. Furthermore, a third collaboration mode which represents considerable risk to the organisation i.e. <X collaboration mode, was evidenced in the discussion above. Each of these collaboration modes influence the outcome and performance of an organisation against its identified objectives.

Table 17: Xⁿ Collaboration model (developed by the researcher)

	<X collaboration mode	X collaboration mode	X ⁿ collaboration mode
Achieve clear stated outcome	Yellow	Green	Green
Willingness to stretch beyond the stated input requirement, sharing insights, personal resources and networks	Red	Red	Green
Innovations identified	Red	Yellow	Green with dots
Complex problem solved	Yellow	Yellow	Green with dots
Focus predominantly on operational and mechanistic antecedents	Yellow	Green	Red
Focus includes <i>individuals experience through for example check-in's</i> , operational and mechanistic antecedents	Red	Red	Green

Key		Yes
		Yes, and reflects capacities and capabilities of collaboration partakers
		Yes, but only in terms of the stated goal
		No

6.4 Future Directions and Recommendations

The focus of this study was limited to experiences as defined above. During the study *growth* and specifically its impact, emerged as being most influential to individuals' experiences during collaboration. This finding was unanticipated. Furthermore, it challenged the researcher's notion that the lens to individuals' experiences should be internally driven i.e. their *self-efficacy*, their *optimism*, their *resilience* and their *trust* levels. It would be interesting to explicitly explore *growth* as a central contextual theme, from which individuals' experiences during collaborations are examined. An example of such a question may be: "In what ways has the recent growth in your organisation influenced the way you collaborate?". Future

studies should also seek to examine the phenomenon above in multiple cases and across different sectors in order to enhance the relevance of the findings of this study.

The role of the psychological capability *hope* was excluded from this study for reasons outlined in the Introduction Chapter. It would be interesting to test its relevance in the context of collaboration. Accordingly, an opportunity exists to contribute toward the continued development of Luthan's (2002) positive psychological capabilities (PsyCap) in three ways. One) Examine Luthan's full suite of PsyCap's specifically in the context of collaboration. Two) Related to this, expand the PsyCap suite to be specifically relevant to collaboration practices. Three) Achieve this by administrating the Implicit PsyCap Questionnaire (I-PCQ) (Harms & Luthans, 2012) which aims to go beyond the use of self-reported measures which has been the predominate approach to-date.

Finally, it is sincerely hoped that the Xn Collaboration model (**developed by the researcher**) as well as the Framework for Individual's Experiences during Collaboration (developed by researcher), are considered useful tools for examination of specific areas that leaders and collaboration conversers, as well as researchers, can explore to elevate the value and input of individuals' experiences during team level collaborations.

7. References

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9. Contribution to practice (Praxis).

During an interview with the South African online newspaper Mail&Guardian, Warren Nilsson associate professor of Social Innovation at the University of Cape Town (UCT) Graduate School of Business argued that “Innovation is about deep inquiry and engagement with the issues and the ongoing harnessing of the knowledge needed to refine the solution” (Morris, 2019). While numerous definitions have been touted in both academia and practice, Nilsson’s definition of innovation is equally applicable to collaboration. This study embodies the notion that the goals of “deep inquiry and engagement” and “harnessing of the knowledge needed” have better prospects of being realised when partakers and conveners are acutely aware of and understand individuals’ experiences during a collaboration.

From a practical viewpoint (based on the researcher’s own experience and observations over a period of more than twenty years of engaging in collaborative activities), the likely benefits of the above is multi-fold from the perspective of both the partakers and collaboration convener’s, as well as the leadership of the organisation. Some of these benefits include: Collaboration forums facilitate the transparent sharing of knowledge, expertise and experience (i.e. X^n collaboration mode) because partakers do not withhold their contribution as a result of fears and concerns (X or even $<X$ collaboration mode); Collaboration partakers are able to develop new insights as a result of this (X^n collaboration mode) thereby increasing the potential for new innovative ideas to emerge; Nascent, but not openly discussed, organisational challenges may be unearthed during collaboration efforts, for example: the impact that rapid growth has on individuals’ self-assessed optimism level, which in turn impact their willingness to contribute as fully as they may be capable of doing, thereby impacting their real or perceived accountability for delivery.

A further benefit lies at the heart of our humanity: it *feels* good to be part of something that contributes positively at work, in our communities and society at large. Conversely, when our efforts toward contributing to something positive is thwarted because we do not feel that our voice is heard for example, then our very humanity is what would result in us holding back and perhaps even “giving-up”- either as a silent form of protest, or fear or even anger.

In practice and academia alike a strong argument is made that the job of the leader is to extract optimal value from all the resources available to her or him, for example through processes such as sense-making and sense-giving (Kraft, Sparr, & Peus, 2018). Consequently, the phenomena described above (partakers holding-back and giving up during collaborations in X or even <X collaboration mode) should be of grave concern to the leaders of any organisation. It is interesting to note that leaders themselves have access to a vast array of literature, academic and support programmes across numerous spheres as well as financial resources at their disposal to optimise their leadership impact. It is therefore even more perplexing that leaders and other collaboration conveners frequently underestimate the impact of individuals' experiences during collaborations- including their very own!

In a volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA)²⁰ world (such as the one the Covid-19 virus plunged the world into in 2020), more than ever before ,does it become essential to challenge ourselves beyond our comfort zone to achieve more with the resources available to us. Accordingly, effective collaboration demands more than the simple notion of teams working effectively together. It calls for more than the management and facilitation of collaboration “mechanisms” such as processes, systems, role clarification, time and clearly defined outcomes. Rather, it calls for a deeper understanding of what is happening to the individuals' during collaboration. Regrettably, and as this study has demonstrated, even highly capable and caring leaders often ignore this aspect of collaboration.

²⁰ VUCA is a term which originated with U.S. Department of Defence in the 1990s. It stands for Volatility (rapidly changing contexts and conditions), Uncertainty (information missing that is critical to problem solving), Complexity (multiple factors difficult to categorize or control), and Ambiguity (vague data subject to multiple interpretations). Business leaders have more recently adopted VUCA to describe a set of conditions under which organizations and individuals must make decisions and/or solve problems in today's complex and often unpredictable world (Reeves & Reeves, 2015)

Accordingly, leaders and collaboration conveners' personal "toolkits" need to be expanded to include individuals' experiences. In line with this, the praxis of this study is the Xⁿ Collaboration model (developed by the researcher) as well as the Framework for Individual's Experiences during Collaboration (developed by researcher). This model and framework effectively demystify the notion of "individuals' experiences". They enable leaders and collaborations to specifically identify which areas of explore and elevate in order attain optimal the value of and input from individuals during team level collaborations.

10. Appendices

10.1 Appendix 1: Collaboration Survey

The survey was developed in an online tool called Survey Monkey. That version has been adapted into a text and a table for the purpose of inclusion here.

Survey starts

Welcome to the Collaboration Survey

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my survey.

A little about the Survey

The survey is one part of my overall research with *Ukufunda*. My research is aimed at understanding how individuals' experiences during team collaborations affect the outcome of the collaboration. In line with this my research has three parts: a survey, one-on-one interviews, and observation of meetings.

The purpose of this survey is to capture your view on how collaboration works at *Ukufunda*. There is no right or wrong answer. I am here to learn from your experiences. I will ask you to include certain information about yourself below. This is because it will help me during my analysis and also so that we can expand on some of your responses during the interview.

However, it is important to keep in mind that your anonymity and confidentiality is guaranteed. There is no link between your name and the research findings that I share with *Ukufunda* or with UCT. **I am the only person who will see the results of your survey.**

Important information

Please provide the information below:

Name: Insert your name here

Department: Insert the department that you work in here

Role: Insert your role here

Time at Ukufunda: Insert how long you have worked at Ukufunda here

Instructions

There are 44 questions in this survey. Don't worry it won't take long to answer these! In fact, it will take approximately 12-15 minutes to complete. Please respond to each of the questions by placing an X in the block that best matches your personal experience. The options are Strongly Disagree; Disagree; Neutral; Agree; Strongly Agree. It's important to move through the questions as quickly as you can, trusting your initial response and not over-thinking the question. Please email your completed survey to me on: kaylalasides@gmail.com. Should you have questions please don't hesitate to email me.

Definitions

Organisation = The organisation you work for i.e. *Ukufunda*

Colleagues = People from departments inside your organisation

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I work with people who are not in my organisation, for their particular expertise.					
I regularly give feedback to colleagues in my department.					
My colleagues in different departments work with me for a range of tasks.					

Teamwork with colleagues from other departments is not important in my ability to help my clients.					
My colleagues from other departments and I rarely communicate.					
Colleagues from other departments, who I work with, have a good understanding of the difference between my role and their role(s).					
Colleagues from other departments involve me in work that isn't my job.					
I can clearly describe tasks that are specific in my role, compared with tasks that are specific in my colleague's role. (Note: these are colleagues from other departments with whom you work).					
I view part of my role as supporting the work of other people who I work with.					
My colleagues from other departments often send work my way.					
Cooperative work with colleagues from other departments is not a part of my job description.					
I use informal methods of communication (i.e. social networks, lunchtime, etc.) to communicate with my colleagues from other departments.					
My colleagues from other departments do not treat me as an equal.					
My colleagues from other departments believe that they could not do their jobs as well, without help from my department.					
Different new programs emerge from the collaborative effort of colleagues from different departments. (Note: these can be collaborative					

efforts you have been part of or even ones that you are aware of)					
Our organisation's practices/rules are what makes people from different departments cooperate .					
Formal procedures exist for facilitating dialogue between people from different departments (i.e., at staff meetings, workshops, etc.).					
I am not aware of situations in my organisation where a task force or committee has developed from efforts across departments.					
Some meetings, committees etc. in my organisation are consistently run jointly with people from outside organisations.					
Working with colleagues from other departments leads to outcomes that we could not achieve alone.					
Creative outcomes emerge from my work with colleagues from outside organisations that I could not have predicted.					
I am willing to take on tasks outside of my job description when that seems important.					
I am not willing to sacrifice some independence to support cooperative problem solving.					
I use both formal and informal procedures for problem-solving with my colleagues from other departments.					
Colleagues from other departments that I work with, stick exactly to their job descriptions, without any compromise.					
Colleagues from other departments and I work together in many different ways.					

Relationships with my colleagues sustain themselves despite changes in the organization or outside environment.					
My colleagues from other departments are not committed to working together.					
My colleagues from other departments work through conflicts with me in efforts to resolve them.					
When colleagues from different departments make decisions together, they go through a process of examining different options.					
My interactions with colleagues from other departments happen in a climate where there is freedom to be different and to disagree.					
External partners/the Ukufunda network participate in interdisciplinary planning that concerns them.					
Colleagues from all departments take responsibility for developing plans.					
Colleagues from all departments do not participate in implementing plans.					
Colleagues from different departments are straightforward when sharing information with clients/community members.					
My colleagues from other departments and I often discuss different strategies to improve our working relationships.					
My colleagues from external organisations and I talk about ways to involve other external organisations in our work together.					

Partners from outside our organisation do not try to create a positive climate in our organization.					
I am optimistic about the ability of my colleagues from other departments to work with me to resolve problems.					
I help people outside to my organisation to address conflicts with colleagues within my organisation directly.					
People outside my organisation are as willing as I am, to address obstacles to our successful collaboration. (Note this is when you are collaborating with people outside your organisation)					
My colleagues from other departments and I talk together about our professional similarities and differences including role, competencies and beliefs.					
My colleagues from other organisations and I do not evaluate our work together. (Note. This means evaluating how successful the collaboration was or what could be learnt from it)					
I discuss with colleagues from other departments the degree to which each of us should be involved in a particular project.					

I am available for a 45-minute interview on

[insert date and time between the 20 November 2018 to 16 December].

Please note that I will confirm your slot with 24 hours.

Survey ends

10.2 Appendix 2: Interview Consent Form

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN INCLUSIVE INNOVATION

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM:

Participant name: [Please insert your name here]

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Kaylarsh (Kay) Lala-Sides as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the MPhil Degree at the Graduate School of Business. I understand that the research is designed to gather information about “Understanding how individuals’ experiences during team collaborations, influence the collaboration outcome”. I also understand that I will be one of approximately forty people being asked to complete a survey, and potentially be interviewed for this research.

Background and purpose of the research

Organisations are increasingly looking to teams to solve complex problems. As a result, many individuals are faced with a workplace demand to collaborate irrespective of how well-equipped they may feel to do so. Kay’s research interest is in examining individuals’ *experiences* during team-level collaborations and how these experiences influence the outcome of the collaboration effort.

Ethics approval

Ethical consent for the study has been approved by the *UCT Commerce Faculty Ethics in Research Committee*

Participation and confidentiality

I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary, that I will not be compensated and that I may withdraw at any time.

The survey will be conducted electronically and take approximately 12-15 minutes to complete. The interview will take place 2 weeks after the survey (subject to your availability) and take approximately 45 - 60 minutes to complete. The interview will be audio recorded.

I understand that I will not be identified by name in any reports using information obtained from the survey or interview and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.

Should you have any questions or concerns please contact me on 083 6548985 or my supervisor: Dr Badri Zolfaghari ,(PhD) on badri.zolfaghari@gsb.uct.ac.za.

Consent

I consent to participate in the survey and potentially the interview, based on the terms outlined above and subject to the following additional condition of my own (if any).

Signed by Student

Date

.....

Signed by Student

.....

Date

10.3 Appendix 3: Letter from *Ukufunda*

The researcher received the following email from the Head of Monitoring and Evaluation post the feedback of research findings and a separate session with the leadership team.

“As a leadership team, we hear anecdotally of how our team members are feeling about organisational development, change and culture, and it's easy to feel torn in many different directions by the challenges we face. Kay's research was incredibly helpful in helping us understand the magnitude of these various issues. Her work is helping us ensure we focus on tackling the concerns that are most pressing and widely held - and those which, if addressed, could help resolve other tertiary issues - rather than getting side-tracked into addressing the concerns of the loudest critics. We learned that accountability for delivery and consistency, if addressed, would also help to solve some of our other issues. She also helped shine a light on the root causes, the narrative underlying them and the way it is reproduced within the organisation - helping us identify where we might start in telling a new kind of story about our organisation's work, one that builds on widely-held commitment to the organisation's mission.” (LI, Head of Monitoring and Evaluation, 2017)

10.4 Appendix 4: ColEx framework

The figure below depicts the ColEx framework. A framework developed by the researcher to support her, i.e. keep track of what was examined and what was not, during the interview process with participants.



Figure 20: ColEx framework

