

Social Policy and Management Research Dissertation

An Exploratory Study of Western Cape Province Non-Profit Organisations' response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Prof. Eric Atmore



Charlotte Tinnion

TNNCHA001

10 February 2022

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION

I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is using another's work and to pretend that it is one's own.

I have used the American Psychological Association (APA) as the convention for citation and referencing. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this essay/report/project/... from the work or works of other people has been attributed and has cited and referenced.

This essay/report/project... is my own work.

I have not allowed and will not allow anyone to copy my work with the intention of passing it off as his or her own work.

I acknowledge that copying someone else's assignment or essay, or part of it, is wrong, and declare that this is my own work

SIGNATURE:

DATE: 10 February 2022

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the response of NPOs to the COVID-19 pandemic. The main research questions focus on the role of NPO leaders and management in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The effect of COVID-19 on the organisations' operations, focusing on service delivery, staff and finances are explored. The study looks at the lessons learned by the NPO sector considering the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on factors that enabled NPOs to survive (protective factors) and factors that placed NPOs at risk of closure (risk factor). Change Management Theory and Organisation Resilience Theory are used as two theoretical frameworks that underpin the study. The research paradigm of the study is qualitative and the research design and method is exploratory. The exploratory nature of qualitative research was selected given that the COVID-19 pandemic is a recent and hitherto minimally research area with limited information. Twenty participants who held senior leadership positions were interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule. Due to social distancing regulations, the majority of the interviews were conducted via 45 minute zoom sessions. The data collected was analysed using Tesch's data analysis model. The method of data analysis applied was thematic analysis. The data collected was analysed using Tesch's data analysis model. The study findings include that the COVID-19 crisis has provided an opportunity for NPOs to strategise for growth opportunities and to rethink services and programmes. NPOs with poor crisis and risk management strategies and practices were most at risk of closure during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, NPOs have proved to have resilience in their ability to pivot and adapt services and programmes. Emotional support for staff combined with staff passion fostered a collective organisation culture of teamwork and commitment to their jobs despite the challenges and in some cases, reduced salaries. Integrating technology in service delivery was crucial for NPO survival. During a crisis, a hybrid model of online and face-to-face services can be provided and may be the new normal of rendering services. Donor fatigue is a concern considering the financial shocks from the external environment and marked by the economic downturn in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study concludes by providing five suggestions for future research, namely, 1) the cost-benefit of rendering services online, 2) donor fatigue, 3) Government support offered to NPOs during the COVID-19 pandemic, 4) compulsory COVID-19 vaccination in the workplace and 5) the integration of technology in poor socio-economic environment.

Keywords: NPO's, COVID-19, Change Management, Leadership, Organisational Resilience, hybrid-service delivery model, donor fatigue

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend a word of gratitude to those who have enabled me to start and complete this study with their assistance, support and encouragement.

I would like to thank all the participants who took the time to contribute to this research study. Your unwavering support for our communities in an uncertain and unprecedented time does not go unnoticed.

A special thanks to my supervisor, Eric Atmore, for his continuous support, guidance and time throughout the process of this research project. Thank you for always reminding me that “in Africa, we do not panic”.

Special thanks and acknowledgment go my dearest mother and father, Ria Tinnion and Dave Cochran, for being a pillar of strength throughout this process and always believing that I am capable of something great.

To my friends, colleagues and students, thank you for always encouraging me to push through the difficult moments of self-doubt.

To the Tremblay family, thank you for your love and support.

To Alrick September, thank you for keeping me smiling

Lastly, my dog, Moccasin, for his late-night companionship and unconditional love.

TABLE OF CONTENT

PLAGIARISM DECLARATION.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENT	vi
LIST OF TABLES	viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH STUDY	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT	1
1.3 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	3
1.4 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM	4
1.5 RESEARCH TOPIC	4
1.6 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	4
1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	5
1.8 MAIN RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS	5
1.9 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS	5
1.10 STRUCTURE OF THIS RESEARCH REPORT	7
1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	8
1.12 REFLEXIVITY.....	10
1.13 SUMMARY	11
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	12
2.1 INTRODUCTION	12
2.2 LITERATURE.....	12
2.2.1 The role of NPO leadership in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.....	12
2.2.2 The role of NPO management in responding to the covid-19 pandemic.....	14
2.2.3 The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on NPO operations.....	17
2.2.4 The lessons learned by the NPO sector in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.....	20
2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS	24
2.4 RELEVANT LEGISLATION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT.....	28
2.5 SUMMARY	30
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	32
3.1 INTRODUCTION	32
3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN	32
3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING	33
3.4 DATA COLLECTION	34
3.5 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY	38

3.6	SUMMARY	39
CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS		40
4.1	INTRODUCTION	40
4.2	PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS	40
4.3	FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION	43
4.4	RESEARCH STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	44
4.4.1	Theme 1: The role of leadership in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.....	44
4.4.2	Theme 2: The role of management in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.....	52
4.4.3	Theme 3: The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on organisations’ operations.....	61
4.4.4	Theme 4: Lessons learned by the NPO sector in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.....	75
4.5	SUMMARY	81
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS		82
5.1	INTRODUCTION	82
5.2	THE PROBLEM CONTEXT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS	82
5.3	CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE STUDY FINDINGS	82
5.3.1	NPO leaders’ responses to the COVID-19 pandemic.....	83
5.3.2	NPO management response to the COVID-19 pandemic.....	83
5.3.3	COVID-19 pandemic and organisations’ service delivery and programmes	83
5.3.4	Lessons learned by the NPO sector in light of the COVID-19 pandemic	84
5.4	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	84
5.4.1	Risk management and strategic planning	84
5.4.2	Financial risk management strategies and practices	84
5.4.3	Training and skills development.....	85
5.4.4	Incorporating Change Management capacity into the NPO sector.....	85
5.4.5	Investing in technology and staff technology skills.....	85
5.4.6	Staff wellbeing.....	85
5.4.7	Communication.....	86
5.4.8	Diversify income.....	86
5.5	SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	86
5.5.1	The cost-benefit of rendering services online.....	86
5.5.2	Donor fatigue	87
5.5.3	Government support offered to NPOs during the COVID-19 pandemic	87
5.5.4	Compulsory COVID-19 vaccination in the workplace.....	87
5.5.5	Integration of technology in poor socio-economic environment.....	88
5.6	CONCLUDING STATEMENT	88
REFERENCES		89
Annexure A: informed consent participation letter		96

Annexure B: Letter from department.....	98
Annexure C: Interview schedule questions.....	99
Annexure D: Tabulated main findings.....	102

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1 Profile of the research study participants.....	38
2 Statistical representation of research study participants' field of service delivery....	39
3 Statistical representation of research study participants' position in the organisation.....	40
4 Framework of analysis.....	41

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic's true impact on the NPO sector is not yet known. Many organisations operated during lockdown, responding to the crisis by providing essential services, food relief and medical supplies to vulnerable communities across the country. These interventions formed an integral part of a collective national response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on organisation operations is substantial and affects various aspects of organisation operations beyond the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. Leadership and management responses are central to promote NPO's sustainability beyond this global crisis.

In this chapter the context of the problem and significance of the research is set out followed by outlining the topic, main research questions, research objectives and assumptions of the study. Hereafter, key concepts are clarified and ethical considerations and reflexivity are discussed.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Originating in Wuhan China in December 2019, the spread of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus two, known as COVID-19, has taken on pandemic proportions. Globally, COVID-19 affected over 100 countries in a matter of weeks, rapidly reaching the necessary epidemiological criteria for it to be declared a pandemic (Remuzzi and Remuzzi, 2020: 1). COVID-19 has infected nearly 395 million people (Worldometer Statistics, 2022) in over 100 countries. Remuzzi and Remuzzi (2020), opined this posed considerable public health challenges to health authorities and governments, as well as major political, scientific, social and economic challenges. The rapid spread of COVID-19 required a coordinated global response.

National governments and international bodies imposed unprecedented measures on individuals, institutions and communities in an attempt to reduce COVID-19 transmission rates (World Health Organisation, 2020). Countries across the globe implemented compulsory social and physical distancing, hand sanitising measures, limited mass gatherings and international travel and mask-wearing in public to slow the spread of the virus.

In several countries more drastic measures were adopted and countries were placed under national lockdown (World Health Organisation, 2020). Schools, museums, cinemas, theatres and any other social, recreational, or cultural centres was closed. Gathering in public spaces was forbidden, including sporting events and funerals. Most shops, apart from pharmacies and grocery stores selling essential products were closed. Measures for the public included introducing flexible work arrangements such as teleworking, distance learning and closure of non-essential facilities and services. Local and national movement restrictions and staying at home measures were implemented to reduce and avoid crowding, aimed to shield and protect vulnerable groups.

An article written by Professors Goldin and Muggah (2020), two University of Oxford professors, highlighted the immediate ramifications of lockdown on individuals, society and businesses. Professors Goldin and Muggah (2020) compared the COVID-19 pandemic to the Second World War, due to the significant threat to humanity. Research by the World Health Organisation (2020) supported these findings, not merely due to the exponentially rising death toll causing a burden on the health care system but the effect on the socio-economic climate of countries across the globe. The World Health Organisation (2020) research predicted that the devastating economic impact would cause a recession that can only be compared to the Great Depression, a decade before World War 2, due to the severe impact on the economy, employment rate and the stock market.

A working paper published by the United Nations University (2020) highlights the potential short-term economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic at a global level. The research indicates that the economic impact of lockdown will especially be evident in the developing world. In countries such as South Africa, the existing socio-economic climate will see the inequality gap between the wealthy and poor increase. South Africa is a unique, complex and

unequal society with more than 55% of the population being poor and vulnerable (STATS SA, 2018). Munshi (2020) argues that lockdown will exacerbate the social issues, as well as create new problems, which will need to be addressed by the non-profit sector. Organisations in South Africa working to combat and alleviate the effects of poverty on communities may be further challenged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has infected 3.62 million people in South Africa (WorldoMeter Statistics, 2022). The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have far reaching implications for the role that NPOs play in the lives of millions of South Africans (NGO Pulse, 2020). NPOs in the Western Cape provide valuable and essential services that supplement social services provided by the government. At the same time, NPOs function in ever-changing social, economic and political environments and they need to be sustainable and adaptable in order to thrive (Department of Social Development [DSD], 2006). Gastrow (2020) opined that South Africa cannot afford to overlook the importance of the non-profit sector in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.3 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There are several scholarly studies available on crisis management, including strategic management and leadership, organisation theory, organisation strategy and planning and organisation behaviour. Organisations facing a crisis are therefore not a new area of study, particularly in the NPO sector. It is well known that the sustainability of the NPO in South Africa is a central and critical issue. However, the COVID-19 pandemic is unique in that the true impact of the pandemic on NPOs is not yet known. The COVID-19 pandemic is not an event with a defined beginning or end and it is likely to remain an ongoing threat for the foreseeable future. This situation makes NPOs extremely vulnerable, some NPOs having closed and others experiencing a decrease in funding or fear funding cuts in the short term.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic is a current and ongoing pandemic, having started in December 2019 and impacting South Africa in March 2020, this study is exploratory. By adopting an exploratory approach to my research study, the aim is to explore a phenomenon that is in the

early stages and its impact on NPOs is not yet known. The purpose of the study is to gain information to better understand a problem that is not yet clearly defined and where minimal focused research exists. The study aims to generate recommendations that can be useful in supporting NPOs sustainability and survival in the face of uncertainty.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

This research study seeks to explore the Western Cape non-profit organisation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The research topic is: An exploratory study of Western Cape province non-profit organisation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.5 RESEARCH TOPIC

An exploratory study of Western Cape Non-Profit Organisation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.6 MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question in this study was:

What has been the response of NPOs in the Western Cape province to the COVID-19 pandemic?

In this study, there were four secondary questions:

- 1) What has been the role of NPO leaders in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- 2) What has been the role of NPO management in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic?
- 3) What was the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the organisation's operations?
- 4) What lessons can be learned by the NPO sector in light of the COVID-19 pandemic?

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In this study, there were five research objectives:

- 1) To explore the response of NPOs in the Western Cape province of South Africa to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2) To understand the role of NPO leaders in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3) To understand the role of NPO management in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4) To understand the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the organisation's operations.
- 5) To explore the lessons learned by the NPO sector in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.8 MAIN RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

In this study, four research assumptions were made.

- 1) NPO leaders need extensive roles and adaptable skills in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2) Organisation management has an especially important role to play in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3) The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on organisation operations will be substantial and affects various aspects of organisation operations beyond the end of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 4) Significant lessons in mitigating and managing the risk will be learned by the NPO sector in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.9 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The main concepts that I clarified are;

COVID-19 is a severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus two, known as COVID-19. Originating in Wuhan China in December 2019, COVID-19 has taken on pandemic proportions. Globally, COVID-19 affected over 100 countries in a matter of weeks, rapidly

reaching the necessary epidemiological criteria for it to be declared a pandemic (Remuzzi and Remuzzi, 2020: 1)

Response is the activity or inhibition of the previous activity of an organism or any of its parts, in relation to a change in the environment. In human behaviour, a response speaks to an event or to something that is said and is your reply or reaction to it (Collins English Dictionary, 2021).

The non-profit sector is defined by the Western Cape Department of Social Development (2009; 1) as a trust, company or other association of persons established for a public purpose and the income and property of which are not distributable to its members or office bearers except as reasonable compensation for services rendered.

Non-Profit Organisation in South Africa a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) is defined, in terms of the Republic of South Africa's Non-Profit Organisations Act, No. 71 of 1997, as a trust, company or other association of persons established for a public purpose and of which it's income and property are not distributable to its members or office bearers except as reasonable compensation for services rendered.

Operations in the context of this study are defined as operations management (OM). According to Artaya (2019: 2) operations management is the business function that plans, organises, coordinates and controls the resources needed to produce a company's goods and services. Operations management is a management function. It involves managing people, equipment, technology, information and many other resources. Operations management is the central core function of every organisation. This is true whether the organisation is large or small, provides a physical good or a service, is for-profit or not-for-profit.

1.10 STRUCTURE OF THIS RESEARCH REPORT

This research report consists of five chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter One introduces the research study, explores the background to the problem and describes the rationale and significance of the study. Ethical considerations and the key concepts of the research study are set out and defined.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter Two examines the literature available in the field on the non-profit sector with a specific focus on leadership, management, policy and procedures, operations and the future of NPO's in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Change Management Theory and Organisation Resilience Theory are set out as two theoretical frameworks that underpin the study. The chapter also describes the policy and legislation that pertains to the NPO sector in South Africa, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Policy focuses on the Occupational Health and Safety Act, No.85 of 1994, Health and Safety Policies and Procedures (HOS) and the Disaster Management Act, No. 57 of 2002.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Chapter Three details the research design and methodology that was used in this study. The research paradigm of the study is qualitative and the research design and method is exploratory. The methodology chapter also outlines the data collection tools and data collection method and the data analysis and verification undertaken. The chapter ends by setting out the limitations of the study.

Chapter 4: Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of Findings

Chapter Four presents the research findings and my analysis thereof. The findings are set out and described, supported by qualitative data, represented by verbatim quotes from the participants. The findings are discussed in relation to the literature presented in Chapter Two.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter Five concludes the study and makes recommendations on the effect the COVID-19 pandemic has had on NPOs in the Western Cape province, South Africa.

1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2011: 56) define ethics as follows; “Ethics is a set of moral principles that are suggested by an individual or group, are subsequently widely accepted and offer rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, sponsors, employers, assistants, students and other researchers”. I obtained ethical clearance from the University of Cape Town Department of Social Development for this study on the 25th of February 2021.

Informed consent

Informed consent is fundamental in research as it ensures the respondents’ participation in the study (De Vos et al, 2011). Participants in this study were required to sign a consent form (see Annexure A) which highlights the purpose and objectives of the study as well as the nature and logistics concerning the interview. Additionally, I started the interview with a “contracting phase”, explaining that the participants informed was of utmost importance.

Privacy, Anonymity and confidentiality

The right of participants to determine the extent to which their information will be revealed by the researcher, according to De Vos et al. (2011), explains anonymity and confidentiality. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms instead of actual names have been used. The participants were all informed that identifying information gathered will only be seen by myself and my university supervisor. Participants were also made aware that they could withdraw their participation at any point in the study if they felt that anonymity and confidentiality were being compromised. Participants were informed prior to the interviews taking place that the interview would be audio recorded for data collection purposes. I provided all participants with the option for their cameras to be off throughout the interview process should they wish, to ensure anonymity. The element of privacy, refers to personal privacy, whereas confidentiality is the protection of information shared (De Vos, 2005: 51). Privacy was ensured by informing participants that a private room and space where the interview will not be interrupted, both in person and via zoom, is to be acquired and secured prior.

Voluntary participation

Babbie and Mouton (2009) state that voluntary participation entails making sure that participants agree and take part in the research freely and of their own free will. The participants in this study received a letter informing them of the purpose and the objectives of the research study with the researcher's contact details, requesting them to take part in the research study. Furthermore, the participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time during the study if they felt uncomfortable or that they were being compromised.

Debriefing

Due to the in-depth nature of the information gathered in qualitative research, it is advised that participants are debriefed at the end of the interview process (De Vos et al., 2011). In this study debriefing covered how the participant experienced the interview, providing the opportunity to

address any questions or concerns and other matters. I used this time to confirm the confidentiality of the information expressed in the interview process.

No harm to participants

Babbie and Mouton (2009) opined no harm to participants refers to the protection of research participants emotional, psychological or physical detriment to the participants. In the “contracting phase” I explained that there were no anticipated risks or harm that could emanate from participating in the study. Participants were informed that they may withdraw at any time during the study process if they felt uncomfortable or that they were being harmed. In this study there was no harm to participants.

Competence of the researcher

Researchers are obliged to ensure that they are adequately skilled to undertake a research project (De Vos et al., 2011). As part of my studies, I have completed courses in social work and psychology research that have equipped me with the skills and knowledge necessary to conduct this research study. I have also completed my honours research dissertation and am skilled in conducting interviews as a means of data collection.

1.12 REFLEXIVITY

Reflexivity is defined as the awareness of how the researcher’s responses and biases influence the outcome of the study (De Vos et al., 2011). Bryman (2012; 393) adds that reflexivity “entails sensitivity to the researcher’s cultural, political and social context.” The context within which a researcher finds oneself impacts their views, beliefs, experiences and values. This in turn may impact how the researcher interprets data. It was important for me to be aware and examine this and to become aware of it so that I was conscious of any potential biases and personal opinions which may have influenced this research study.

During the data collection phase, I wanted to get a true reflection of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the NPO sector given my work experience within the NPO sector. Before commencing this study, I was of the view that the need for NPOs to meet social development needs was crucial, but the COVID-19 pandemic would render many NPOs unable to meet the needs of beneficiaries. I had to take care to not interpret my findings in a way that supported this assumption if it was not the case. By being aware of these factors I was better able to set them aside during the research process. Furthermore, I have a good working relationship with my supervisor, who guided and supported me throughout the research study. This was done to maintain a neutral stance throughout the research process.

1.13 SUMMARY

This chapter explored the research topic and introduced the study. The main research objectives and assumptions were set out, as well as the key concepts referred to in this study. This chapter highlighted the significance of the study and provided a statement of the research problem. Ethical considerations relevant to the study were discussed and how they were upheld is shown. I also reflected on my role and involvement in the study. An outline of the structure of the study was provided. The chapter that follows presents literature relevant to the research topic.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two comprises of a thematic review of literature relevant to NPOs response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The literature was sourced from relevant international and local journal articles, Google Scholar and books. The literature review begins with the role of leadership and management in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on organisations' operations is then discussed, focusing on service delivery, staff and finances. Thereafter, the lessons learned by NPOs in light of the COVID-19 pandemic are discussed. The two theoretical models that underpin the study are then defined and critically discussed. Lastly, relevant policy and legislation are discussed.

2.2 LITERATURE

This section systematically addresses the 'themes' linked to the objectives of the research study. This literature review is set out under four headings. Each heading has several sub-headings.

2.2.1 The role of NPO leadership in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic

Calep, Coolidge and Bartcza (2020) opined organisations that remain resilient during challenging times tend to have a strong and diffuse approach to leadership that enables them to make quick decisions in response to evolving challenges. Adaptability in the face of uncertainty becomes crucial for organisation sustainability when in crisis. Munshi (2020) highlighted the fact that leaders are crucial in creating a safe work environment, communicating COVID-19 protocols and adjustments to operations.

Leadership in a VUCA world

Organisation leaders in the 21st century face dynamic and profound change that is unprecedented with the speed, intensity and frequency of change, ascending rapidly to produce volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) operating environments (Rimita, 2019). The pandemic has forced political leaders, business leaders and individuals across various

societal sectors to adapt in the face of these VUCA circumstances (Rimita, 2019). Travis (2017) reported that a crisis places pressure on those in leadership positions. Crises, however, can provide opportunities for development and growth as it calls for a “transformational” approach to leadership. Chikwanda (2020) opined that leadership needs to be innovative and adaptable to drive success and the survival of an organisation. Leadership strategies are crucial in a crisis such as a pandemic.

In a rapidly changing environment, individuals in leadership roles need to develop new policies pertaining to working remotely, office behaviour and culture, protecting the health and wellbeing of staff, maintaining programmes and services and sustaining financial viability (McMullin and Raggo, 2020). Leaders have now been tasked with adaptive leadership strategies and management requirements such as social distancing rules, reacting to the sudden loss of funding streams, shifting their priorities and adopting modern technology. Di’Vanna and Maris (2004) argue that ambiguity in implementation needs to be understood in depth by those in leadership positions and cannot be avoided and thus flexibility becomes as important as adaptability in navigating uncertainty.

Leadership adaptability

Chikwanda (2020) argues that, in a rapidly changing world, many leaders of NPOs lack strategies to build and maintain organisation sustainability in times of crisis. Frequent changes and ambiguous and uncertain environments may prove challenging for leaders to balance the conflicting and opposing issues maturely and calmly to thrive in the unknown. A lack of leader confidence and control follows events that cause uncertainty, which unfortunately leads to inaction, sluggishness in responses and indecision (Horney and O’Shea, 2015). Drucker (2004) highlights that action plans are not always successful and therefore leaders must have the ability to pivot and adapt, turning problems into learning opportunities.

Adapting to a rapidly changing environment requires leaders to be proactive rather than reactive (Botelho, Powel, Kincaid & Wang, 2017). Leaders must also be willing to grow within and from every situation that presents itself. Lazenby (2014) states that adaptable leaders are those who support employees by empowering commitment and motivating employees to implement strategic change as necessary, often making the difficult decisions needed for an

organisation's survival. Leadership's key role is therefore adaptability and influencing others to do the same.

Leadership and communication

Di' Vanna and Maris (2004) argue that indecisiveness and delayed communication can have a negative impact on staff morale and momentum to make the change required. Calep et al. (2020) and Chikwanda (2020), reported frequent and transparent communication with staff and good governance practices help build and maintain the kind of trust a productive culture requires. Adding that, clear communication and participation with staff in decision-making are crucial in facilitating a culture of change and adaptation required for organisation sustainability in a crisis. Chikwanda (2020) states that communication must be non-intimidating, transparent, regular, accessible to all, readily available and able to be put into practice. Solutions provided must be based on understanding, skills and offerings. Moreover, communication is a tool that can provide a platform to prioritise, learn from past experiences, motivate and organise others to think conceptually and ultimately make informed decisions that impact the entire team.

Calep et al. (2020) argue that communication needs to extend beyond the office and engagement with a range of stakeholders is important to maintain communication, stay informed of what is happening and share relevant information about service delivery and strategy. For leaders and managers to be successful, they need to communicate effectively. Harvey, Holland, Hensley, Cummins (2013) highlights that successful leadership is not solely focused on the purpose of the business but also on the wellbeing of its employees, creating a working environment that fosters teamwork and active participation.

2.2.2 The role of NPO management in responding to the covid-19 pandemic

Management has the task of short-term repairs versus long-term sustainability for an organisation's survival (Di'Vanna and Maris, 2004). According to Rimita (2019), sudden changes create challenges for organisations built to operate in relative stability, adhering to set plans and routines with fixed structures built for reliability. Annarelli and Nonino (2020) state that strategic management acts as a coping mechanism for turbulent and unprecedented times. Lazenby (2014) writes that external environments for both the private and public sectors in South Africa can be summarised as in flux and volatile. To cope with this ever-

changing environment and to deliver sustainable, efficient, effective and quality services, strategic management principles and strategic approaches are important for managers (Lazenby, 2014). Strategic management can help NPOs manage and respond to environmental change and improve organisation decision-making, help manage organisation relationships and external interactions, drive goal accomplishment and improve performance (Miller, 2019).

Internal and external role of management

Managers have the responsibility of evaluating the influence and impact of the external environment on an organisation and its strategy. Key tasks involved in environmental analysis include the identification of threats and opportunities, analysing areas for change and potential crisis as well as areas for growth and meeting the needs of stakeholders and beneficiaries, taking into consideration the strategic plan and mission of the organisation (Amos, Davis, Hamann, Neuland, Jansen van Rensburg, & Callaghan, 2019).

Managers must be conscious of external political, economic, social, technological, legal and environmental changes that may pose a risk to the organisation. Managers are then tasked with incorporating and aligning the organisation's strategic plan with evaluation tools, techniques and strategies to deal with external change and challenges. This speaks to internal resources, competencies, human resources, materials, information and finances. This process may require alternative strategies to be developed or existing ones to be adjusted to safeguard organisation survival (Amos, et al., 2019). Lazenby (2014) argues that managers who are unable to identify, monitor, forecast and evaluate key external forces and adjust their strategy accordingly are one of the leading causes for the decline of an organisation.

Di'Vanna and Maris (2004) argue that managers have the role and responsibility to involve all levels of individuals in planning and strategic thinking and to instill awareness of crisis management and the recovery process. They further argue that mobilising existing resources, reflecting on organisational capacity and developing skills are key in including employees in strategic planning and motivating collective participation in an organisation's survival. Encouraging collective participation in a time of change is a crucial tool to foster consistency and predictability in the face of uncertainty.

Strategic Management

According to Lazenby (2014), strategic management is a requirement for all organisations to plan and prepare themselves for any unforeseen circumstances. Di’Vanna and Maris (2004) argue that despite organisations’ best efforts to predict the future, there are unpredictable factors that can render strategic plans valueless. One of the key factors to alter this outcome is the organisation’s ability to handle and manage both the ambiguities of the environment and associated uncertainties. Strategic management focuses on an organisation’s ability to adapt to changes in the environment, reliability of its operational systems and the agility of a system to answer and react to changes in uncertain and changing environments (Lazenby, 2014). Lazenby (2014) reported flexibility, competence, responsiveness and willingness of those in management roles as crucial in the recovery level and time in restoring financial resources, social resources relationships with stakeholders, internal and external based on trust and transparency, good leadership and fellowship from employees.

Crisis management and risk management

According to Di’Vanna and Maris (2004; 84) crisis management “is a strategy used to combat uncertainty, risks and ambiguities.” NPOs are a key component of today’s society and are not exempt from a crisis. It is therefore fundamental that organisations analyse the level of risk that threats pose to organisation survival. Risk management is central to an organisation’s strategic management. Risk has been defined as: “Uncertain future events which could influence the achievement of the organisation’s strategic, operational and financial objectives”. (Collier and Agyei-Ampomah, 2006; 1). For management purposes, risks are usually divided into categories such as environmental, operational, financial, legal compliance, information and personnel. Management must identify, evaluate, manage and report risk for improved external decision making.

Collier and Agyei-Ampomah (2006) opined risk management protects and adds value to the organisation and its stakeholders through supporting the organisation’s objectives by improving decision making, planning and prioritisation by a comprehensive and structured understanding of the VUCA world in which organisations operate. Through engaging in this process, volatility is reduced and operation optimised, protecting the organisation from external risk factors. Collier and Agyei-Ampomah (2006) suggest that in all types of undertaking, there

is the potential for events and consequences that constitute opportunities for benefit (upside) or threats to success (downside). Suggesting that when management focuses on risk beyond negative consequences it can provide opportunities for growth. Integrating risk management into continuous development process in the organisation's strategy and the implementation of that strategy can translate into the culture of the organisation and operational objectives.

2.2.3 The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on NPO operations

The unprecedented scale and pace of change brought about as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged NPOs in multiple areas of their work (McMullin and Raggo, 2020). A survey published by Independent Sector (2020) indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significantly negative impact on the services, operations and people working in the non-profit sector. Chikwanda's (2020) study on the challenges faced by NPOs during the pandemic found that the main challenge faced by organisations was to scale back on services to keep the organisation operational. Barnard (2020) found that the negative impact on the NPO sector was a decline in revenue from events, individual donations and grants received, forced limited services and retrenchment of staff or reduced pay.

Finances and funding

Most NPOs are dependent on grant funding and individual donations to support their operations (Calep, Coolidge and Bartcza, 2020). As the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in businesses and households experiencing financial hardship, limited funding and support are available for organisations that rely primarily on donations (Calep, et al., 2020). Independent Sector's (2020; 1) study quantified the significance of the disruption to funding streams; the study found that 83% of organisations experienced a reduction in revenue and contributions between April 2020 - April 2019. Bam (2020) attributed the drastic reduction in revenue to cancelled events and services during the lockdown, reduced service delivery due to social distancing and the ability to relate in person with donors. As local and international funders are affected by economic downturns, less funding will be available to support NPOs.

Barnard's (2020) study found that the negative funding situation made NPOs extremely vulnerable and some NPOs were already experiencing a significant decrease in funding or feared funding cuts in the future. Bosman's (2020) study on funding of NPOs during the height

of the COVID-19 pandemic found that relief for organisations represented a large part of the Department of Social Development's (DSD) budget, contributing significantly to the poor and vulnerable in the Western Cape. In the 2019/20 fiscal year, a total of 2 186 NPOs received such funding from the DSD. Barnard (2020) highlighted several initiatives that have emerged to support NPOs under financial pressure because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Initiatives included an emergency fund launched by CAF Southern Africa to support NPOs that provide essential services to the most marginalised communities in the country and the emergency Gap Fund created by the Mergon Group to support NPOs. This funding offered to all small NPOs with a budget of less than R5 million per annum was a once-off offer and particularly focused on organisations that deliver food to vulnerable groups. The National Lotteries Commission (NLC) released R150 million as a relief measure to NPOs experiencing financial challenges and at risk of reduction and termination of service delivery to those in need (Barnard, 2020).

The Temporary Employee/Employer Relief Scheme (TERS) fund offered by the state under the Disaster Management Act in partnership with the Department of Employment and Labour was allocated a budget of R40 billion by the Government. A media statement released in February 2021 by a spokesperson for the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) stated that as of that date the fund had paid out approximately R60 billion since March 2020 (Government Communications, 2021). The spokesperson acknowledged that not all sectors were fully operational and that assistance was required to roll out the payments owed to applicants and recipients. The Solidarity Fund was created by Government as a platform for all South Africans, from the public and private sector to civil society as well as the general public, to unite the nation in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic (Solidarity fund, 2020; 1). The fund is designed as a rapid response vehicle that aims to support the various government and NPOs in the prevention, detection, medical and humanitarian support.

Job security and pay

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to funding interruptions and increased demand for services and safety concerns, many organisations have been forced to make difficult staffing and compensation decisions (Independent Sector, 2020). A study by Tshikululu (2020) showed that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on staff retainment, with many organisations facing the threat of downsizing and retrenching staff while the need for their services has increased. Bam (2020) found that employees were operating with a degree of

uncertainty regarding job security due to the instability and uncertainty around financial support.

Working remotely

A study by Tshikululu (2020) found that NPOs have had to navigate how to comply with social distancing and health and safety protocols in their offices. Munshi's (2020) study argued that remote working has provided the means for organisations to ensure that proper occupational health and safety measures are in place to promote a working environment that protects staff. Oeheler's (2020) study on professionals who worked remotely during the lockdown and, for some organisations, for a period hereafter, found that working remotely could also be efficient. Bam (2020) and Oeheler's (2020) study found that employees were faced with a new kind of burnout and establishing a remote working policy was beneficial to staff wellbeing.

Oeheler's (2020) study found that companies that established policies for working remotely remained productive. Bam (2020) supported this finding, suggesting that offering staff flexible working arrangements were found to boost productivity. Wheatley (2017) found that flexibility was one of the most important determinants of employee satisfaction and retention. Not surprisingly, flexible work arrangements, such as remote working and flexible working arrangements, have been adopted in the NPO sector. Flexibility, through remote working, has been adopted as a tool to retain staff. Bam (2020) highlighted that in light of reduced pay and increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 in previous office conditions, such flexibility was crucial for operations to continue.

On the other hand, Chikwanda (2020) found that working remotely gave rise to many new challenges. Findings indicated that the main challenge was ensuring that employees adhere to the responsibility surrounding the new way of delivering services. The study argued that in order to monitor the work ethos of staff working remotely, platforms that promoted online connectivity were crucial. Orsmond (2020) argued that the challenges associated with working remotely have been both technical and behavioural. The study found that the adaptability of the behaviours, mindsets, attitudes and beliefs of staff have been key to the success of this type of change. Bam (2020) found that due to the resource constraints highlighted in Orsmond's (2020) study, it was not possible for all staff to work from home. Assessing staff access to

resources and the organisation's ability to support their needs to deliver services were fundamental to remote working success.

Service delivery and programmes

Tshikululu (2020) reported NPOs that remained operational during the COVID-19 pandemic experienced an increased demand for their services. The study refers to this as a double-barrel dilemma, with many NPOs running on reduced resources and still providing essential services, food relief and medical supplies to vulnerable communities across South Africa. As NPOs play a vital role in trying to alleviate the challenges and inequalities within our societies, the crisis poses the twin burden of financial survival and organisation sustainability amidst the increasing need for services in response to the societal consequences of the pandemic. Independent Sector (2020; 1) found that 23% of organisations that remained operational reported an increase in demand for services. On the other hand, Bam (2020) found that many organisations were forced to close their doors or scale back on services due to fewer available staff.

Chikwanda (2020) found that NPOs were one of the first to develop and implement solutions to continue their work under difficult conditions. Tshikululu (2020) found that organisations demonstrated resilience in an exceedingly difficult year by adopting new ways of working to ensure that they remain operational and able to deliver needed services to communities. Calep et al. (2020) support these findings, highlighting that many organisations are changing the way they deliver programmes and services. Their study found that organisations were forming new partnerships to extend their reach and impact and even advocating systemic change. Bam (2020) argued that despite the quick call to action in the NPO sector, the crisis has highlighted the slow pace of service delivery in some areas.

2.2.4 The lessons learned by the NPO sector in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Research shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the NPO sector. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are far reaching and have caused an unprecedented degree of change and upheaval. This raises the question of whether organisations within the NPO sector will revert to practices pre COVID or whether the changes will become the "new normal." Orsmond (2020) pointed out that organisations have been forced to do business

differently. The study found that most staff were required to work remotely or from home and that business processes have had to change rapidly for organisations to survive.

Independent Sector (2020) reported that the main short-term challenges faced by NPOs were their inability to fulfil their service delivery mandate despite the increased need for services, having to retrench staff due to financial constraints, the investment in technological purchases required to carry out work and the importance of strategic planning to obtain long-term sustainability. Calep et al. (2020) argued that organisations need to consider possible changes in client needs, behaviours and the operating environment, creating innovative approaches or solutions for organisations survival.

Chikwanda (2020) found that although there were many challenges, opportunities also emerged. Chikwanda (2020) found that despite the challenges faced by NPO, organisations that remained operational were adaptable and flexible to change in a period of crisis, enhancing organisation resilience. NPOs are not immune from disruptions, however, NPOs have shown resilience and adaptability

Prioritising staff wellbeing

Employees of front-line organisations are faced with personal risks due to daily interactions with clients and possible COVID-19 exposure. McKnight and Gouweloos (2021), reported front-line services have adversely impacted the mental health of employees in this sector. Tshikululu (2020) found that among the main fears staff had during the pandemic (in no particular order of severity) were fear for their safety (getting infected with COVID-19), loss of their job, decreased income and increased stress levels. Oehler (2020) supported this finding, stating that employees are at a new risk of burnout. Fear of job losses, isolation, the need for adequate and reliable technology, fatigue and extreme stress, combined with wider societal anxieties around the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of a clear endpoint, is likely to result in a reduction in employee wellbeing and engagement and will pose a once-in-a-generation challenge for business leaders. While the pandemic has had a significant impact on NPOs from operations and funding perspective, the mental health of those involved within the NPO sector also requires attention.

Tshikululu (2020) found that NPO employees are overworked, at risk of reduction in pay and are facing trauma and lack of resources every day. Tshikululu partnered with SADAG (South African Depression and Anxiety Group) to provide psychological first aid to NPO leaders, staff and volunteers, many of whom are experiencing unprecedented strain and burnout caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The partnership called NPOwer aims to support NPOs that are experiencing staff burnout by providing emotional support to staff. Support for staff's emotional wellbeing was found to be crucial in continued operations, however, it was not prioritised by all NPOs.

Technological advancements

Orsmond (2020) found that the ability to provide sufficient infrastructure and systems for employees to work from home was a challenge. Bam (2020) attributed this to all staff members not having equal access to resources and organisations not all having the resources and means to provide the tools necessary for staff to work remotely. Chikwanda's (2020) study highlighted that working remotely required an investment in the required technological devices and training for remote working to be successful in programme delivery. With organisations operating under strained funding, financial means to provide the resources, infrastructure and training required for employees to work remotely became the main challenge (Bam, 2020). The reality is that advances in technology are only beneficial to organisations that can afford to implement them. Moreover, not all NPOs will adopt remote work practices as not all services provided by the NPO sector are appropriate for remote work and many by their very nature, require face-to-face service delivery. O'Brien and Bierce (2020) found that these challenges threaten the long-term success of such organisations. They found that 85% of NPOs indicated that technology is important to their long-term success, yet only 23% have a long-term strategy or vision for how they will implement and use technology (O'Brien and Bierce, 2020; 1). As NPOs have scrambled to shift to virtual operations, the need for strong systems and staff who can use them has become even more clear. Calep et al. (2020), reported that technological capacity is critical to business continuity and will remain critical during recovery, both for data-informed decision-making and as a method of delivering services at a lower cost and greater scale.

Alternative approaches to fundraising

O'Brien and Bierce (2020) found that the top NGO challenge six months into the COVID-19 pandemic was fundraising. The top three concerns for generating organisation revenue are (1) cancelled fundraising events (64.1%), (2) loss of funders or corporate partners (45.15%) and (3) challenges meeting funder requirements (38.46%) or grants/contracts with government agencies at risk (30.77%) (O'Brien and Bierce, 2020; 1). McKnight and Gouweloos (2021) argue that for organisations to survive, NPOs need to recognise the need to alter traditional funding procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic. Barnard (2020) found that NPOs are implementing specific fundraising efforts to gain urgent and immediate financial and in-kind donations to continue providing or expanding their programmes. Bam (2020) argued that NPOs directly or indirectly involved in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic should explore the opportunities that are available locally and globally to alleviate expected funding constraints. With the prospect of a reduction in donations, immediate attention should be given to prioritising how finances are managed. A recent survey from the Non-profit Finance Fund (cited in Calep et al., 2020; 1) found that most NPOs (60%) were experiencing destabilising conditions that threatened their long-term financial stability and even more (64%) expected to experience continued threats in the months ahead. The study highlights that NPOs need to find new ways to invest in their capacity and capability to allow them to sustainably continue to provide services in the future. Bam (2020) encouraged organisations to search for fundraising options on technological platforms, shifting the way of transacting and fundraising to smartphone users.

Adaptability for organisation survival

Chikwanda (2020) found that organisations that remained operational were able to transform uncertainties into opportunities by shifting focus or reimagining what their respective organisations are about and revisiting strategic planning and capacity of resources to adapt to sudden changes. The study argued that operational strategies and planning are crucial to maintaining sustainability. Lyons-Newman (2020) argued that the NPO sector is known for adaptability in the face of adversity, using innovation to shift programmes, services and communication methods to accommodate the constraints and survive the crisis. Calep et al. (2020), opined that the importance of adaptability became apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Munshi (2020) stated that these findings are not absolute, stating that although

NPOs may adopt strategies to build and maintain their sustainability, organisation's survival is under strain as they continue to provide crucial services despite limited resources and funds.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

A theoretical framework in research provides a context through which to understand the research problem or aspects of the research problem. The two theoretical frameworks that underpin this research study are discussed below, namely, Change Management Theory and Organisation Resilience Theory.

Change Management Theory

In today's constantly shifting market, organisation change has become unavoidable (Amos, et al., 2019). Change can be triggered by environmental change and requires organisations to make internal changes or have their survival threatened. Transformative technology, business innovation and global competition have made adaptability vital for companies that want to remain competitive in their industry (Amos, et al., 2019). With change being the only constant, businesses find themselves either becoming the drivers of that change or being driven by it. To adapt to change, organisations require the skills to successfully anticipate, articulate and act to build the organisation's competency for change. This applies especially to renewing an organisation's systems, infrastructure and operations (Amos, et al., 2019).

“Change management” refers to the process of change or transitioning of people, groups, companies and projects from one state to another (Belyh, 2019). Change management involves the application of structured methods and a pre-planned framework to direct business from its current state to the desired state. Changes may need to be introduced in relation to functional levels, inclusive of but not limited to operations, marketing, finance or the other aspects of a business that are needed to improve its chances of reaching its goals (Belyh, 2019). The Change Management Model was created by Kurt Lewin in the 1950s to understand organisation and structural change and remains valid today. Lewin's model focuses on three phases of organisation change, namely unfreezing, moving to the next level and refreezing. The definitions and figure below have been adapted from Khimani's (2013) comparative study of Lewin's change management model.

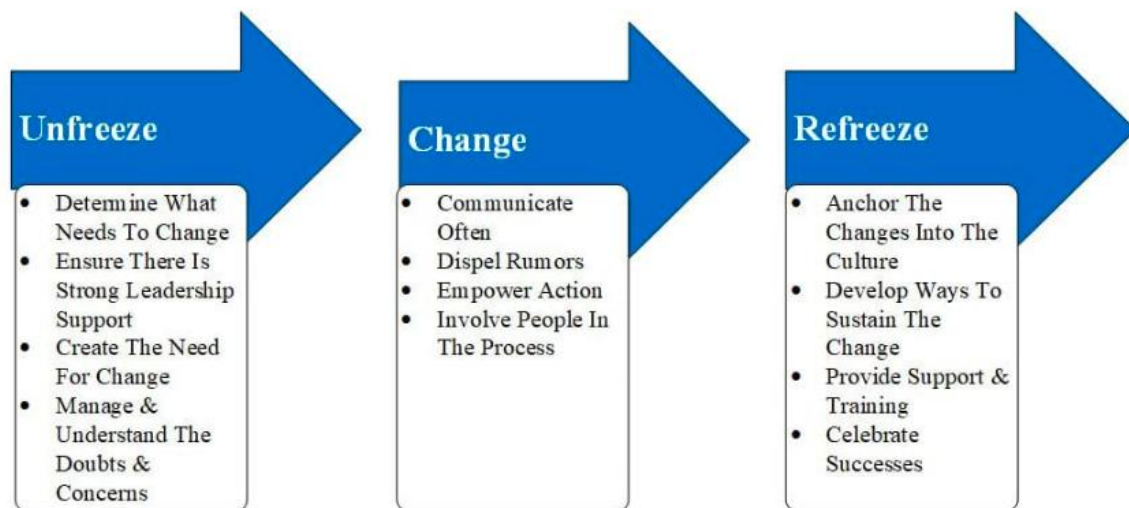


Figure 1: Lewin's Change Management Model (Khimani, 2013:1).

Unfreezing: Change management is an ongoing process that takes time, expertise, dedication and effort to implement and run. It requires the involvement of staff, especially those people who will be affected by the changes. In order for “unfreezing” to occur, employees need to abandon their current practices and cultural norms. It is important when the previous ways of doing things will no longer be applicable that managers and those in leadership positions prepare employees for the change that must happen. This includes having managers with the ability to perceive changes in the marketplace and who can pivot strategy and retool an organisation, not just to remain relevant but to thrive. At this stage, good leadership and reassurance are important because these aspects not only steer the process in the right direction but also make the process easier for staff or individuals who are involved. Communication and time thus are the key for this stage to take place successfully. Communication becomes crucial to mitigate resistance to change, educating and motivating staff towards change.

Moving to the next level: The required change is introduced. The time this will take depends on the number of changes that are required and the nature of the required change. Organisation culture can take many years to change, while changes in systems may be relatively easy and require a shorter amount of time.

Refreezing: The new behaviours and changes must be locked in to prevent the organisation from going back to its old way of doing things. The new way of doing things must be “frozen”

for it to become the norm. Leadership skills with the power to influence become the most crucial component to combat resistance to change, highlighting the importance of learning and working as a team, sharing a vision for the future and tapping into employees' skills, motivating collective means of change.

Those in leadership positions take on a crucial role in Organisations and need to actively coach their workforces through the stages. Leaders need to make appropriate and quick adjustments to the systems, processes, and structures. Organisations should also look at opportunities to innovate its operating model, proactively engage and communicate with all stakeholders and prioritise people's needs and staff-wellbeing, whilst maintaining the organisations continuity during uncertain times. Managing the process of change, therefore, becomes a crucial tool for organisation survival and sustainability in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Orsmond (2020), organisations that have accelerated change management to help them cope with the "new normal" brought about by the pandemic, have a better chance of survival compared with those organisations who have struggled or have been simply unable to cope with the pace of change.

Organisation Resilience Theory

Natural and societal environments in which organisations function and exist pose a series of challenges and threats and can disrupt operations, continuity and sustainability. In challenging contexts and environments, organisations need to be resilient (Annarelli et al., 2020). Resilience is a concept that has many definitions, depending on the areas of application. In organisation development literature, Vogus and Sutcliffe (2007; 418) define resilience as "the maintenance of positive adjustment under challenging conditions such that the organisation emerges from those conditions strengthened and more resourceful." According to Tshikululu (2020), organisation resilience speaks to an organisation's ability to overcome a crisis with mindfulness, optimism and energy, adapting and succeeding, regardless of the circumstances. Chikwanda's (2020) definition of organisation resilience is linked to organisation sustainability, speaking to the organisation's ability to respond productively to significant disruptive change and transform challenges into opportunities. Based on these definitions, organisation resilience is an organisation's ability to successfully adapt to external factors that threaten its existence and survival.

Annarelli et al. (2020), state the key factors that influence an organisation's resilience are organisation culture, internal communication, strategic decision-making and planning, employee engagement, ability to quickly spread information, enabling response and reaction promptly and reconfigure and alter an unexpected event. Gracey (2019) argues that a resilience framework is underpinned by the coordination of organisation resources, leadership adaptability, intelligence and communication, which enables the identification and analysis of strategic threats through shared situational awareness. Hereby, developing a strategic capability and contingency planning through foresight, situational awareness and strategic planning, multi-level repossesses, operational sustainability, learning culture and adaption during periods of uncertainty.

According to Annarelli et al. (2020; 1) resilience theory's application to organisations focuses on an "organisation's ability to face disruptions and unexpected events thanks to the strategic awareness and linked operational management of internal and external shocks." It speaks to preparedness (planning) and preventive measures that minimise the impact of threats, as well as the effectiveness of management and leadership to overcome and shorten the impact, maximising the organisation's recovery.

Developing an organisation resilience framework speaks to the ability of an organisation to anticipate, prepare for, respond to and adapt to incremental change and sudden disruptions in order to survive a crisis and prosper in a world of uncertainty. Most organisations are likely to encounter crises that have the potential to restrict or even end their functioning. The concept of resilience explains the differing outcomes that result from these experiences, with some organisations successfully addressing those crises and adapting to new situations, while others falter or fail. In this regard, resilience theory is crucial in understanding the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has on an NPO's ability to survive and sustain itself. By its very nature, there is a focus on leadership awareness, management of vulnerabilities and adaptive capacities in a complex, dynamic and interconnected environment.

2.4 RELEVANT LEGISLATION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Individuals in leadership and managerial roles have the responsibility of providing and maintaining a work environment that includes suitable structures and systems that are in place and to provide adequate facilities, training, information and instructions for employees. Considering the health and safety risks associated with COVID-19, a safe working environment needs to be prioritised. This requires NPOs to revisit their occupational health and safety policies and procedures in line with various acts stipulated below.

Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993

The National Department of Health is legally obliged and committed to creating a healthy and safe working environment for all the South African workforce. The Occupational Health and Safety Act No. 85 of 1993, requires the employer to provide and maintain as far as is reasonable and practical, a work environment that is safe and without risk to the health of employees (The Department of Health, 1993; 3). The employer and management team must ensure that the workplace is free of hazardous ergonomics and substances, microorganisms, etc., which may cause injury or diseases (The Department of Health, 1993; 3). The employer and management team has the responsibility to inform employees of the risks and dangers and how these may be prevented.

Health and Safety (HOS) policies and procedures in the workplace

Health and Safety Policies and Procedures are rules and regulations that have been documented by the respective organisation (Rocket Lawyer, 2020). Such policies and procedures are expected to be adopted and used by all in the workplace. These policies are implemented to safeguard the health and safety of all employees. According to Rocket Lawyer (2020), the Occupational Health and Safety Act stipulates that every employer should prepare a written policy concerning the protection of the health and safety of their employees. The policy should further include the description of their organisation and the guidelines concerning the contents of the policy concerned. All employees are to be familiarised with the applicable policies and procedures utilising suitable training and distribution of information.

The Health and Safety Executive (2020) website highlights that organisation's must adapt their relevant Health and Safety policies and procedures to ensure that the workplace is a safe environment to work in. This includes providing a safe place of work, safe access to work, safe systems of work, safe equipment, safe and competent fellow workers and protection from risks of injury in relation to COVID-19. The measures put in place are inclusive but not limited to personal protection equipment, hand sanitation stations, social distancing signs and markers, remote working and meeting protocols. The website highlights that some organisations and businesses have appointed members of staff who have individual duties relating to health and safety at work, ensuring that protocols and procedures are adhered to and that non-compliance procedures are followed. According to the Health and Safety Executive (2020), the adaptations of health and safety protocols to include COVID-19 safety measures ensure that organisations are compliant with government-issued regulations.

Disaster Management Act No. 57 of 2002

Disaster management “means a continuous and integrated multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary process of planning and implementation of measures aimed at (a) preventing or reducing the risk of disasters; (b) mitigating the severity or consequences of disasters; (c) emergency preparedness; (d) rapid and effective response to disasters; and (e) post-disaster recovery and rehabilitation” (Disaster Management Act No. 57 of 2002; 45) The aim of the Disaster Management Act No. 57 of 2002 is to provide for an integrated and coordinated disaster management policy that focuses on preventing or reducing the risk of disasters, mitigating the severity of disasters, emergency preparedness, rapid and effective response to disasters and post-disaster recovery Disaster Management Act No. 57 (2002; 3). Regulations relating to the COVID-19 pandemic were issued under the Government Notice 318 of 2020. The document spoke to the regulations adopted under the Disaster Management Act, No. 57. Regulations were inclusive of the release of resources by the Department of Defence, the National Treasury and provincial treasuries, prevention and prohibition of gatherings (amended under various lockdown levels) prophylaxis, treatment, isolation and quarantine, places of quarantine and isolation, closure of schools and partial care facilities, limitation on the sale, dispensing or transportation of liquor, emergency procurement procedures and authority to issue directions, offenses and penalties.

Human Relation policies underpinned by The Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No. 11 of 2002.

The Basic Condition of Employment Act (2002) is a legislative framework that aims to give “effect to the right to fair labour practices referred to in section 23 (1) of the Constitution by establishing and making provision for the regulation of basic conditions of employment; and thereby to comply with the obligations of the Republic as a member of the International Labour Organisation and to provide matters connected therewith”.

Human Relation (HR) policies are designed for employers and employees to carry out their duties and promote discipline with the working environment (Kapur, 2020). HR policies and procedures seek to support staff well-being and enhance the reputation of the organisation. Employees are required to be familiar with HR policies and procedures through training and manuals. HR policies and procedures are subject to change within an organisation and employees are to be updated accordingly. HR policies are concerned with recruitment policies, employee orientation, staff retention, attendance and leave, grievance handling, employee relation, performance evaluation and termination (Kapur, 2020).

2.5 SUMMARY

Given the limited research on the topic, this literature review briefly highlighted the main lessons learned by NPOs, identifying that funding efforts are key in the survival of NPOs, calling for an innovative approach to fundraising. The literature also highlighted that the major focus has been on operations and programmes and as a result, the wellbeing of staff has been marginalised. The literature argued that for organisations to remain operational, staff wellbeing needs to be prioritised.

This literature review showed that while much has been written about organisations facing a crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic is unique in that the true impact of the epidemic on NPO’s is not yet known. There is not much research that has been conducted on this topic that relates directly to South African NPOs and in particular NPOs in the Western Cape. Thus, this research study aimed to increase knowledge and understanding of this topic. The following chapter

provides an overview of the design and methodology that was used to conduct the research study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter sets out the research design and methodology used in this study, including the study population, sampling and data collection procedures. The framework for data analysis and data verification is explained and the limitations of the research study are recorded.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to De Vos, et al. (2011) research design can be described as the framework and strategy that has been used to conduct a study. This research study adopts a qualitative research approach. The qualitative research approach, according to De Vos et al. (2011; 65) refers to "Research that elicits participant accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions, collected/gathered through in-depth interviews of participants".

Qualitative research is described by Babbie and Mouton (2001; 270) as "a research method that provides a direct, in-depth and constructed understanding of the social world of the research". Participants offer a deeper understanding of human experience by providing personal accounts, making the data-rich within its descriptions (De Vos et al., 2011). A qualitative research approach has been used in this study due to its exploratory nature, which seeks to describe and understand human behaviour as opposed to explaining and predicting it (De Vos et al., 2011). This approach to describing and understanding NPO responses to the COVID-19 pandemic enabled me to collect in-depth data, allowing me to have an understanding of the research topic and in answering my research questions. Since COVID-19 is a recent phenomenon the value of this study is that it provides an early account of the impact of the pandemic on NPOs, thereby building on the limited literature on the research topic.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

In South Africa, there are an estimated 230,000 registered not-for-profit organisations (NPOs) that provide a wide range of services to marginalised communities and employ about 800,000 people (Bosman, 2020; 1). According to Bosman (2020) in May 2020 there were 23, 492 registered NPOs in the Western Cape. Gastrow (2020) reported that these are unreliable statistics on the size and scope of the non-profit sector, as registration with the Department of Social Development is voluntary, therefore there may be many unregistered organisations.

According to the Department of Social Development (DSD) (2016), the NPO sector in South Africa encompasses a variety of organisations of different legal forms and sizes across the political, economic and social spectrum of society. The research population in this study was selected to ensure a variety of NPO's that offer different programmes and services to provide a comprehensive picture of the impact of COVID-19 on the NPO sector.

According to De Vos et al (2011; 223) a sample "comprises elements or a subset of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study." For this study, the sample comprised of 20 registered NPO's in various sectors in the Western Cape province of South Africa. I selected the study sample with the intention of covering a wide range of key informants to get a diversity of inputs and to get as much good quality information as possible. As far as practicable, the sample selected is spread across these groupings to give a more representative view of the Western Cape NPO sector. The researcher consulted with respected peers in the NPO sector to determine which NPOs should be approached to participate in this study.

To be selected for the study, participants had to have 5 years of experience in their position and be employed by a registered NPO. To gain a good understanding of the research topic, data was collected from the NPO's top-level individuals. These include Programme Managers, Chief Executive Officers, Chief Executive Officers and Founders, Senior Manager and Managing Directors.

Non-probability purposive sampling was used in this study as it allowed me the opportunity to select a cross-section of the NPO population. In constructing this sample, I compiled a list of 30 NPO's operating in various sectors in the Western Cape province during the pandemic. The

list was approved by my supervisor. From the list, I contacted the 20 participants requesting their participation in the study (see Annexure B). Appointments were made with the respective individuals at a time suitable to them.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Qualitative data collected through interviews allows the researcher to gain an in-depth perspective and in this study (Creswell, 2014). I provided all participants with the option to conduct the interview online or a face-to-face interview. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions in place at the time of the research study as well as COVID-19 protocols and with most participants working from home, the majority of the participants (70%) opted for an online interview. It is my opinion conducting the interview online had no negative impact on the information obtained. During the face-to-face interviews, I ensured social distance was adhered to by requesting a spacious, ventilated room that allowed for a 1.5m distance between the interviewee and myself. I always wore a mask and sanitised before and after completing the interview. For the face-to-face interviews, I complied with the respective NPO's COVID-19 protocols and procedures to ensure a standard of health and safety was always adhered to.

Data collection instrument

A semi-structured interview schedule was designed with questions linked to the research topic and research objectives (see Annexure C). The benefit of a semi-structured interview is that it is flexible and questions are used as a guide and it allows the opportunity for additional questions to be asked to explore the new information that the researcher might not have been aware of before undertaking a research study (De Vos et al., 2011). Each interview was conducted in the participant's office or on a suitable online platform and lasted approximately 45 minutes. Interviews were recorded using audio from my cell phone and in the instance of online interviews, the online platform's recording option was used to record the interview. This allowed me to accurately capture the interview content for coding purposes. Data was saved to Google Drive and to an external hard drive to ensure that no data was lost.

Pilot interviews

Glesne (1999: 75) writes that formal pilot studies may be designed in the early period of interviews. The pilot interviews are designed to revise the interview schedule and should suffice for pilot-testing purposes. De Vos et al (2002;215) defines the purpose of a pilot study to improve the effectiveness of the data collection instrument in for the main investigation. Furthermore, the pilot interview is to be conducted in the same manner as the investigation; similar setting, data collection methods and participants.

Before starting data collection for this study, the interview schedule was piloted with two NPO workers in senior positions. The pilot study was conducted to determine if any changes needed to be made to improve the interview schedule before the interviews for the research study were conducted. The two interviews were hosted on Zoom. The draft interview schedule was used in the interview. At the end of each pilot interview, I asked the interviewees for feedback on the interview schedule and requested suggestions for improvement. Through this discussion, I was able to assess what changes could be made to the interview schedule. Based on this feedback and reflection, four questions were removed from the draft interview schedule as they were deemed redundant and repetitive. The changes to the interview schedule were minor and the interview schedule was finalised reflecting the suggested changes. The information obtained from the two interviewees were not included in the data collected and findings.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the breakdown of the data collected through the interviewing process to obtain answers to the research questions and to meet the research objectives (De Vos et al., 2011). By reducing the data, it allows for analysis and interpretation, with the researcher drawing meaning from and producing research findings. The method of data analysis applied was thematic analysis. This method was selected as it best suited to analysing qualitative research, by providing structure and meaning to the mass of the data collected (De Vos et al., 2011).

The data analysis method used in this study is an adaptation of Tesch's (1990 as cited in De Vos et al., 2011) data analysis model. This model is outlined in a series of steps that explains in detail what must be done in the data analysis process. The process involves reading the data, labelling it and identifying themes and categories. The steps that I followed were as follows:

1. I read through all the transcriptions.
2. I selected the first interview transcript and read it to understand what the participant was saying about the research questions.
3. I summarised what the participant was saying.
4. I labelled the notes in various colours and made linkages where found, repeating this process with all the transcriptions
5. Reflecting on my research objectives I then developed themes and categories.
6. I then used the themes and categories as a framework for my analysis and in producing my findings.
7. I linked the themes and categories with actual participant quotes.
8. Lastly, I linked the research findings to my literature review and made comments on similarities or differences or whether comparisons could be made.

Data verification

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985 as cited in Babbie and Mouton, 2001) four criteria can be used to assess the trustworthiness of qualitative data. These four are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Each criterion is briefly discussed below.

Credibility

Babbie and Mouton (2001) opined credibility determines how congruent the findings are with reality. In this study it was therefore my responsibility to ensure that those participating in the study were identified and described accurately. Furthermore, I concluded each interview by debriefing the participant, ensuring that I had fully and correctly captured an understanding of the participant's responses.

Transferability

Transferability is when the researcher's findings can be replicated either in other contexts or with different participants (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). Qualitative research does not primarily aim for generalisable data, as is the case in quantitative research. However, Lincoln and Guba

(1985) as cited in Babbie and Mouton (2001; 277) provide strategies that can be used to increase transferability in qualitative research.

Babbie and Mouton (2001) recommend 20-30 participants to ensure that transferability is possible. By collecting and recording sufficient data, readers of the research would have sufficient information to assess for themselves the transferability of the research. In addition, ensuring that the study could be done in other contexts with different populations. Transferability refers to “the extent to which the findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents” (Babbie and Mouton, 2001; 277). The first strategy they write about is ‘thick descriptions’, where the researcher collects and records sufficient descriptions of the data collected and the context in which it is collected, which gives readers of the research sufficient information to judge for themselves the transferability of the research. The second strategy they record is using purposive sampling to maximise the range of specific information in the research context. Purposive sampling was used in this research study.

Dependability

Lincoln and Guba (1985 as cited in Babbie and Mouton, 2001) state that the dependability of data is met through obtaining credibility and cannot be present without it. Dependability examines whether, if the study were to be repeated in a similar context with similar participants, the research findings would be similar. Babbie and Mouton (2001: 278) posit that there is “no credibility without dependability”. In this study, I ensured dependability by enhancing credibility through the affiliation with the University of Cape Town, renowned and respected in the area of research. Additionally, my supervisor approved the method of data collection and data analysis and the presentation of my research findings. In this study all interpretations and conclusions were examined to determine whether these were supported by the data. Through this process I was able to confirm the accuracy of the findings and to ensure the findings are supported by the data collected.

Confirmability

Confirmability is associated with the question of whether or not the findings of the study could be confirmed by another (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). I documented the procedures for acquiring, checking and rechecking the data throughout the study, as set out in section under

data collection. By detailing the process of data collection, data analysis and interpretation of the data I ensured confirmability.

3.5 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

De Vos et al., (2011) opined research limitations within the qualitative paradigm are frequently due to the fact that the data collected heavily relies on the skills of the researcher. The interviewing process allows the potential for researcher bias to be one of the main research limitations in qualitative research (De Vos et al., 2011). It is therefore vital that the researcher identifies these limitations beforehand so that the researcher can be made conscious and be cautious of the limitations so that it does not hinder the intended study. Possible limitations in this study pertain to the research design, the sample, the recording of the participant's responses and online interviews as a data collection method.

Research design

The exploratory nature of qualitative research was selected given that the COVID-19 pandemic was a recent and hitherto minimally researched area. The nature of qualitative research involves an extensive analysis of data and required me to be well informed on qualitative research and methodology. Research limitations within the qualitative paradigm are frequently due to the reliance on the skills of the researcher. Having gained the skillset and experience through my successful completion of my honours dissertation and five years' work experience, I consider myself to be competent to conduct this research.

Sample

In this study the sample group consists of 20 participants. The participants are not intended to be a representation of the 20 registered NPOs. Non-probability purposive sampling was used in the research study since this is an exploratory study and it allowed me the opportunity to select a cross-section of the NPO population. As this is an exploratory study the sample size was not an issue to make study generalisations.

Recording of participants responses

Participants may have been reluctant to share in-depth information as it was being audio recorded. This may be due to anxiety over their employer gaining access to their responses. I ensured that the participants were well informed that the interviews will be recorded for data collection purposes only and their identity would not be revealed at any point. I also informed participants that should they feel uncomfortable at any point, they can end the interview and participation immediately. In my view, the participant's responses were all correct and authentic.

Online interview tool

Due to the COVID-19 practice of working from home, it is difficult to control the environment in which the interview is conducted. Disruption to privacy and issues with connectivity when conducting the interview are noted as a limitation. I scheduled a convenient time to interview participants when the participants were best able to participate. I allowed for adjustments in my interview schedule, accommodating last last-minute postponements due to personal circumstances and the ability to commit to the interview without disruption. No interviews were cancelled or postponed.

3.6 SUMMARY

This chapter provides an explanation of the qualitative approach used in this study by focusing on the design and methodology that was used in the study. The chapter also examines the potential limitations of the study. Chapter Four presents the research data and I discuss my research findings and analysis. The chapter records themes and categories that emerged from the interview with the participants.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The first three chapters of this dissertation introduce the study provide a review of relevant literature and an explanation of the research design and methodology. A qualitative study with data gathered from 20 in-depth interviews with top-level managers of NPOs was conducted. This chapter provides a profile of the participants who took part in this research study. To adhere to the ethical considerations of this study and to ensure confidentiality, the respondents are neither named nor are any identifiable details provided. Instead, they are referred to as ‘participants’. This chapter sets out the framework for analysis that is used to discuss the main findings of this research study. It follows with the presentation of the main themes, categories and sub-categories developed to present a framework for the discussion of the findings. The findings gathered are interpreted and discussed by using significant input from the 20 participants and relevant literature in the literature review in Chapter Two.

4.2 PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

A profile of the research study participants from whom the data was collected is set out below in Table 1. A statistical representation of research study participants is presented in Table 2. Table 3 provides a statistical representation of the research study participant’s position in the organisation.

Table 1: Profile of the research study participants.

Participant number	Field of Service Delivery	Position in Organisation
Participant 1	Family and couple counselling	Programme Manager
Participant 2	Crime prevention and human rights	CEO
Participant 3	Counselling	CEO & Founder
Participant 4	Counselling	Senior Manager
Participant 5	Counselling	Managing Director
Participant 6	Skill training and job creation	Managing Director

Participant 7	Skill training and job creation	CEO & Founder
Participant 8	Skill training and job creation	CEO
Participant 9	Literacy development	CEO & Founder
Participant 10	Literacy development	Managing Director
Participant 11	Parents skill development	Managing Director
Participant 12	Skills development and therapy	CEO & Founder
Participant 13	Youth skills development	Managing Director
Participant 14	Youth skills development	CEO
Participant 15	Youth skills development	Programme Manager
Participant 16	Early Childhood Development	Programme Manager
Participant 17	Early Childhood Development	Managing Director
Participant 18	Early Childhood Development	Programme Manager
Participant 19	Early Childhood Development	CEO & Founder
Participant 20	Feeding Scheme	CEO & Founder

Table 2: Statistical representation of research study participant: field of service delivery.

Field of Service Delivery	Number	% of participants
Counselling	4	20
Social crime prevention and human rights	1	5
Skill training and development	8	40
Literacy development	2	10
Early Childhood Development	4	20
Feeding Scheme 1	1	5

Counselling services and the ECD sector each represented 20% of the sample. Literacy development, social crime prevention and human rights represented the lowest percentage at

1 Due to the food insecurity increase in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, 7 NPOs (35%) in the sample adapted service delivery to include providing food relief for their beneficiaries. This was especially evident in the ECD sector, whereby all four ECD NPOs provided food relief for young and vulnerable children.

10% and 5% respectively. Skills development and training represented the largest percentage of the sample at 40%. One organisation in the sample group (5%) provides food relief.

Table 3: Statistical representation of research study participant's position in the organisation.

Position in Organisation	Number	% of participants
Programme Manager	4	20
CEO	3	15
CEO & Founder	6	30
Senior Manager	1	5
Managing Director	6	30
	20	100

All 20 participants in the research study held a senior position in their respective NPOs. 30% of the data collected was gathered from participants in Managing Director positions. 15 % of the data collected was gathered from participants in CEO positions. 30% of the data was gathered from participants who held CEO's and founders' positions. Cumulatively, 75% of the data gathered was collected from participants who held a CEO/ Managing director position in their respective NPOs. The remaining 25% of the total sample group held senior management positions.

The above three tables represent the NPOs operating in various sectors in the Western Cape province during the pandemic and organisation position held by each of the 20 research study participants. The information collected covers a variety of NPOs who offer different programmes and services. Participants comprise a range of key informants who provided a diversity of good quality inputs which contributed to a comprehensive assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on the NPO sector.

4.3 FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In presenting and discussing the findings of this study, I developed a framework for the analysis of the data and the presentation of the research study findings. This is set out below in Table 4. The themes, categories and subcategories are expanded on in the findings section of this chapter.

Table 4: Framework for analysis

THEME	CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY
1) The role of leadership in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic	Leadership skills and practices	Adaptability and flexibility
		Communication
	Leadership priorities	Emotional support for staff
		Meeting beneficiaries needs
2) The role of management in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic	Strategic management and planning strategies	Proactive vs. reactive management
	Policy formation, implementation and amendments	Occupational Health and Safety policies, practices and procedures
		Human Relations policies, practices and procedures
3) The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on NPO's operations	Service delivery and programmes	Adapting service delivery and programmes
		Expanding service delivery and programmes
	Technology	Benefits
		Challenges
	Finances	Donor support
		Assets and reduced operational costs
		COVID-19 relief funds
4) Lessons learned by NPOs in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.	Factors that enabled NPOs to survive (Protective factors)	Technology
		Staff commitment and compassion
		Strategising growth opportunities
	Factors that placed NPOs at risk of closure (risk factors)	Inadequate financial planning

4.4 RESEARCH STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings of this research study and provides an interpretation of the findings. The research findings are described and explained by following the framework for analysis in Table 4. Each theme, category and sub-category are systematically examined in this chapter. The findings of the study are divided into four main themes, developed from the research objectives of this study. Under each theme, several categories and sub-categories emerged from the findings. The findings are interpreted and discussed by using significant comments from the 20 participants and relevant literature from the body of the literature review in Chapter 3. See Annexure D for tabulated main findings.

4.4.1 Theme 1: The role of leadership in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic

The first theme looks at the role of NPO leaders in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. In analysing the data, two categories emerged: 1) leadership skills and practices and 2) the priorities of those in leadership positions. Under each of these categories, sub-categories emerged and each of these is discussed below.

Leadership skills and practices

NPO leaders, during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, face dynamic and profound change that is unprecedented. The COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of a clear endpoint place severe and ongoing pressure on those in leadership positions. Leadership skills and practices become the crucial component to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on NPOs. This section describes two aspects of leadership that were raised during the interviews when participants were asked what leadership skills and practices assisted them in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adaptability and flexibility

Eleven of the 20 participants stated that adaptability and flexibility are essential leadership skills in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. A common thread amongst participants was that the unpredictable conditions of COVID-19 forced them to rapidly change and adjust plans accordingly.

Participant 3: *Adaptability and flexibility were crucial.. focused on what are the changes that need to be made and how can you still be effective in light of what's happening? ...As it comes along, we are adapting and seeing what is important and what is critical and trying to shape what we do, without losing it.*

Participant 5: *I will start by saying that an important skill is adaptability..in conditions that are completely unpredictable within the sector.*

Participant 7: *You need to be able to adapt. What's a priority today might not be a priority tomorrow.*

Participant 16: *We needed to be far more agile and adaptable than we were in the past. And flexible. A lot of flexibility.*

This finding concurs with the literature that attributes an organisation's survival to a leader's adaptability and flexibility in responding to change brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings concur with Chikwanda's (2020) study which highlights that organisations who remained operational during the COVID-19 pandemic were adaptable and flexible to change in this time of crisis. The findings support earlier studies on NPOs in crisis, that correlated organisations' survival in a crisis, to leaders' adaptability and flexibility in navigating ambiguity and uncertainty. Di'Vanna and Maris (2004) and Lazenby (2014) found adaptability to be crucial for the sustainability of an organisation in the face of crisis. The findings indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of adaptability and flexibility as core leadership skills in a crisis, indicating that a strong leader uses the skill of adaptability in combating ambiguity.

Communication

Sixteen of the 20 participants stated that communication is a core leadership skill and a necessary practice in a crisis. Externally, communication focused on building networks with stakeholders and mobilising partnerships to render programmes and deliver services. Internally, communication promoted a work culture of teamwork. Participants stated that sound external and internal communication was essential for staying abreast with relevant COVID-19 information and essential in making informed decisions.

External communication: Networking

Seven participants highlighted the importance of building networks with stakeholders to mobilise resources, essential for service delivery.

Participant 1: *I think what we learned is that network is our net worth.*

Participant 4: *Another one would be networking. So, making use of the networks that you have.... networking in terms of the food, the clothes, the community... I would definitely say networking was a huge priority. Staying connected. That was lifesaving...Like networking and communication... That was really important.*

Participant 5: *Networking with the right people to get the target market we wanted. So, connecting the community members, connecting with churches, going out there and spreading the word of what we're doing and so forth. Communication and networking are the keys to sustainability in a crisis.*

This study findings support the research conducted by Calep et al. (2020) which found that organisations in crisis were forming new partnerships to extend their reach and impact. Findings indicate that sound communication empowered leaders to form networks and partnerships that enabled leaders to access relevant and updated information, distribute and share resources and partner in service delivery. This indicated that leaders who drew on support networks were able to make more informed decisions and communicate information with staff promptly. This approach to leadership enabled communication to extend beyond the office and promoted engagement with a range of stakeholders. This finding supports Calep et al.

(2020) study that found that communication needs to extend beyond the office and engagement with a range of stakeholders is important to maintain communication, stay informed of what is happening and share relevant information about service delivery and strategy. Risk management speaks to this role of management in accessing information from informed sources and communicating this information within the organisation to adopt strategic and operational objectives to mitigate such risks. Collier and Agyei-Ampomah (2006) argue that management that can develop a sound and intimate knowledge of the organisation, the market in which it operates and the legal, social, political and cultural environment in which it exists, is better equipped to survive a crisis.

Internal communication: team building

Nine participants highlighted that sound communication promoted a work culture of teamwork.

Participant 3: *There needed to be communication with your teams and stakeholders. It [decision making] requires communication, research and knowledge to be able to make a decision.*

Participant 6: *I just made sure I had the information that I needed to make a decision. ...keeping in touch with them [staff] and making sure that they know your decisions that you've made and going forward, where we're going to.*

Participant 16: *To go through a crisis like this and think you can do it on your own is foolhardy. I also reached out for internal support. Communication was really important. We learned that. Especially in communicating with staff.*

The findings highlight that staff is crucial in decision making and therefore communication with staff is key. Calep et al. (2020) highlight the importance of frequent and transparent communication with staff in promoting good governance practices that help build and maintain a trusting and productive organisational culture and is crucial in combating the uncertainty that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about. In addition to this, my findings confirm Chikwanda's (2020) study which found clear communication and participation with staff in decision-making is crucial in facilitating a culture of change and adaptation required for

organisation sustainability in a crisis. Change Management Theory speaks to effective leadership communication and reassurance that steer the process of change in the right direction and makes transitions to change easier for staff. Communication becomes crucial to mitigate resistance to change, educating and motivating staff towards change. Change Management Theory sees effective communication as the most crucial component to combat resistance to change, highlighting the importance of learning and working as a team, sharing a vision for the future and tapping into employee's skills, motivating collective teamwork as means of change. Furthermore, as highlighted in Johnson's (n.d) study, meaningful communication plays a crucial role in staff focus, care for the team, information sharing, process improvement and performance patterns.

These findings are underpinned by the Change Management Theory, found in Khimani's (2013) study. Change Management is an ongoing process that takes time, expertise, dedication and effort to implement. It requires the involvement of staff, especially those people who will be affected by the changes. For the first stage to occur, known as "unfreezing", employees need to abandon their current practices and cultural norms. It is important when the previous ways of doing things will no longer be applicable that managers and those in leadership positions prepare employees for the change that must happen. At this stage, good leadership and reassurance are important because these aspects not only steer the process in the right direction but also make the process easier for staff who are involved. Communication and time thus are the key for this stage to take place successfully. Communication becomes crucial to mitigate resistance to change and in educating and motivating staff towards change. t

These findings correlate with organisation resilience theory, attributing organisation resilience to an organisational culture of internal communication, strategic decision-making and planning, employee engagement and the ability to quickly share information. The findings indicate that these skills and practices are core to organisational survival. This affirms Gracey's (2019) study that attributes leadership adaptability, intelligence and communication to organisation resilience in a crisis. The next category discusses how leaders have had to prioritise their response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leadership priorities

Individuals in leadership roles need to develop new policies and practices pertaining to working remotely, office behaviour and culture, protecting the health and wellbeing of staff, maintaining programmes and services and sustaining financial viability (McMullin and Raggo, 2020). Due to the complex and rapidly changing environment, leaders have been tasked with prioritising various duties and functions in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This section describes two themes that were raised during the interviews when participants were asked what they prioritised when responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Emotional support for staff

Sixteen of the 20 participants stated that prioritising emotional support for staff was crucial in mitigating burnout and COVID-fatigue.

Participant 8: *Our staff was our priority through everything because we knew without that, we couldn't extend our services to the clients. We had to make sure everybody was okay and if everybody was coping.... I realised how important staff is.*

Participant 10: *Compassion fatigue and burnout. I think that's quite a thing with COVID-19 as well. Some of the staff, really have shown signs of fatigue. Especially in the NPO world, compassion fatigue is quite a challenge.... And feeling a lot of pressure, a lot of fear. A lot more fear that they felt from COVID-19 for their own families amongst the younger people.... We've had staff members lose husbands or partners who have lost their jobs. Some of them have had COVID-19. Some of them have really been hit economically by financial circumstances. We've tried to support as much as we can... We organised counselling for a couple of people. We said we would pay for the counselling sessions.*

Participant 16: *It's been hugely stressful for staff. On so many levels. Worrying about job security, worrying about funding.... I realised that we were dealing with so much trauma that we needed external support in taking care of ourselves...To take care of staff is really important. You have empathy for staff who are struggling health-wise or who have lost family members...We have a big focus in our organisation on providing*

regular supervision to staff. Each manager continued to provide that to staff telephonically or via WhatsApp or Zoom...Where staff need additional support, we refer them, help them to access counselling.

Participant 20: *We had to build in a lot of layers of support for the staff to cope because they sat with a lot of anxiety. Number one; anxiety about COVID-19. Number two; anxiety about income. Number three; anxiety about how to do their work.*

Emotional support and supervision for staff working in the NPO sector is not a new phenomenon due to the strenuous nature of their work. However, the COVID-19 pandemic is unique in that staff were suddenly faced with a new kind of burnout. Participants spoke of this complex and multi-layered burnout referred to as COVID fatigue. The findings support Oehler (2020) and Tshikululu (2020) whose studies focused on the emotional support of frontline workers, highlighting that the burnout faced was multi-dimensional, including fear of job losses, isolation, the need for adequate and reliable technology, fatigue and extreme stress, combined with wider societal anxieties around to the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of a clear endpoint.

My findings do not concur with Tshikululu (2020) findings which indicate that support for staff's emotional wellbeing is not prioritised by NPOs. During the interviews, I found that the dominant perception of 80% of participants is that while staff are experiencing burnout and COVID-19 fatigue, leaders are providing substantial support. The findings support Harvey, Holland, Hensley and Cummins's (2013) study that successful leadership is not solely focused on the purpose of the business but also on the wellbeing of its employees.

Participants emphasised that emotional support was provided internally as well as externally. Online team meetings, therapeutic counselling and coaching as well as supervision are crucial in mitigating COVID-19 fatigue and supporting staff's emotional well-being. Support extended itself to the online training for staff, upskilling staff in technology and sharing information relevant to performing tasks amidst the stress and anxiety. Technology and work from home benefits were crucial in providing staff support. Online meetings were tailored to provide debriefing and containment spaces for staff and leaders provided reassurance and support where possible. Findings indicate that NPO leaders are providing the attention required to support the mental health of those working in the sector and that those in leadership positions

have risen to this challenge. The finding combined with existing research by Lazenby (2014) suggests that leaders who are empathetic and prioritise staff wellbeing are adaptable leaders, who support employees and thereby empower commitment and motivate employees to implement strategic change as necessary.

Meeting beneficiaries need

Fourteen of the 20 participants stated that their main priority as leaders in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic was meeting the needs of their beneficiaries.

Participant 9: *The priority was to keep the operations going to meet the needs of our clients.*

Participant 18: *Leadership, for me, was never about us, it was always about the people that we were helping... So, for us, it's getting food out to as many people as we possibly can. That was what drove me. That's our number one priority.*

Participant 19: *For us, knowing how to support our beneficiaries is important.... We sort of prioritised immediate and urgent relief... We stayed very, very close to our beneficiaries.*

These comments support Tshikululu's (2020) study that found that NPOs that remained operational during the COVID-19 pandemic experienced an increased demand for their services and as a result prioritised service delivery and increased outputs to meet the growing needs of their beneficiaries. These findings counter Chikwanda's (2020) study, which found that NPOs were scaling back on services to keep the organisation operational at a reduced level. My findings indicate that services were not rendered at a reduced level, instead, services extended beyond "normal" levels to meet the increased needs of beneficiaries. An Independent Sector (2020; 1) study found that 23% of organisations that remained operational reported an increase in demand for services. The findings suggest that these statistics may be an underreporting of the magnitude of the increased demand for services to meet the need of beneficiaries. This study highlights a gap in statistical information that may need to be researched in the future.

This section illustrates that leadership adaptability and flexibility is crucial in managing change and for NPOs to remain operational and sustainable through a crisis. The findings highlight that leaders' ability to communicate has internal and external benefits. Leaders who were able to build partnerships and mobilise services were crucial in meeting beneficiaries' needs.

4.4.2 Theme 2: The role of management in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic

The second theme in this study looks at the role of management in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. In analysing the data two categories emerged: Strategic management and planning strategies and policy formation, implementation and amendments. Under each of these categories, sub-categories emerged and each of these is discussed below.

Strategic management and planning strategies

The external environment for both the private and public sectors in South Africa can be summarised as in flux and volatile (Lazenby, 2014). To cope with this ever-changing environment and to deliver sustainable, efficient, effective and quality services managers are tasked with incorporating and aligning the organisation's strategic plan to external change and challenges. Strategic management focuses on an organisation's ability to adapt to such changes in an uncertain environment.

Proactive vs. reactive management

Eleven of the 20 participants attributed being proactive rather than reactive in crisis as a key management role in responding to COVID-19. Respondents emphasised that being flexible in decision making and adapting strategies to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic was key to being proactive in responding to the pandemic.

Participant 5: We were able to adapt ourselves last year due to the element of being proactive and not reactive... we didn't respond emotionally...we thought the whole thing through and then we put a plan into place.

Participants 19: *I think I would call it [role of management] adaptive... in that we all had a strategy, a plan for the year. While you're in adaptive leadership, you also must be thinking with that long-term hat on, you are not just reacting to the here and now crisis aspect.*

Participant 20: *We must switch our focus to another priority. We were adaptable and got on with it. I think we were extremely delivery focused. Very output focused. Very responsive, rather than just reacting.*

Findings indicated that adaptability is required in planning and strategising, both short-term and long-term. In support of this Chikwanda's (2020) highlights that leadership needs to be innovative and adaptable to drive success and the survival of an organisation. Adaptive strategies are crucial in a crisis such as a pandemic. The findings support Botelho et al., (2017) study which showed that adapting to a rapidly changing environment requires leaders to be proactive rather than reactive. Botelho et al., (2017) attribute this to the willingness of leaders to grow within and from every situation that presents itself. Chikwanda (2020) argues that frequent change and ambiguous and uncertain environments may prove challenging for leaders to balance issues maturely and calmly and to thrive despite the unknown. Remaining level-headed and calm is essential in being able to respond to a crisis in a manner that is beneficial.

Team meetings

Nine participants attributed their ability to be proactive to hosting regular staff meetings, allowing the management team to strategise and adjust.

Participant 10: *One of the things that we did as a team is we used to have the weekly team meetings and those team meetings were very much about connecting and strategising.*

Participant 18: *We had regular organisation meetings, strategy meetings and marketing meetings. So, everyone knows what they must do on an ongoing basis. So, there's a lot of communication and strategy.*

Participant 20: *As a management team, we literally had daily management meetings on Zoom to develop our strategy. They would go on for hours. Sometimes it would go on for six or seven hours because we had to strategize and so intensively develop this program that we had to develop out of nothing.*

These findings support Di’Vanna and Maris’s (2004) study that argues that managers have the role and responsibility to involve all levels of staff in planning and strategic thinking and to instil awareness of crisis management and the recovery process. They further argue that mobilising existing resources, reflecting on organisation capacity and developing skills are key in including staff in strategic planning and motivating collective participation in an organisation’s survival. Encouraging collective participation in a time of change is a crucial tool to foster consistency and predictability in the face of uncertainty. Teamwork is thus crucial in building on the internal capacity in making informed decisions towards organisation survival.

Policy formation, implementation and amendments

When participants were asked about the implementation of COVID-19 related policies, all twenty participants stated that they had implemented various COVID-19 policies, protocols and procedures. Policies focused on NPO operation adjustments to safeguard staff from exposure to COVID-19. Policies included work from home, work rotation scheduling and adaptations of Operational Health and Safety protocols to include practical COVID-19 safety measures. Policies developed were underpinned by existing government policies such as the Disaster Act and relevant Health and Safety and Human Relations Policies. This section focuses on the role of management in amending, developing and implementing COVID-19 policies to keep staff and beneficiaries safe.

Participant 2: *When COVID-19 hit, there was a need to rethink policy and formalize the policy shift.*

Participant 16: *The first thing we did was put our heads together and developed a COVID-19 policy, to ensure health and safety for staff.*

Participant 17: Our priority was firstly, to get the staff safe because we are the group that operates and runs the program, so it was important for them to be cared for, as a management team we had to develop and implement COVID-19 policies to this effect.

McMullin and Raggio's (2020) study found that management teams are tasked with developing new policies that protect the health and wellbeing of staff and maintain programmes and services. In this study, the findings indicate that management teams have ensured that the work environment adheres to the specifications set out in relevant government policies. Management complied with the regulations set out as the government declared a national state of emergency. Findings indicate that management had aligned and underpinned policies with the Disaster Management Act, No. 57 of 2002, adopting a process of planning and implementing measures that reduced the risk of staff and beneficiaries' exposure to COVID-19. Due to the nature of COVID-19 transmission NPO policies needed to be looked at in terms of social distancing office spaces and the rendering of services. Management was tasked with strategising and implementing policies, procedures and processes that protected staff from the potential risk of exposure to COVID-19.

Rocket Lawyer's (2020) research on the purpose of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, No. 85 of 1993 stipulates that every employer should prepare a written policy concerning the protection of the health and safety of their employees. The policy should further include the description of the organisation and the guidelines concerning the contents of the policy. All employees are to be familiarised with the applicable policies and procedures utilising suitable training and distribution of information.

The findings in this study support regulations stipulated by The Department of Health, 1993:3 under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, No. 85 of 1993. The Act stipulates that the employer and management team must ensure that the workplace is safe for employees and have the responsibility to inform employees of the risks and dangers and how these may be prevented.

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) policies, practices and procedures

Twelve of the 20 participants stated that amending OHS policies and procedures in the workplace in line with relevant COVID-19 regulations was crucial in safeguarding staff.

Participants stated that updated OHS policies were informed by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, No. 85 of 1993, the Disaster Management, Act No. 57 of 2002 and updated information issued by the President of South Africa and the Department of Social Development. Procedures and protocols were inclusive of compliance officers, sanitising and compulsory mask-wearing, a staff screening register to monitor COVID-19 symptoms questionnaires and temperature recording.

Participant 3: *You need to check, have registers, have good paperwork. Every single register had a COVID-19 aspect to it. So, they had to tick off they had symptoms. We took temperatures. We would have paper towels and sanitisers everywhere. Social distancing and everyone had to wear masks.*

Participant 13: *So, we did amend one of the policies that if anyone is using the office the correct COVID-19 procedures are followed such as sanitising our stuff and making sure there is at least one COVID compliance officer within the office. We made sure the staff were wearing masks.*

Participant 16: *We've appointed a compliance officer. We've implemented COVID-19 protocol in line with what the government has said as well as the Occupational Health and Safety Act. We had to make sure that we were compliant with all of that. Every time the lockdown levels changed, we had to revisit policies and make amendments.*

These findings concur with the Health and Safety Executive (2020) website which highlights that organisations must adapt relevant Health and Safety policies and procedures to ensure that the workplace is a safe environment for staff to work in. This includes providing a safe place of work, safe access to work, safe systems of work, safe equipment, safe and competent fellow workers and protection from risks of injury in relation to COVID-19. The measures put in place are inclusive but not limited to personal protection equipment, compliance officers, hand sanitation stations, social distancing signs and markers, COVID-19 screening symptom questions, temperature recordings and remote working. The website highlights that some organisations and businesses have appointed members of staff who have individual duties relating to health and safety at work, ensuring that protocols and procedures are adhered to and that non-compliance procedures are followed. According to the Health and Safety Executive

(2020), the adaptations of health and safety protocols to include COVID-19 safety measures ensure that organisations are compliant with government-issued regulations.

Human Relations (HR) policies, practices and procedures

HR policies are concerned with recruitment policies, employee orientation, staff retention, attendance and leave, grievance handling, employee relation, performance evaluation and termination (Kapur, 2020). HR policies and procedures are subject to change within an organisation and employees are to be updated accordingly.

Sick leave

Ten of the 20 participants highlighted that due to the inference of COVID-19 on staff's health and ability to perform work duties, management determined that sick leave would not be deducted should a staff member test positive for COVID-19. 3 of the 10 participants paid for staff's COVID-19 tests.

Participant 2: *We were certainly forced to review and update our HR policies ... We decided that we would pay for testing and they [staff] did not lose any leave, sick or annual.*

Participant 10: *We had a policy that said that if any staff member needed testing this year, the organisation would pay for it. You wouldn't lose all your leave because of it. We would make allowances for leave if they [staff] tested positive.*

Participant 13: *So, we had a policy that any staff member that needed testing that the company would pay for it and you would not lose your leave because of it.*

Management teams have had to review HR policies on attendance and leave. The Basic Condition of Employment Act, No.75 of 1997 stipulates that employees are entitled to sick leave, amounting to 1 day for every 26 days worked. Based on the findings of the study management used their discretion to regulate the various working conditions, inclusive of sick leave and working from home policies as well as staff remuneration. Findings support Kapur (2020) that highlights that HR policies and procedures are subjected to changes. Human

Relation (HR) policies are designed for employers and employees to carry out their duties and promote discipline with the working environment.

Compulsory vaccination

Four of the 20 participants mentioned compulsory vaccination of staff members when sick leave was discussed.

Participant 9: *We never deducted the isolation time as part of their sick leave. We are now, however reconsidering that in the case of people who refuse to be vaccinated. So, if you refuse to be vaccinated and you get sick, that will be deducted from your sick leave and any additional time it takes to recover.*

Participant 10: *I just had to say to the staff that I must keep the staff and beneficiaries safe and unfortunately, if you are not vaccinated, then you cannot be on-site, which will negatively impact your leave and remuneration.*

Participant 13: *We had a meeting with the staff and told them that it's their right and decision on whether they are getting vaccinated. And if they didn't get vaccinated, we had to find alternative ways to keep each other safe, which have further implications on how we do things, how we pay the staff and how much leave we can provide them, especially during December, if they fell ill.*

During the time that chapter four of this research study was written compulsory vaccination compliance in the workplace has gained traction and there are currently legalities being pursued on the controversial compulsory vaccination in the workplace. The literature review does not discuss compulsory vaccination in the workplace. The findings have highlighted a gap in the literature review and provide an interesting area for future research.

Work from home

Sixteen of the 20 participants emphasised that working from home policies became a key feature of HR and OHS policy in ensuring that the health and safety of staff were prioritised by management.

Participant 2: *Part of our plan and strategy was to make sure that we shift from our staff being desk-bound. We changed our desktop computers to portable laptops, which allowed people to work from home, after-hours and on weekends. We told people to set up their own home offices so that they could work from home.*

Participant 6: *We've been working on a strategy and policy for a rotational basis since we have been back at the office, having half the staff working from home, which was tricky. It was quite a learning curve and we are still learning how to accommodate staff working from home. It's a tricky one because, first of all, some have jobs where they can sit at a desk and do their jobs whilst other staff members are required to be in the field. Their job is site visits and training and that kind of thing, so for some staff, I think it's been fairly easy to adapt, but for others, you know, you've had to plan a bit better.*

Participant 11: *It was new to us to work from home. When we strategised around how can we enable people to work from home.... How do we support people with data...? How do we get dongles? Are laptops suitable? What are home working environments like? And then from that came a lot of stuff on, "What about budget?"*

These comments support Bam's (2020) study that highlighted the importance of management reviewing organisational policies concerning remote work and concurs with Munshi's (2020) study that argued that remote working has provided the means for organisations to ensure that proper occupational health and safety measures are in place to promote a working environment that protects staff.

Challenges with working from home

Five participants highlighted that working remotely had various challenges, including technological resource restrictions, limitations of job specifications, difficulty balancing work and personal home life and resistance to returning to office-based work full time.

Participant 7: *Some staff had great Wi-Fi connections and laptops so they could connect very easily. Other staff had no laptop, maybe a smartphone, but no data. So immediately we said, okay if staff need data and airtime to work from home, we will*

cover that and try to give them access to that. We've been fairly quick at saying, "Okay, right, do people need laptops, what do people need to be able to communicate. It has been tricky to implement and budgets had to be moved around to accommodate these costs.

Participant 8: *When we went into hard lockdown, we didn't have enough computers for people to continue with their work. It was difficult so we had to use smartphones and started using WhatsApp.*

Participant 16: *Working from home was really hard in the beginning. A lot of staff really struggled. And the parents are also working from home, juggling home-schooling. It was really hard and it's still hard for some. Some staff like working from home, others still find it very difficult. We're all different. I don't really like working from home. I prefer being at the office. I think the staff have adjusted. It's still not easy for some but they adjusted. There's really no other way. And then we find some staff who have become very adjusted to working from home and they don't want to come back to the office.*

In contrast to the above, Bam (2020) and Orsmond's (2020) study found that due to the absence of technological resources all staff could not work from home. Orsmond's (2020) study found that the ability to provide sufficient infrastructure and systems for employees to work from home was a challenge. Orsmond (2020) also found that the adaptability of the behaviours, mindsets, attitudes and beliefs of staff was key to the success of this type of change. The staff has difficulty balancing work from home with family life and others had trouble adjusting when returning to work offices. Chikwanda's (2020) study indicated that the main challenge was ensuring that employees adhere to the responsibility surrounding the new way of delivering services. Two participants mentioned this challenge, with reference to the payment of staff.

Participant 7: *Some staff could do their job 100%. Their time was fully occupied and they were working from home. Whereas other staff was at home, but they couldn't necessarily do their job and their time was not that occupied. For how long can you continue to pay a salary and not get the work?*

Participant 19: *How do you still pay full time, now you're working half-day, but management is working a full day and still getting the same salary, but others are working half-day, but getting full salaries.*

Findings support Tshikululu's (2020) study that NPO employees are at risk of a reduction in pay. However, there is little in the literature review on the implications of working from home and staff remuneration. This has identified a potential area for future research, focusing on the impact of working from home on staff remuneration, especially in NPOs whose service delivery model is challenged by technology.

This section has indicated that management teams have been able to strategise and adapt during the COVID-19 pandemic. The finding indicates that strategic planning and crisis and risk management needs to be prioritised by management for organisation survival. In general, management has been tasked with policy formation, amendments and implementation to keep staff and beneficiaries safe. Work from home was a key policy, however, despite the safety benefits, it posed technological challenges for some organisations. The study raised the controversial topic of compulsory vaccination that gained momentum during the time that this section of the study was written.

4.4.3 Theme 3: The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on organisations' operations

The third theme arising from this study looks at the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on NPOs operations. In analysing the data three categories emerged: service delivery and programmes, technology and finances. Under each of these categories, sub-categories emerged and each of these is discussed.

Service delivery and programmes

When participants were asked about the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on their NPO's operations, all participants indicated that they remained operational throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adapting service delivery and programmes

Seventeen of the participants attributed remaining operational through COVID-19 to their ability to strategise, re-conceptualise and adapt their programmes and services.

Participant 1: *A lot of adaptability and rethinking how you are going to train and deliver services was required.*

Participant 4: *We tweaked and changed and adjusted, but we were never not delivering services.*

Participant 6: *From our side, it [the impact of COVID-19 on programs] was huge. We had to do an entire strategy change. So, basically, our entire objective and mission went skew but we adapted to keep active.*

Participant 17: *We had to reinvent ourselves as an organisation... the immediate thing we had to look at was how we could possibly operate under the new restrictions, a lot of adaptability and flexibility in terms of delivering services.*

The findings support Chikwanda's (2020) study that found that NPOs were amongst the first to develop and implement solutions to continue their work under COVID-19 conditions. Similarly, Calep et al. (2020) highlighted that many NPOs changed the way that they implemented programmes and services. Chikwanda's (2020) study found that NPOs that remained operational were able to transform uncertainties into opportunities by shifting focus and reimagining what their organisations were about and revisiting strategic planning to adapt to sudden changes. Both Lyons-Newman's (2020) and Calep et al. (2020) highlight the importance of adapting during the COVID-19 pandemic. This suggests that adaptability in the face of a crisis, use of innovation to shift programmes and services and sound communication to accommodate the constraints attribute to NPOs survival in the crisis. These findings are underpinned by Change Management Theory. The theory argues that internal change is crucial in surviving external change. The theory argues that external change drives internal change, building an organisation competent for change, especially to renew organisation systems, infrastructure and operations, needed to improve chances of achieving its goals.

Expanding service delivery and programmes

Eleven of the 20 participants highlighted that to remain operational they had to render services beyond their usual activities. The majority of NPOs added food relief schemes as identified as the core need of society, especially during the initial hard lockdown period. This was particularly evident in the ECD sector, as schools remained closed and children required access to feeding programmes.

Participant 1: *Our first response was adjusting all the activities. Just because our exact service is not needed, let's keep going and offer help because help is still needed...so expanding from our core service delivery to ensure that people's needs were still being met.*

Participant 7: *COVID-19 has made an increase in the need for services. It might not be your core service, but, like, feeding, right? Our organisation doesn't want to become a feeding scheme organisation, but if that's what's required now... Staff who previously were out in the field helping ECD centres to get registered... Suddenly, they're saying, "Okay, well..." They're rolling up their sleeves and they're now helping in the soup kitchen. It's one small, silly example, but it's that willingness to do what needs to be done.*

Participant 10: *We then just had to switch our appeals from infrastructure and providing containers for ECD centres to feeding and the response was actually massive, much better than we ever get with infrastructure.*

Participant 13: *When we could not deliver our training programmes, we switched our core to feeding...it meant that we had to switch up our appeals from infrastructure to feeding and the response was great because we provided about three million meals since lockdown started lockdown.*

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced external pressures that have disrupted how NPOs operate and deliver services. However, these have not threatened their future as they navigate a changing environment as suggested by Rimita's (2019) research. Instead, NPOs have adapted to external shocks. The socio-economic implications of COVID-19 on vulnerable population

groups have resulted in an increased need for service delivery. Contrary to my findings, the Independent Sector (2020) indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant negative impact on the services, operations and people working in the NPO sector. In this study, NPO's ability to adapt has enabled the continuation of service delivery, albeit not the NPO's core service delivery. The findings highlight how NPOs have been able to identify a need and tailor their services to meet beneficiaries' needs and remain operational.

Technology

Eighteen of the 20 participants stated that integrating technology was crucial to remain operational and deliver services and programmes. The participants mentioned the benefits and challenges of integrating technology into service delivery. Benefits included accessibility to services, expanding service delivery to meet the increased number of beneficiaries and upskilling staff in the technological space. Limitations of online resources were mentioned as the main challenge to integrating technology into service delivery.

Benefits of technology

Accessibility and expansion of services and programmes

Six participants stated that moving online made their services and programmes more accessible to clients, thereby expanding services and programmes to an increased number of beneficiaries.

Participant 5: *The beauty of it [online] is that we are reaching people who are geographically not accessible to us with in-person training. So, we have people who are as far as Joburg and Durban accessing our services. Going online has expanded our service beyond the borders of the Western Cape, beyond the borders of the Cape Peninsula. Now that we are online there are four times more people than before.*

Participant 6: *We were compelled to go online. We had roughly four weeks to sort out online platforms, which we did successfully. The benefit is now we have both online and in-person training so we can meet a lot more clients.*

Participant 16: *For all our training programmes, they took the manual and asked how we could deliver it via WhatsApp. Same with all our services. Our home visiting programme is now delivered via WhatsApp and calls. Zoom and WhatsApp have been really useful. It's been the main medium of service delivery... but we are very keen and I think going forward we are going to continue like this.*

Participant 20: *It [services] changed from a face-to-face model to a complete remote model, where all our programmes, including our social work services, were done via WhatsApp or telephonically... That service went amazingly well because many clients, not all, found that the fact that they could engage with the social worker when they could instead of just having that one half an hour visit that they would have maybe once ever...so accessibility was better. We've been getting new referrals from outside, like from rural areas. So, we can provide counselling, we can provide support, we can provide guidance around what people need to do.*

These findings support Calep et al.'s (2020) study that found technological capacity to be a method of delivering services at a greater scale. The findings indicate that technology expands services across geographical boundaries and makes programmes more accessible.

Upskilling and training

Three participants mentioned that the integration of technology to implement programmes and services required staff to be trained in the technological space.

Participant 1: *We had to find videos and creative ways of teaching staff and beneficiaries how to use these devices so that we could transfer our training from physical spaces to online.*

Participant 4: *We did online training for our staff on how to do online therapy. So, we tried to make services still accessible.*

Participant 20: *Getting clients' heads around technology is important. We took it step-by-step in training...literally removing barriers as we went along until we perfected it.*

Staff and clients have come on board with their technology. It was a hell pf a lot of upskilling.

The literature provides limited information on upskilling of staff in the technological space to effectively implement services online. My findings support the limited information provided by Chikwanda's (2020) study that highlighted that working remotely required an investment in the required technology devices and training for remote working to be successful in programme delivery. The findings identify a gap in the literature that will be worthwhile exploring in future studies, to determine if service providers are sufficiently equipped and adequately trained to deliver quality online services and programmes.

Challenges with technology

Despite the benefits that technology bring to service delivery and programmes, some participants had trouble adapting to rendering online services. Four of the 20 participants (20%) highlighted that beneficiaries did not have access to resources such as devices and data, whilst some had trouble understanding how online platforms worked.

Participant 3: *There is no Wi-Fi in their [beneficiaries] homes. So, even though we sent them data bundles it was difficult. We would try and get little groups together. WhatsApp is the main one. They don't relate to Zoom at all. I think their phones can't support it. We could see Zoom just wasn't going to go anywhere, but we did try that avenue. In the end, the best thing was WhatsApp. So, then we formed groups on WhatsApp...it was difficult with data and cell phones.*

Participant 4: *No one was familiar with it [online platforms], so you'd be trying to have a conversation in a preschool environment and we'd say, "So and so, please mute your phone when you're not talking to us." ...Ja, we persevered. But it has been very, very frustrating, but it's the best that it can be. Technology is really, difficult.*

Participant 6: *In terms of the program, that was a complete shutdown because we don't have assets like that. Our laptop has given in recently, as well. The kids don't have access to data and to phones and all of that, so it would be unrealistic for us to have gone online, because of accessibility.*

Participant 17: *Our student population who could access new online training was introduced quite seamlessly. Whereas our more impoverished students, they didn't have access to devices or data.*

My findings suggest that the suitability and success of online programmes are dependent on the nature of the programme and the type of service delivered. Skills development and training programmes translated well into the online space, whereas counselling proved to be more of a challenge. These findings support Bam's (2020) study that found that not all services provided by the NPO sector are appropriate for remote work and many by their very nature, require face-to-face service delivery. Beneficiaries from lower socio-economic communities had less accessibility to online resources due to technological resources and data-related costs. Bam (2020) attributes technological constraints to NPOs operating under limited funding, lacking financial means to provide the resources, infrastructure and training required for employees to work remotely. The study highlights technological constraints were mainly due to beneficiaries' lack of access to technology resources to receive online services. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of online services and programme delivery in communities of poor economic status may act as the main barrier for service delivery, previously rendered face to face. The reality is that advances in technology are only beneficial to NPOs that can afford to implement them. The impact hereof provides an interesting area of research for future study.

Finances

The impact of COVID-19 on NPO finances was commented on by all 20 of the participants. Sixteen of the 20 participants stated that donor support had remained consistent since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Five of these 16 participants stated that donor support had increased, reporting 2020/2021 as their best financial year. None of the participants reported that donor support was withdrawn in total, however, four of the 20 participants experienced reduced funding. Reduction in funding resulted in applications for COVID-9 relief funds (Solidarity Fund and TERS), re-adjusting budgets and using financial reserves to remain operational.

Donor support

Sixteen of the 20 participants indicated that donor funding remained consistent. Participants attributed this to sound communication with donors about changes to core programmes and donor loyalty attained over years of successful operations.

Participant 1: *We just had to communicate with our funders. Our funders are quite flexible. So as long as we still bringing a service to the children, they were pretty happy.*

Participant 17: *We spoke to our funders, we set up meetings. We had zoom meetings and we would discuss and reassess the situation. We looked at our memorandums of agreements with the various funders, what the grant specifics were and we basically reinvented. We said let's re-draw it up. This is how we're going to move forward and this is how it's going to work. They supported us and here we are today.*

Participant 19: *We had funders who were incredibly supportive and understanding. We prioritised engaging with our funders... asking for flexibility on funding and time...Funders and anybody who was part of our strategy was incredibly supportive and understanding.*

Participant 20: *I must say, we have been funded quite well. They [donors] maintained the same level of funding. They [donors] were very supportive and understanding. We couldn't do all the programmes in the community like we used to, but we're developing new ways of doing that online. They saw the value in that.*

The findings indicate that NPOs received continued financial support. O'Brien and Bierce (2020) highlight that one of the top three challenges in securing donor funding in the pandemic was meeting funder requirements. Funders were flexible to the changes in programme and service delivery, if there was value in the services rendered. It is noted that Bam (2020) found a drastic reduction in NPO revenue during the lockdown. In this study, I found that donors have remained supportive of NPOs. It does, however, raise the concern of donor fatigue long-term, as we approach the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic. It poses the question of how NPOs will continue to meet an increased need for services whilst remaining financially sustainable. Referred to Tshikululu (2020) as a double-barrel dilemma, with many NPOs running on reduced

resources and still providing essential services, food and medical supplies to vulnerable communities across South Africa.

Financial growth

Five participants stated that they experienced the most fruitful financial year, 2020-2021.

Participant 5: *It was our best year funding-wise. We were fortunate because our donors came on board, they actually gave us 40% more funding.*

Participant 6: *This was our best financial year yet. Online programmes produced an additional income stream that we didn't expect. COVID-19 actually gave this to us. We got donors on board, local donors came on board, individual people came on board also. And then we also got funding from our international donors. So, altogether we raised about, since last year June or July, R1.6 million for this food fund.*

Participant 18: *The first few months were unbelievable. The donations came in... We've been blessed. We went from an organisation that raised 1.2 million a year, to our last financial year where we raised R25 million. That's how much we grew.*

Participant 10: *We made more money this year than we have ever made. We have been in a very lucky financial position.*

The above findings do not support O'Brien and Bierce's (2020) study that found that the top NPO challenge six months into the COVID-19 pandemic was fundraising. Five participants reported having experienced the most fruitful financial year is not a significant enough representation of the data collected to conclude that all NPOs grew financially during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is however a noteworthy finding, as it suggests that NPOs are not in as bad financial shape as assumed. As highlighted in an Independent Sector (2020) survey and the Non-profit Finance Fund (2020: 1), 83% of organisations experienced a reduction in revenue and contributions between April 2020 - April 2021 and 60% of NPOs are experiencing destabilising conditions that threaten their long-term financial stability. This study does not disregard the NPOs that have struggled financially during the COVID-19 pandemic, as findings highlight that four participants are at financial risk. The four participants however, do not

equate to the 60-83% of NPOs experiencing financial instability as indicated by survey data. This is discussed below under financial risk.

Financial risk

Four participants stated that they are at financial risk and have had to rethink their budget, cut operational costs, sell assets, reduce salaries and access reserves and COVID-19 relief funding: TERS and Solidarity Fund.

Participant 15: *That is part of what we as a Board decided should any of our donors, or should we reach a crisis again, we should be prepared and plan ahead. So, we have something like a safety net now. So, we never have to eat into our reserves again.*

Participant 16: *The past year, we've had to redraft our budget so many times. We're working in very unusual circumstances so we've had to look where we could cut costs to remain in operation.*

Participant 17: *We were very open with staff about the financial situation. We hit a very dire space in April, May and June last year. We had funding cuts, we had to make very drastic adjustments.*

This study highlights that NPOs are not immune from financial shocks as NPOs are highly dependent on their external environment. This includes economic downturn, changes in government policies, political instability, high inflation, competition, change in technology, service delivery and change in environmental forces (Ventor et al., 2006). Effective risk management becomes key in mitigating poor financial outcomes that place NPOs at risk for closure. Risk management protects and adds value to the organisation and its stakeholders through supporting the organisation's objectives by improving decision making and strategic planning. Collier and Agyei-Ampomah (2006) suggest that financial risks are reduced through the effective management and control of the finances of an organisation. The literature provides limited information on financial risk practices.

Assets and reduced operational costs

Three participants expressed they were able to boost their revenue by selling assets due to working from home and saving on operational costs.

Participant 5: *We made a lot of savings in terms of venue hire. We don't pay for venues as training is now online.*

Participant 9: *The first objective in terms of the budget was to identify areas where we could cut costs. The first thing we did was to move to a smaller premise. That was an immediate area we could cut costs. So, we've reduced our rental by 50% by moving into a smaller house.*

Participant 20: *We did have savings in a way because we didn't have the normal costs of transport. That was a huge saving as our social work transport budget is huge.*

The literature that I reviewed does not speak to methods adopted by NPOs to save on operational costs. However, the finding suggests that due to the implementation and large uptake of work from home policies that promote staff safety, several office operational costs have been saved. This includes transport, office and venue rental and printing costs. Findings indicate that work from home acted as a physical health and safety measure but also as a cost-saving mechanism, providing a financial buffer to NPOs.

COVID-19 relief funds

Three of the four participants experiencing financial difficulties stated that they had to access COVID-19 government relief funds (Solidarity Fund) to remain operational.

Participant 1: *The government relief fund gave us a very small amount, about R25 000. There were a couple of opportunities that wouldn't have happened if there wasn't COVID-19. They [government] had this one funding solution, where they would give you R30 000 and you would pay 10% of that back. It was all about getting artists back into the workforce. Trying to reactivate the sector.*

Participant 4: *The Solidarity Fund gave us funding, an opportunity that wouldn't have happened if there wasn't COVID-19. As well as a cultural relief fund.*

Participant 16: *I saw there was a Solidarity Fund report that came out and I sent that in because one of the strong messages of the report was flexibility. So, applying to get funding. We applied and received the funding.*

These comments support Bosman's (2020) finding that NPOs accessed financial relief from the Department of Social Development's (DSD) budget and the findings of Barnard (2020) that highlighted several initiatives that emerged to support NPOs under financial pressure because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings indicate a gap in the literature pertaining to NPOs financial sustainability in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. It poses the question of what percentage of NPOs at financial risk received funding relief and which types of relief funding were accessible. Barnard's (2020) study on measures to assist NPOs experiencing financial challenges and at risk of reduction and termination of programmes briefly explores this, however, a comprehensive study would be insightful in understanding the support offered by the government to NPOs that provide essential services to the most marginalised communities in the country.

Staff remuneration

Sixteen of the 20 participants stated that there has been no reduction in staff salaries since the outbreak of COVID-19. Four participants stated that staff received annual increases, between 5-15%. Four participants were from NPOs that reduced staff salaries, stating that they accessed TERS, adding that it was a tedious process.

Participant 1: *All our salaries were confirmed and budgeted for until the end of the year so there were no salary cuts.*

Participant 2: *Ensuring that none of the staff is put to the sword in terms of having retrenchment or reductions. Look, technically there was no need for us to do that [access TERS funds] because we were still in a position to continue to pay full salaries to all staff.*

Participant 10: *There was never any, “We need to access TERS, we need to cut down, we need to retrench”. We are very lucky that there were no salary cuts.*

What is clear from the interviews is that staff are crucial for service delivery and therefore job security and pay has been a priority. In contrast to this Tshikululu (2020) found that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on staff retainment, resulting in the downsizing and retrenchment of staff.

Salary increases

Four NPOs were able to implement annual salary increases and provide annual bonuses.

Participant 5: *Our salaries actually increased. No, I’m serious, because when COVID-19 happened, it happened in March. The December of that year, when our board met, we increased salaries.*

Participant 7: *We’ve been able to continue to pay staff their full salaries. The normal annual increase we offer was still implemented.*

Participant 9: *We didn’t have to make any salary cuts. People still received their monthly salary. The only two sacrifices were, whereas most staff for most of the years got a 100% bonus, this time it was reduced to a 60% bonus and the salary increases were just more than the CPIX rate, I think 5%.*

Participant 20: *We got increases last year and this year, which is amazing. It’s already more than what the government gave us. And we got bonuses last year, which was also amazing.*

These comments may be associated with the NPOs that grew financially during the COVID-19 pandemic financial year. The literature that I reviewed did not cover salary increases, instead, the literature indicated that COVID-19 placed staff jobs at risk and reduction in pay.

Reduced salaries and access to Temporary Employment relief scheme (TERS)

Four participants experienced reduced salaries and access TERS as means to mitigate salary reductions.

Participant 4: *When the pandemic hit us, everybody's salaries were cut. Thankfully TERS support came.*

Participant 16: *In our consultation with staff, we said we want to avoid retrenchment, so we'd rather go the reduced salary route. Staff agreed so we reduced by 22%. We accessed TERS. That has helped. So, for about three months, I think we got TERS. So, we were able to pay staff that shortfall. They essentially got almost full salary for those months.*

Participant 17: *The one adjustment cut was the salary cut of 30% and then we tried to access the TERS fund and then the TERS fund didn't pay out. A lot of complexities with that.*

Participant 19: *We didn't retrench anybody. We all got a 40% cut to our salaries. But we got some TERS money. We got it very late. There was a big delay in pay-outs.*

Barnard's (2020) study found that some NPOs financial constraints resulted in reduced pay. The article does not specify the percentage decrease in pay or the level of retrenchment within the sector. The four NPOs in this study reduced salaries by between 22% and 40%. The data is not sufficient to make a generalised representation of the NPO sector. Findings indicate that TERS provided financial relief for NPOs who had insufficient funds to continue to pay full salaries. Access to the TERS fund offered by the government under the Disaster Management Act, No. 57 of 2002 in partnership with the Department of Employment and Labour provides NGOs with the finances towards salaries. Two participants indicated that their TERS pay out had been slow. Government Communications (2021) acknowledged that not all sectors have been able to access the TERS fund and that assistance is required to roll out the payments owed to applicants and recipients. The success hereof may be a worthwhile area for future studies.

This section has indicated that adapting services and programmes is crucial in meeting increased beneficiary needs. The adaptation of services and programmes required strategising

and rendering services beyond the NGOs normal scope of practice. Technology was crucial in continued service delivery, although, it was not without its challenges. My findings indicated that donors remained loyal, providing those services were adding value and meeting the needs of beneficiaries. Findings indicate that some NPOs were in a better financial position than others since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings of organisations' finances indicate that NGOs are in a better financial position than indicated in the literature review and that job security was being prioritised by NPOs. The findings did not provide sufficient information about the benefits and limitations of Government relief funding.

4.4.4 Theme 4: Lessons learned by the NPO sector in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The fourth theme in this study looks at the lessons learned by the NPO sector considering the COVID-19 pandemic. In analysing the data two categories emerged during the analysis process; factors that enabled NPO to survive (protective factors) and factors that placed NPOs at risk of closure (risk factors). Under each of these categories, sub-categories emerged and each of these is discussed below.

Factors that enabled NPO to survive (Protective factors)

All NPOs in this study have survived the COVID-19 pandemic at the time that this study was conducted. Participants equate NPOs resilience to three main protective factors; re-integration of technology into service delivery, identifying gaps in operations and service delivery and staff commitment and passion for service.

Technology

Eighteen of the 20 participants stated that integrating technology into programme and service delivery was crucial for NPO survival for three reasons; meeting beneficiary needs, developing a new avenue of income via an online presence and adopting a hybrid model to programmes and service delivery.

Participant 2: *There is an urgent need to roll out and improve our technological capabilities in the organisation.... given the uncertainties of the pandemic I think we're*

beginning to realise that having technology on our side is to our advantage as we can continue to work remotely. We've been preparing to create a hybrid model of matching physical work with remote work. We're integrating service delivery with technology as we can continue to provide ongoing support albeit electronically and remotely.

Participant 17: *We're now operating with hybrid classes. So, we have some students who have opted to remain remote. So, we have a dual, mostly live, the students prefer to be live... But we do have cameras in all our classrooms now and everything is online, so people can join the classes.*

Participant 20: *The pandemic has made us become more aligned with technology and we will need to invest in it for the future. We are doing a hybrid model at the moment. All our facilities are open now. So, the clients who come to the facilities are coming in, but in turns. But I think the hybrid model is here to stay...I think it probably will stay because there have been good things to come out of it, like extending our services beyond the Cape Metropole to rural areas where people are in need.*

These findings are consistent with O'Brien and Bierce (2020: 1) study that found that 85% of NPOs indicated that technology is important for their long-term success, yet only 23% have a long-term strategy or plan for how they will use technology. The reality is that advances in technology are only beneficial to organisations that can afford to and are able to implement them. The findings suggest that investment in technology is not something that can be overlooked by NPOs as technology plays a crucial role in long-term programme and service delivery. As highlighted in Calep et al.'s (2020) study, technological capacity is critical to business continuity and will remain critical during recovery, both for data-informed decision-making and as a method of delivering services at a lower cost and on a greater scale. This suggests that NPOs need to invest in technology and upskilling of staff in rendering services online.

Staff commitment and compassion

Eleven of the 20 participants stated that the staff's passion and commitment during the COVID-19 crisis acted as a protective factor for the organisation's survival. Participants mentioned that

this has fostered a collective organisation culture of teamwork and commitment to their jobs despite the challenges and in some cases, reduced salaries.

Participant 7: *Staff can either make or break an organisation, your human resources are your biggest asset at the end of the day, their commitment is really important.*

Participant 8: *The most important thing that we have learned as an organisation is that if you don't look after your staff, you are not going anywhere. So, the most important lesson for me is how important our people are. How important staff is...COVID-19 has really taught me that you cannot work alone, without staff we wouldn't be able to do this.*

Participant 16: *Seeing how much our staff care about the client we serve...If we didn't have staff who were willing to sacrifice the way that they are. It's a combination of all of that. I want to emphasise the compassion and sacrifices made by staff.*

One could attribute these findings solely to the humanitarian aspect of NPO work. However, it would be foolhardy not to acknowledge the role that leadership has in prioritising the wellbeing of its employees. Findings suggest that in doing so, leaders create a working environment that fosters teamwork and active participation. This is an important finding as it highlights the importance of leadership in fostering a work culture that staff is committed to being part of.

Orsmond's (2020) study on change management found that organisations that had implemented a change management process, have been more equipped to cope with the "new normal" and have a better chance of survival compared with those organisations who have struggled or have been unable to cope with the pace of change. Managing the process of change, therefore, becomes a crucial tool for organisation survival and sustainability. Underpinned by Change Management Theory, management is tasked with guiding the process of transitioning staff through change. The effort and expertise made by those in leadership positions is a key determining factor in the success of the adjustment to change. As change impacts all, the staff of an organisation must be involved in the stages of change and feel supported when they are required to abandon their current practices and cultural norms. It is important when the previous ways of doing things are changed that those in leadership positions prepare employees for the change.

Good leadership assurances are important as these aspects not only steer the process in the right direction but also make the process easier for staff. Leadership skills with the power to influence become the most crucial component to combat resistance to change, highlighting the importance of learning and working as a team, sharing a vision for the future and tapping into employees' skills, ultimately motivating collective means of change.

Strategising for growth opportunities

Seven of the 20 participants indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic forced them to strategise and re-think their work. Hereby using the COVID-19 crisis as an opportunity to close the gaps in services and operations and speed up with the advances of our time.

Participant 2: *The crisis has provided a good opportunity to fast-track a lot of the plans and intentions that we had on the technological side of our operations and our programmatic working. Looking at opportunities to scale up and broaden services.*

Participant 5: *People are complaining about COVID-19. We don't complain. We respond to the threat by turning it into an opportunity. What we did was change our strategies. We did introspection.*

Participant 9: *During that period of hard lockdown, we looked at the organisation. We assessed. With assessing and looking at all our gaps, we started with development to fill our gaps. We redeveloped our policies, our systems, which includes the technical system, but also how we do our case management.*

When discussing the future of NPOs considering COVID-19, participants attributed leadership and management's ability to adapt to crisis to be the key factor in organisation survival. Ultimately, using the crisis as an opportunity to strategise, invest in technology, shift services online and re-thinking budgeting line items such as rental costs and travel, considering working from home.

From this study, the risks associated with a crisis can provide opportunities for development and growth. The findings suggest that if organisations can develop a sound understanding of

their strategic and operational objectives, including factors critical to its success and the threats and opportunities related to the achievement of these objectives, the risk can add value to an organisation. Collier and Agyei-Ampomah's (2006) study speaks to risk management as a strategy that protects and adds value to the organisation and its stakeholders through supporting the organisation's objectives by improving decision making and planning. Collier and Agyei-Ampomah (2006) also suggest that in various undertakings, there is the potential for events and consequences that constitute opportunities for benefit (upside) or threats to success (downside). When management focuses on risk beyond negative consequences it can provide growth opportunities. This suggests that combining key principles of risk and crisis management and organisational resilience theory explains organisations successfully addressing crises and adapting to new situations, while others falter or fail.

Factors that placed NPOs at risk of closure (risk factors)

When considering factors that would place NPOs at risk of closure, participants expressed financial concerns about donor fatigue, the South African economic climate and the burden of financially meeting the increased need of programmes and services to combat poverty. Participants highlighted the need to re-look at funding strategies, adding that the COVID-19 pandemic has shifted their perspective on NPO reserves. They explained that NPOs need to have secure funding for programmes and service delivery.

Inadequate financial planning

Seventeen of the 20 participants stated that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to their attention the need for financial reserves and improved financial management.

Participant 2: *A good lesson and starting point out of all of this is to think about financial management.*

Participant 7: *Building reserves build a resilient organisation. Having a financial buffer probably is the biggest lesson.*

Participant 10: *The biggest lesson has been the importance of building up a reserve over the years. And I believe those who have built up reserves over the years are going to be the ones that are going to get through.*

Participant 15: *I can honestly and sincerely say that I've learned from COVID the need for an emergency budget or something like that. We have now decided that, should we ever reach a crisis again, we should be prepared and have a financial safety net.*

The Independent Sector (2020: 1) study quantified the significance of the disruption to funding streams; the study found that 83% of organisations experienced a reduction in revenue and contributions between April 2020 - April 2021. The findings highlight the importance of building financial reserves as a protective factor against the risk of NPO closure, especially considering financial shocks from the external environment, marked by the economic downturn in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. This supports Collier and Agyei-Ampomah's (2006) study on financial risks, underpinned by the effective management and control of the finances of the organisation and the effects of external threat factors, such as the economic climate.

In this study, findings indicate that NPOs need to focus their attention on financial risk management. NPOs must build their knowledge in understanding financial risk management systems and practices and the challenges that are faced in this regard. As the findings in the study suggest, change is constant and therefore financial risk plans and strategies must change accordingly. Sound financial management in general and financial risk management specifically are key management areas on which NPOs must focus to survive and thrive.

This section illustrates that NPOs have mostly been resilient in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and have been sustainable despite the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings indicate that NPOs have responded at the forefront of the crisis and NPO leaders and staff have been key to organisation survival. Integrating technology has offered NPOs the ability to continue programme and service delivery, referred to as a hybrid model to service delivery of programmes. The section indicates that NPOs that can use a crisis as an opportunity and strategise for the short-term and the long-term are sustainable. This section has indicated that there are more protective factors sustaining NPOs, as opposed to risk factors. The only risk factor mentioned by participants was poor financial planning, in terms of lack of reserves, donor fatigue and lack of financial risk management. My findings suggest

that NPO leaders and management teams need to focus on financial risk management strategies to increase NPOs chances of survival in a crisis.

4.5 SUMMARY

This chapter highlighted that leadership and management have been adaptive in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. NPOs have adapted and prioritised programmes and service delivery to meet the change and increased needs of beneficiaries in light of COVID-19. The integration of technology has been imperative in continued service delivery, although this is not without its challenges. NPO leaders have prioritised external and internal support for staff, who have been key in organisation survival. The passion and commitment have fostered a collective organisation culture of teamwork and commitment.

Internal and external communication has been key in accessing updated and relevant information to respond to COVID-19. Communication skills have revealed the importance gaining support through networking and building partnerships. The findings indicate the importance of management being able to strategise and adapt their response to the crisis in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the various challenges NPOs have faced in responding to the crisis, most NPOs are resilient and have remained operational throughout the pandemic. All NPOs in this study have survived the COVID-19 pandemic at the time that this study was conducted. Participants equate NPO's resilience to three main protective factors; integration of technology into service delivery, identifying gaps in operations and service delivery and staff commitment and passion for service. Participants have attributed organisation resilience to protective factors that far outweighed factors that would place NPOs at risk of closure.

Findings on organisation's finances indicate that some NPOs are in a better financial position than before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is attributed to loyal donors. The findings did not provide sufficient information about the benefits and limitations of Government relief funding. The findings highlight that poor financial planning is the greatest risk factor threatening NPO survival. The chapter that follows concludes this study with recommendations for addressing the challenges identified in this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The concluding chapter briefly sets out the purpose of the study and records the main conclusions of the study. Recommendations are made based on the study's findings. These can be useful in supporting NPO sustainability and survival in the face of uncertainty, such as elicited by the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter closes with a concluding statement that encapsulates the main findings of this study.

5.2 THE PROBLEM CONTEXT AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

South Africa cannot afford to overlook the importance of the NPO sector in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic as they provide crucial social development programmes that reach deeply into communities, supporting vulnerable populations in need. As NPOs function in an ever-changing social, economic and political environment they need to be resilient, agile and sustainable to thrive. Without good leadership skills and practices and policies, skills, capabilities and culture, many NPOs are not able to survive a crisis in which they may find themselves. In this exploratory research study, the study aimed to generate recommendations that can be useful in supporting NPOs sustainability and survival in the face of uncertainty.

In this study, four research questions are answered in relation to:

- 1) The role of NPO leaders in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2) The role of NPO management in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3) The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on the organisation's operations.
- 4) Lessons learned by the NPO sector in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE STUDY FINDINGS

From the findings of this study four main conclusions are drawn in relation to the response and functioning of NPOs since the COVID-19 pandemic. These four conclusions are recorded below with a brief explanation of each.

5.3.1 NPO leaders' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic

NPO leaders were required to adapt and expand service and programme delivery to meet the growing needs of their beneficiaries. Adaptability and flexibility are essential leadership skills in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic due to the unpredictable conditions. Prioritising emotional support for staff was crucial in mitigating burnout and COVID-fatigue. As a result, leaders have prioritised staffs' emotional wellbeing by providing internal and external training and emotional support. Leaders were required to build networks and partnerships to continue rendering services and programmes. Consistent communication played a key role in building a work culture of teamwork and accessing information to make informed decisions.

5.3.2 NPO management response to the COVID-19 pandemic

NPOs ability to be flexible and proactive in the face of the COVID-19 crisis has been crucial for organisation survival. Management complied with the regulations set out the Disaster Act and relevant Health and Safety and Human Relations Policies. Managers have the role and responsibility to involve all levels of individuals in planning and collective strategic thinking. Management was tasked with strategising and implementing policies, procedures and processes that protected staff from exposure to COVID-19. Work from home was a key policy, however, despite the safety benefits, it posed technological challenges for some organisations. Working remotely had various challenges, including technological resource restrictions, limitations of job specifications, difficulty balancing work and personal home life and resistance to returning to office-based work full time.

5.3.3 COVID-19 pandemic and organisations' service delivery and programmes

NPO ability to adapt and expand service delivery and programmes enabled the continuation of service delivery, albeit not the NPOs core service delivery model. Most of the donor funding remained consistent. Participants contributed this to continuous and transparent communication with donors and donor loyalty attained over years of successful operations. NPOs at financial risk had to re-evaluate their budget, cut operational costs, sell assets, reduce salaries and access reserves and COVID-19 relief funding (TERS and Solidarity Fund). Integrating technology was crucial to remain operational and deliver service and programmes, although not without its challenges.

5.3.4 Lessons learned by the NPO sector in light of the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 crisis has provided an opportunity to strategise for growth opportunities and to rethink services and programmes. For NPOs with poor crisis and risk management strategies and practices were most at risk of closure. However, NPOs have proved to have resilience in their ability to pivot and adapt services. Emotional support for staff combined with staff's passion fostered a collective organisational culture of teamwork and commitment to their jobs despite the challenges and in some cases, reduced salaries. Integrating technology in service delivery was crucial for NPO survival. During a crisis a hybrid model of online and face-to-face services can be provided and may be the new normal of rendering services. Donor fatigue is a concern considering financial shocks from the external environment, marked by the economic downturn in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study and the conclusions drawn eight recommendations for supporting NPO sustainability and survival in a crisis are made.

5.4.1 Risk management and strategic planning

Due to the unprecedented nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional approaches to crisis management have been challenged. NPO leaders have been required to respond carefully and thoughtfully to a global pandemic. It is recommended that NPO leaders and senior management develop a sound understanding of risk management and strategic planning. Through engaging in such processes, volatility can be mitigated, protecting the organisation to a degree from external risk factors.

5.4.2 Financial risk management strategies and practices

It is recommended that NPO leaders and management teams focus on financial risk management strategies to increase NPOs chances of survival in a crisis. NPOs should establish formal financial risk management policies, systems and practices in their organisations and these should be reviewed regularly as part of their management practices. Implementing

effective risk management can improve the quality of decision-making, enable effective implementation of decisions and ensure that strategic decisions are sound. This will help to ensure continuity of service delivery. Ultimately, sound risk management creates confidence in stakeholders that an organisation can deliver on its mandate, manage threats and make informed decisions.

5.4.3 Training and skills development

It is recommended that training, focusing on strategic leadership and financial management skills and practices should be provided for leaders NPO, management and staff. Training NPO staff and managers will enable staff to be better skilled and able to understand and promote organisational sustainability and to minimise financial risk.

5.4.4 Incorporating Change Management capacity into the NPO sector

The study highlights that NPOs that have change management processes in place, have been more equipped to cope with the “new normal” and have a better chance of sustainability compared with those organisations that have been unable to cope with the pace of change. It is recommended that acquiring skills in managing the process of change is prioritised as a crucial element for organisations’ survival and sustainability.

5.4.5 Investing in technology and staff technology skills

The world is in the technological revolution and technology is here to stay. Technology plays a crucial role in the long-term service delivery and rendering of programmes. It is recommended that NPOs should invest in equipping and training staff to build competency in the use of technology and the available applications.

5.4.6 Staff wellbeing

It is recommended that NPO boards and leadership needs to prioritise the well-being of its staff. In times of crisis this can be done by offering internal and external psychological and emotional support. Internally, regular team meetings can be held to foster an organisational culture of

compassion and commitment. Externally, regular group supervision or counselling for staff with individual sessions as additional emotional support for staff.

5.4.7 Communication

It is recommended that those in leadership positions need to prioritise creating accessible platforms for communication beyond the boardroom, targeting all levels and categories of staff. Staff throughout the organisation should receive regular internal communication on the state of the crisis and what the organisation is doing to reduce the effects. This is particularly crucial in a time of uncertainty and unpredictability.

5.4.8 Diversify income

Participants in this study that worked at NPOs at risk of closure due to COVID-19 expressed concerns about donor fatigue. The South African economic climate and the burden of financially meeting the increased need for social services to combat poverty have contributed to these concerns. It is recommended that NPOs actively diversify their sources of income and explore alternative platforms of fundraising. Having the fundamental NPO compliances in place and an active fundraising strategy and plan will contribute to NPO sustainability.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

During the process of conducting this research study, I identified several gaps in knowledge about NPOs response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The following five areas are suggested for further research.

5.5.1 The cost-benefit of rendering services online

The literature provides limited information on upskilling of staff in the technological space to effectively implement services and programmes online. The success and cost-benefit of rendering services online is a worthwhile area of study as technology is increasingly an integral component of NPO operation and service delivery. My findings identify a gap in the literature

that will be worthwhile exploring in future studies, to determine if service providers are sufficiently equipped and adequately trained to deliver quality online services and programmes.

5.5.2 Donor fatigue

NPO donors have generally remained supportive of NPOs. It does, however, raise the concern of donor fatigue long-term, as we approach the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic. A research question to be posed and studied is how NPOs will continue to meet an increased need for services whilst remaining financially sustainable. This has been referred to as a double-barrel dilemma, with many NPOs running on reduced resources and still providing essential services, food relief and medical supplies to vulnerable communities across South Africa. The sustainability hereof is a worthwhile area for future research

5.5.3 Government support offered to NPOs during the COVID-19 pandemic

The findings indicate a gap in the literature about NPO financial sustainability considering the COVID-19 pandemic. It poses the question to what degree have NPOs been at financial risk since the COVID-19 pandemic struck in March 2020. The uptake of government relief funds and the challenges of obtaining such funds is a further worthwhile area for future research. A comprehensive study would be insightful in understanding the support offered by the government to NPOs that provide essential services to the most marginalised communities in the country.

5.5.4 Compulsory COVID-19 vaccination in the workplace

The issue of compulsory COVID-19 vaccination compliance in the workplace has gained traction and there are currently legalities being pursued on the controversial compulsory vaccination in the workplace. The literature review does not discuss compulsory vaccination in the workplace, however the negative implications of non-vaccinated staff on sick leave was highlighted. The findings have highlighted a gap in the literature and provides an interesting area for future research. As COVID-19 has no clear end date, compulsory vaccinations pose ethical considerations and the impact on staff retention, remuneration and service delivery to beneficiaries is unknown.

5.5.5 Integration of technology in poor socio-economic environment

My findings suggest that the effectiveness of online services and programme delivery in communities of poor economic status may act as the main barrier for service delivery to those in poor socio-economic environments. These are the beneficiaries most in need of services, previously rendered face to face. The reality is that advances in technology are only beneficial to NPOs that can afford to implement them and where communities have access to technological resources and data. The impact hereof provides an interesting area of research for future study.

5.6 CONCLUDING STATEMENT

NPOs have demonstrated resilience in an exceedingly difficult two-year period by adopting new ways of working to ensure that they remain operational and able to deliver needed services to communities. This study has highlighted that NPO leaders' adaptability has so far played an important role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The study highlighted that prioritising the emotional well-being of staff was key to an organisation's survival. Proactive organisational management had an especially important role to play in strategic planning to pivot services and programmes and implement policies to safeguard staff and beneficiaries. The study showed that organisations that successfully integrated technology and expanded and adapted the rendering of services were able to sustain their operations through the crisis. Significant lessons in mitigating and managing the risk were learned by the NPO sector over the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite donor loyalty, inadequate financial risk management has placed NPOs at risk of closure. The crisis brought to light the importance of technology, albeit not without its challenges. Staff commitment and compassion and strategising for growth opportunities are key protective factors in organisations' sustainability, during and beyond a crisis. The recommendations made in this study provide a guide to NPOs to enhance sustainability and hence enable NPOs to continue to provide much needed social service programmes into the future.

REFERENCES

- Amos, T., Davis, A., Hamann, R., Neuland, E., Jansen van Rensburg, M. & Callaghan, C. (2019). *Strategic Management: Towards sustainable strategies in southern Africa*. Ed.4. South Africa: Oxford University Press.
- Annarelli, A. and Nonino, F. (2020). Strategic and operational management of organizational resilience: Current state of research and future directions. *Omega Journals*,10.
- Artaya, I. P. (2019). The concept of operations and production management. The Basics Of Operations Management And Production. Publisher: Narotama University Press.
- Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. (2001). *The Practice of Social Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bam, A. (2020). Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 within the “Third Sector”. *USB News*. Retrieved from <https://www.usb.ac.za/>.
- Barnard, D. (2020). COVID-19 in South Africa – An Overview of the NGO Funding Situation and Fundraising Efforts. *NGO Pulse*. Retrieved from <http://www.ngopulse.org/>.
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No. 11 of 2002*. (2002). Retrieved January 29, 2021 from <http://www.labour.go.za>.
- Belyh, B. (2019). *Major Approaches & Models of Change Management*. Retrieved from <https://www.cleverism.com/major-approaches-models-of-change-management/>.
- Bosman, G. (2020). *Department of Social Development on its registration process, funding, monitoring and evaluation of NPOs*. Retrieved from <https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/30312/>.
- Botelho, E., Powel, K.R., Kincaid, S. and Wang, D. (2017). What sets successful CEOs apart. *Harvard Business Review*, 95(3), 70-77. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/>.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1990). *Discovering what families do, in rebuilding the nest: A New Commitment to the American Family*. USA: Family Service America. Retrieved from <http://www.montana.edu/www4h/process.html>.

- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods*. 4th ed. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Celep, A., Coolidge, M. and Bartcza, L. (2020). Social Impact and Economic Viability of NPOs during the COVID-19. *NGO Pulse*. Retrieved from <http://www.ngopulse.org/>.
- Chikwanda, H.K. (2020). *Challenges and strategies in NPO's Operations during COVID-19 pandemic*. Graduate School of Technology Management. University of Pretoria. Hatfield. 0028, RSA.
- Collins English Dictionary. HarperCollins Publishers 2021.
<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/response>.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications.
- Department of Health (1993). The Occupational Health and Safety Act, No. 85 of 1993.
- Department of Social Development. (2001). *Codes of Good Practice for South African Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs)*. Retrieved from http://www.dsd.gov.za/npo/index2.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=46&Itemid=39
- Department of Social Development. (2016). *2015/16 State of South African Registered Non-Profit Organisations*. Retrieved from http://www.dsd.gov.za/npo/index.php?option=com_docman&task=cat_view&Itemid=39&gid=81&orderby=dmdate_published [1 April 2017].
- De Vos, A., Strydom, H., Fouche, C.B & Delpont, S.L. (2011). Research at grassroots.
- Disaster Management Act, No. 57 of 2002. *Government Gazette*, 24252.
- Di'Vanna, J.A. and Maris, S.J. (2004). *Strategic thinking in tactical times*. UK: Palgrave.
- Drucker, P. F. (2004). What makes an effective executive? *Harvard Business Review*, 82(6),58-63. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org>.

- Gastrow, S. (2020). *SA can ill-afford to overlook the non-profit sector in its response to Covid-19*. The Daily Maverick. Retrieved from <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2020-04-19-sa-can-ill-afford-to-overlook-the-non-profit-sector-in-its-response-to-covid-19/>.
- Goldin, I. & Muggah, R. (2020). *The world before this coronavirus and after cannot be the same*. Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/the-world-before-this-coronavirus-and-after-cannot-be-the-same-134905>.
- Government Communications (2021). *R60bn in temporary Covid-19 relief paid out so far*. Retrieved from <https://www.labour.gov.za/>.
- Gracey, A. (2019). *Developing an Organisational Resilience Framework*. Resilience Association Congress Conference, Belgium.
- Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (1985). *Competing paradigms in Qualitative Research: Handbook of qualitative research*.
- Hamidovic, H. (2012). An Introduction to Crisis Management. *ISACA Journal*, 5.
- Harvey, J., Holland, H., Hensley, D. and Cummins, H.J. (2013). *The Principal as Leader: An Overview - The School Principal as Leader: Guiding Schools to Better Teaching and Learning*. USA: The Wallace Foundation.
- Health and Safety Executive (2020). *How can occupational safety and health be managed?* Retrieved from <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-administration-inspection/resources-library/publications/guide-for-labour-inspectors/how-can-osh-be-managed/lang--en/index.htm>.
- Horney, N. and O'Shea, T. (2015). *Focused, Fast and Flexible: Creating Agility Advantage in a VUCA World*. USA: Indie Books International.
- Independent Sector (2020a). *Independent Sector Annual Report*. Retrieved from https://independentsector.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/is_2020_annual_report-72921.pdf
- Independent Sector. (2020b). *The Impact of COVID-19 on Large and Mid-sized Non-profits*. Retrieved from <https://independentsector.org/resource/covid19-survey/>.

- Johnson, K.J. (n.d). *The Health Care Interdisciplinary Context: A Focus on the Microsystem Concept*. USA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.
- Kapur, R. (2020). *Human Resources Policies and Procedures*. University of Delhi
Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/339711840_Human_Resources_Policies_and_Procedures.
- Khimani, S. (2013). Comparative Study: The Kurt Lewin of Change Management. *International Journal of Computer and Information Technology*, 2(4).
- Lazenby, K. (2014). *The strategic management process A South African perspective*. RSA: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Lyons-Newman (2020). *Scenario planning: rapid planning in a time of rapid change*. Retrieved from <https://www.lyonsnewman.com/blog/scenario-planning-rapid-planning-in-a-time-of-rapid-change>.
- McMullin, C. and Rago, P. (2020). Leadership and Governance in Times of Crisis: A Balancing Act for Nonprofit Boards. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 49(6), 1182–1190.
- McKnight, B. and Gouweloos, J. (2021). How COVID-19 could transform non-profit organizations. Retrieved from <https://theconversation.com/how-covid-19-could-transform-non-profit-organizations-153254> .
- Miller, E. (2019). Nonprofit Strategic Management Revisited. *Canadian journal of nonprofit and social economy research*, 9.
- Munshi, S. (2020). Covid-19 reminds us to respect, admire, learn from social welfare organisations. *Bizcommunity: NGO, NPO & social enterprise news South Africa*. Retrieved from <https://www.bizcommunity.com/>.
- Newman, L. (2020). The impact of Covid-19 on the non-profit sector. *Dialogue*. Retrieved from <https://dialogue.co.za/>.

NGO Pulse (2020). The impact of Covid-19 on the non-profit sector

<http://www.ngopulse.org/article/2020/10/02/impact-covid-19-non-profit-sector>.

O'Brien, J. and Bierce, K. (2020). Announcing the Latest Nonprofit Trends Report. Retrieved from

<https://www.salesforce.org/blog/nonprofit-trends-report-second-edition-research/>.

Oehler, K. (2020). *How Covid-19 will impact employee wellbeing in the long term*.

Retrieved from <https://www.hrzone.com/lead/change/how-covid-19-will-impact-employee-wellbeing-in-the-long-term>.

Orsmond, Q. (2020). *COVID-19 and the Impact on Organisational Change*. Retrieved from

<https://www.cmcpartnership.com/en-za/blog/covid-19-and-the-impact-on-organizational-change>.

Remuzzi, A & Remuzzi, A.G. (2020). *COVID-19 and Italy: what next?* Department of Management Information and Production Engineering, University of Bergamo, Dalmine, Italy.

Republic of South Africa. 1993. *The Occupational Health and Safety Act, No. 85 of 1993*

Rimita, K. (2019). *Leader Readiness in a Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous (VUCA) Business Environment*. Doctoral dissertation, Walden University, USA.

Rocket Lawyer. (2020). *Health and safety*. Retrieved from

<https://www.rocketlawyer.com/gb/en/quick-guides/health-and-safety>.

Seaward, B. L. (1999). *Managing Stress: Principles and Strategies for Health and Wellbeing*. Retrieved from www.netlibrary.com.

Silva, L. (2007). Epistemological and theoretical challenges for studying power and politics in information systems. *Information Systems Journal*, 17(2), 165-183.

Statistics South Africa. (2017). *Poverty on the rise in South Africa*. Retrieved from

<http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=10334>.

- South African Revenue Service. (2020). *Solidarity fund, 2020*. Retrieved from <https://www.sars.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/Docs/TaxExemption/SARS-Solidarity-Fund-Article-2020-2021.pdf>
- Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative research: Analysis types and software*. New York: Falmer.
- The Health and Safety Executive. (2020). *Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 of 1993*.
- Tshikululu (2020). *We need to look after the mental health of NPO's now more than ever Supporting the Mental Health of South African NPO's*. Retrieved from <https://tshikululu.org.za/we-need-to-look-after-the-mental-health-of-npos-now-more-than-ever-supporting-the-mental-health-of-south-african-npos/>.
- Ventor, L., Hamann., A.D., Callaghan, J. and Venter, S. (2006). *Strategic management: Towards sustainable strategies in Southern Africa*. RSA: Oxford University Press, 4th Edition.
- Vogus, T. and Sutcliffe, K. (2007). *Organizational Resilience: Towards a Theory and Research Agenda*. Montréal, Canada.
- Western Cape Department of Social Development. (2009). *What is an NPO*. Retrieved from
- Wheatley, D. (20117). Employee Satisfaction and Use of Flexible Working Arrangements. *Work Employment & Society*, 31(4), 567–585. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/26500124.
- World Health Organisation (2020). *COVID-19 Strategy update*. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/covid-strategy-update-14april2020.pdf>
- WorldoMeter. (2020). *COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic*. Retrieved from <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>.
- Zemke, A. (2020). *Role of Strategic Communication in Crisis Management and Business Continuity*. Retrieved from <https://beehivepr.biz/strategic-communication-in->

[crisis/#:~:text=The%20key%20role%20of%20strategic,maintain%20business%20continuity%20and%20recover.](#)

Annexure A: informed consent participation letter



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Informed Consent Participation Letter

Dear participant,

I am currently a master's student at the University of Cape Town, requesting voluntary participation in a research study. The research study seeks to explore the Western Cape province non-profit organisations' response to COVID-19.

The study will be used to generate information on NPOs in the Western Cape province response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic is unique in that the true impact on the NPO is not known. By adopting an exploitative approach to the research study, the aim is to explore a phenomenon that is in the early stages. The purpose of the study is to gain information to better understand a problem that is not yet clearly defined and where minimal research exists. The study aims to generate recommendations that can be useful in supporting NPO's sustainability and survival in the face of uncertainty.

The sample for the study is individual CEO's, executive directors and chief operating officers.

In light of COVID-19 protocols and safety regulations, participants are given the option to partake in the interview via a suitable online platform or face to face at your place of work. Please indicate your preference below.

Face to face

Online

Online platform preference: Zoom Teams Skype

All information gathered will be confidential. As a participant, your responses will only be viewed by the researcher's university supervisor and an external moderator. Your name will not be used in the research report at all.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and you can withdraw from the study at any point. Please read the information below and ask questions/raise concerns with regards to the study.

Participant's involvement

- I voluntarily agree to participate in this research study, acknowledging that the nature of the study has been clearly explained to me and an opportunity provided for me to ask any questions I might have.
- I understand that I am under no obligation to participate in the study and can decide to withdraw at any stage.
- I agree to this interview being used for purposes of the research on condition that my privacy is respected.
- I have received a copy of this consent form.

I agree to participate in this study:

YES	NO
-----	----

Participant's name and signature

Date:

Signature of researcher

Date:

Annexure B: Letter from department



Department of Social Development
University of Cape Town
Upper Campus
Leslie Social Sciences Building
5th Floor, Office 5.18
Private Bag X3
Rondebosch
770
South Africa

Tel: +27 21 650 4221
Fax: +27 21 689 2739
Email: eric.atmore@uct.ac.za
Doctor Eric Atmore

Dear Sir/Madam,

Western Cape province non-profit organisations' response to COVID-19.

This research study forms part of the Masters in Social Policy and Management Degree programme in the Department of Social Development at the University of Cape Town.

The researcher is investigating the Western Cape province non-profit organisations' response to COVID-19. Currently, minimal research has been conducted on this important topic. By adopting an exploitative approach to the research study, the aim is to explore a phenomenon that is in the early stages. The purpose of the study is to gain information to better understand a problem that is not yet clearly defined and where minimal research exists. The study aims to generate recommendations that can be useful in supporting NPO's sustainability and survival in the face of uncertainty.

The objectives of the study are:

i. Primary research objective:

To determine NPO's in the Western Cape response to COVID-19.

Secondary research objectives:

- ii. To determine the role of leaders in responding to COVID-19.
- iii. To determine the role of management in responding to COVID-19.
- iv. To determine the effect of COVID-19 on the organisations' operations.
- v. To explore the lessons learned by the NPO sector in light of COVID-19.

Should you require any further confirmation or clarity regarding this study, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Prof Eric Atmore

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Eric Atmore'.

Annexure C: Interview schedule questions

An exploratory study of Western Cape Non-Profit Organisations' response to COVID-19

Main question:

What was the response of NPOs in the Western Cape to COVID-19?

Secondary questions:

- 1) What is the role of leadership in responding to COVID-19?
- 2) What is the role of management in responding to COVID-19?
- 3) What was the effect of COVID-19 on the organisation's operations (service delivery, staff, finances and planning)?
- 4) What lessons can be learned by the NPO sector in light of pandemic?

1. What is the role of leadership in responding to COVID-19?

- What leadership skills and practices were required in responding to COVID-19?
- What has COVID-19 taught you about leadership?
- What practices during a crisis promote successful leadership?
- How did you respond to the change/demands during lockdown and the rise of COVID-19?
- During the pandemic what are your highest priorities?
 - Health and safety of employees and service delivery
 - Supporting staff's wellbeing
 - Funding
 - Programmes & service delivery
 - Communication – stakeholders, staff, community
 - Strategy- Short-term & long term (for the future)

2. What is the role of management in responding to COVID-19?

1. How would you describe your NPO's management approach during COVID-19?
2. Did your NPO have a strategy and management responsibilities in place to deal with a crisis?
 - Did you change any management practices as a result of COVID-19?
 - within internal and external processes?

- Have there been any new or emerging issues with NPO management practice in light of COVID-19?
- Did your NPO adhere to the National Disaster Act regulations? (If so- how? Did you adopt and/or make amendments to your Health and Safety policies, appoint a COVID, compliance officer, screening stations, social distancing, sanitizing, limit office capacity?)

3. What was the effect of COVID-19 on the organisation's operations?

3.1 Programmes & services

- What was the impact of COVID-19 on your programmes/services?
- Were there changes to organization programmes?
- What was/is the impact on community who rely on your services? (Spike in demand for services? Unable to meet client's needs? new way to deliver services-part delivery of services/virtually, new programmes)
- Did your NPO close for a period of time during covid-19? (If yes, when and for how long?)

3.2 Staff

▪ Emotional wellbeing support

- What impact has COVID-19 had emotionally/psychological/physical on staff's well-being?
 - Adaptation to working from home
 - Fear/anxiety: future
 - Job security
 - Unable to work the community
- If yes to any of the above, how did your NPO support staff?
- Did any staff test positive for COVID and did the NPO pay for the testing and/or treatment?
- How did you deal with staff unable to work due to isolation and/or infection? (What protocols were followed?)

▪ Salaries

- How the payment of staff impacted during COVID-19?
 - reduced? (If so, what was the average percentage?)
 - No salaries received.
- Did you have to retrench any staff?

- Did your NPO apply for TERS (if yes, have you received the funds?)
- **Technological infrastructure & resources**
- How did your organization communicate with staff during lockdown? (Main platform for communications for meetings etc.)
- Did staff have access to the tools required to work from home (internet, technology, resources)
- Did staff workspace, hours and/ or duties change? (If so, how?)

3.3 Finances

- What was the impact of COVID-19 on your NPO's income/funding?
- Did donor income increase/decrease/remain the same during COVID-19?
- What was the impact of COVID-19 on your NPO's budget?
- Did your NPO access COVID-19 government support?
- Did you have sufficient reserve/emergency/sustainability fund for the crisis presented by COVID-19??

3.4 Planning

- Was your NPO prepared for a crisis of any kind?
- What would the impact of a potential future lockdown be on your NPO?
- What operational changes were made due to COVID-19? (Policy, procedures & processes, systems, strategies and decision making)

4) What lessons can be learned by the NPO sector in light of COVID-19?

- What are the lessons learnt from COVID-19?
- How did the NPO change during the first year of the pandemic?
- What factors would put your NPO at risk of closure in light of the pandemic?
- What factors enabled your NPO to survive the first year of the pandemic?
- What are your priorities for the sustainability and survival of your NPO in an uncertain future?
- If one could have forecasted and planned for such a crisis- what do you know now that you wish you knew then?
- What do you believe the trajectory for the NPO sector will be in the future?

Annexure D: Tabulated main findings

THEME	MAIN FINDINGS
1) The role of leadership in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptability and flexibility are essential leadership skills in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic • Unpredictable conditions of COVID-19 forced them to rapidly change and adjust plans accordingly. • Communication is a core leadership skill and a necessary practice in a crisis. • Externally, communication focused on building networks with stakeholders and mobilising partnerships to render programmes and deliver services. • Internally, communication promoted a work culture of teamwork. • Sound external and internal communication was essential for staying abreast with relevant COVID-19 information and essential in making informed decisions. • Staff is crucial in decision making and therefore communication with staff is key. • Sound communication promoted a work culture of teamwork. • Change Management is an ongoing process that takes time, expertise, dedication and effort to implement. It requires the involvement of staff, especially those people who will be affected by the changes. • Organisation resilience to an organisational culture of internal communication, strategic decision-making and planning, employee engagement and the ability to quickly share information. • Individuals in leadership roles need to develop new policies and practices pertaining to working remotely, office behaviour and culture, protecting the health and wellbeing of staff, maintaining programmes and services and sustaining financial viability. • Prioritising emotional support for staff was crucial in mitigating burnout and COVID-fatigue. • Online team meetings, therapeutic counselling and coaching as well as supervision are crucial in mitigating COVID-19 fatigue and supporting staff's emotional well-being. • Main priority as leaders in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic was meeting the needs of their beneficiaries.
2) The role of management in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive rather than reactive in crisis as a key management role in responding to COVID-19. • Being flexible in decision making and adapting strategies to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic was key to being proactive in responding to the pandemic.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular staff meetings allow management team to strategise and adjust. • Management implemented various COVID-19 policies, protocols and procedures. • Policies focused on NPO operation adjustments to safeguard staff from exposure to COVID-19. • Policies included work from home, work rotation scheduling and adaptations of Operational Health and Safety protocols to include practical COVID-19 safety measures. • Working from home policies became a key feature of HR and OHS policy in ensuring that the health and safety of staff were prioritised by management. • Policies developed were underpinned by existing government policies such as the Disaster Act and relevant Health and Safety and Human Relations Policies. • Due to the inference of COVID-19 on staff's health and ability to perform work duties, management determined that sick leave would not be deducted should a staff member test positive for COVID-19. • Vaccinations were not compulsory in the majority of the NPOs workplace. • Working remotely had various challenges, including technological resource restrictions, limitations of job specifications, difficulty balancing work and personal home life and resistance to returning to office-based work full time.
<p>3) The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on NPO's operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NPOs remained operational through COVID-19 due to their ability to strategise, re-conceptualise and adapt their programmes and services. • To remain operational they had to render services beyond their usual activities. The majority of NPOs added food relief schemes as identified as the core need of society, especially during the initial hard lockdown period. • Integrating technology was crucial to remain operational and deliver services and programmes. • Limitations of online resources were mentioned as the main challenge to integrating technology into service delivery. • the integration of technology to implement programmes and services required staff to be trained in the technological space. • Moving online made their services and programmes more accessible to clients, thereby expanding services and programmes to an increased number of beneficiaries.

- A few beneficiaries did not have access to resources such as devices and data, whilst some had trouble understanding how online platforms worked.
- the suitability and success of online programmes are dependent on the nature of the programme and the type of service delivered.
- Donor funding remained consistent due to sound communication with donors about changes to core programmes and donor loyalty attained over years of successful operations.
- Funders were flexible to the changes in programme and service delivery, if there was value in the services rendered
- Some NPOs experienced the most fruitful financial year from 2020-2021, whilst others have had to rethink their budget, cut operational costs, sell assets, reduce salaries and access reserves and COVID-19 relief funding: TERS and Solidarity Fund.
- No reduction in staff salaries since the outbreak of COVID-19.

4) Lessons learned by NPOs in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Integrating technology into programme and service delivery was crucial for NPO survival for three reasons; meeting beneficiary needs, developing a new avenue of income via an online presence and adopting a hybrid model to programmes and service delivery.
- Staff's passion and commitment during the COVID-19 crisis acted as a protective factor for the organisation's survival.
- COVID-19 crisis is an opportunity to close the gaps in services and operations and speed up with the advances of our time.
- Factors that would place NPOs at risk of closure; financial concerns about donor fatigue, the South African economic climate and the burden of financially meeting the increased need of programmes and services to combat poverty.
- The risks associated with a crisis can provide opportunities for development and growth.
- NPOs need to focus their attention on financial risk management.
- NPOs must build their knowledge in understanding financial risk management systems and practices and the challenges that are faced in this regard.
- Sound financial management in general and financial risk management specifically are key management areas on which NPOs must focus to survive and thrive.