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YAKWAZULU-NATALI

**INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY MODEL TO ENHANCE
SMALL-MEDIUM ENTERPRISES DEVELOPMENT USING INDIGENOUS
LANGUAGES IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Matome Samuel Fortune Makgopa, declare that:

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“Ka metsotso eohle, Jesu ke ya o hloka; O ke o hlolohetswe, Bapa le’ na”.

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DEDICATION

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

B-BBEE	Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
DST	Department of Science and Technology
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
DSBD	Department of Small Business Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IS	Information System
IT	Information Technology
LEDET	Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism Limpopo
NCR	National Credit Regulator
NDP	National Development Plan
SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SEFA	Small Enterprise Finance Agency
SME	Small Medium Enterprises
SMMEs	Small Medium Micro Enterprises
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
RSA	Republic of South Africa
TAM	Technology Acceptance Model
TAM2	Extended Technology Acceptance Model

ABSTRACT

The Republic of South Africa has a multicultural population with 12 official languages. Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are significant to the economy, especially in rural areas. The study explored the appropriation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by SMEs with the considerable utilisation of indigenous languages, the development marked by the improvement of their business and the challenges experienced. The study investigated the government's role in advancing ICT integration in SME development in Limpopo Province and how ICT can be conceived to tackle the hurdles of including indigenous languages for the progress of SMEs. A research design that incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods was selected for this study.

A purposive sampling technique was employed to gather qualitative data, which involved interviews with two SMEs in each district in the Limpopo Province and 10 were interviewed. These SMEs had operated for at least five years. For the quantitative component of the study, 130 questionnaires were distributed to SMEs officially registered with the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (DEDET) in the Limpopo province. The study's findings revealed that SMEs could play a critical role in helping address the recent declines in the South African economy. However, in the Limpopo Province, the economic contribution from SMEs still needs to be increased as they currently employ very few people. The study revealed the importance of infrastructure in SME development, ICT support and creating business opportunities. The barriers identified included government participation in implementing policies and legislation, a need for an information-sharing culture, siloed stakeholder collaboration, sensitive information and ineffective information technology usage. The recommendations include the need for government institutions to advance SMEs' development and sustainability while implementing indigenous languages as an essential part of business communication. This consists of implementing indigenous languages in mainstream business operations to communicate, promoting the uptake of technology and the role of the government in promoting ICT in SME development in Limpopo Province.

Keywords: ICT, SMEs, indigenous languages, Limpopo Province,

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A comprehensive overview of the complete study will be presented in this chapter. It will focus on the following aspects: introduction, the rationale of the study, the research problem, research questions, the significance of the research and the definition of concepts. The Republic of South Africa (RSA) is renowned for its multiple languages and diverse racial population, often called the "rainbow nation." Within the country's borders, one can observe the frequent or widespread usage of twenty-six languages (The Republic of South Africa, 1996).

1.1 Background of the study

The official languages of South Africa are recognised by the RSA constitution as Sepedi (Sesotho sa Leboa), Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu as stated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996). Moreover, citizens can utilise their preferred language and engage in their selected cultural endeavours. However, no one exercising these rights may do so in a manner inconsistent with any provision of the Bill of Rights (Makgopa, 2009). South Africa, a nation characterised by linguistic diversity, embraces a multilingual essence with 12 official languages, which now includes sign language. The inclusion of the 12 official languages within the constitutional framework, along with the integration of other significant languages spoken in the country, serves as evidence of the multicultural and multilingual fabric of South Africa. Subsequently, the South African government has developed legislative measures to promote and protect the language status of the nation.

The first legislation is the constitution recognising the country's 12 official and other languages. The recognition of 12 official languages and the zeal and desire to acknowledge and develop different spoken languages is admirable and signifies progress in the appropriate direction (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). To advance the rights of individuals with auditory impairments, the National Assembly, on the 2nd of May 2023, Bhengu and Patrick (2023) decided to "amend Section 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, to incorporate.

Scholars such as Modimogale and Kroeze (2011) posit that ICT in business is a significant part of business sustainability and provides a competitive advantage for businesses primarily through increasing and maintaining markets/clients. According to Rogers (1995), ICT adoption defines a willingness to innovate computers and the internet. Rogers (1995) divides innovation adopters into five categories; namely, (1) innovator (2) early adopter (3) early majority (4) late majority and (5) laggard. According to Thomson and Reuters (2015), the ICT sector was the most innovative industry; consequently, SMEs in the ICT sector were chosen for this study.

The ICT sector is rapidly transforming and is one of the main influential forces in the transition towards an increasingly interconnected and information-rich global society. It has yet to contribute to the development of closed innovation, resulting in the extinction of the open innovation paradigm.

Moreover, it is essential to understand that SMEs are businesses where products and ventures are traded for each other or cash. There are two kinds of companies; namely, profit and non-profit (Erasmus, Rudansky-Kloppers & Strydom, 2019). Investment in SMEs is significant; Erasmus et al. (2019) outline the importance of enough clients to whom its yield can be sold on a reliable premise to make a profit. Furthermore, the World Bank (2019) states that SMEs represent most businesses worldwide and significantly contribute to economic development. Reddy (2022) and Yuliawati, Rofaida, Gautama, Hadian and Aryanti (2021) asserts the significance of SMEs, which have served as a pivotal component of the Taiwanese economy, enabling them to contribute to the economy owing to their entrepreneurial disposition. They play a burgeoning role in fostering innovation and generating value-added goods and services. The SME sector forms a substantial proportion of the global gross domestic product (GDP).

The study will develop a model for the significant value of small-medium enterprises utilising indigenous languages in information and communication technology. The proposed model will help build SMEs adopt ICT technologies in indigenous languages and improve their business operations. The researcher will conduct a qualitative survey to comprehend the effect of not utilising this indigenous language ICT on SMEs.

1.2 The motivation for the study

The relationship between ICT and a country's language is essential for its development. ICT is significant for the South African economy and can connect the information society. The National Development Plan (NDP) emphasises the importance of ICT and aims for a more inclusive and prosperous economy. The role of indigenous languages should be considered in the NDP's inclusivity. Makgopa (2009) praises the South African government for enacting legislation in line with the Constitution. However, English still plays an essential role in business, government, media, education, law and other facets of life. According to Makgopa (2009), indigenous languages have a significant role to play. Looking at the current global study, SMEs in India have reliably created opportunities, outperforming influential organisations on basic parameters, such as growth in production and employment. According to Lawal (2015), using indigenous languages in business is essential. Jacobsohn (2019) has cited cases of China, Japan and Germany using indigenous languages for almost all technological terminologies.

Furthermore, consider that when the critical foundations for learning - including literacy development - are being laid, only 6% of children's story books are produced in isiZulu (the mother tongue of 22.7% of the population) and 40% are produced in English (home language to 9.6%). The study explores the appropriation of ICT by SMEs with the significant utilisation of indigenous languages, the development marked by the improvement of their business and the challenges experienced. SMEs have advanced business creation, income generation and poverty reduction. The study will encourage SMEs to see the benefits of utilising innovation in business, improving their daily operations market and increasing their demand. Nugroho, Prijadi and Kusumastuti (2022) highlight the importance of technological advancement in enabling people to communicate, share information and conduct business transactions. Communication from our daily personal lives to the workplace has become faster, more efficient and more convenient. This may enhance work for nearby individuals since it tends to utilise more individuals when a business develops.

The study seeks to illustrate the interface between ICT and indigenous language in the development SMEs. The aim of the study is to explore the appropriation of ICT by SMEs with the significant utilization of indigenous language, development market and improve their business and the challenges experienced. The study is also expected to inform sectors that support SMEs to increase their ICT infrastructure, access and support. The significant value of indigenous languages in the development of SMEs has resulted in several research studies focussing on their introduction, especially in urban areas and their implications. The rural areas and small towns need to be addressed, negatively impacting development. The researcher will develop a model on whether SMEs utilise ICT in their business and what educational tools are used to promote, market and provide business benefits.

1.3 The focus of the study

SMEs play a significant role in the economy by creating jobs and expanding salary levels, a dominant feature of the general population while alleviating poverty in the communities. The adoption and integration of ICT has offered SMEs enormous opportunities (Gono, Harindranath & Özcan, 2016.). The absence of a framework and asset access has caused SMEs not to use ICT to perform business capacities. Information and Communication Technology offers SMEs growth opportunities by introducing marketing tools that increase business by expanding the customer base and employment, contributing to the area's economic development (SEDA, 2016). SME owners must know about utilising and adopting ICT in their businesses. The Limpopo Province comprises five district municipalities: Mopani, Vhembe, Capricorn, Waterberg and Sekhukhune.

1.4 Problem Statement

SMEs play an essential part in the economic transformation in emerging markets and developed economies contribute more towards improving employment opportunities than massive affiliations (Gono *et al.*, 2016). The present unemployment context confronting SMEs does not just assume a critical part in the Republic of South Africa's economy. Still, it is essential to the country's economic strength and employment creation.

SMEs have not utilised ICT resources adequately in their operation; accordingly, they do not develop and contribute towards monetary advancement and poverty alleviation. According to Leonidou, Christodoulides, Kyrgidou and Palihawadana (2017), “SMEs are underutilising the ICT potential as they encounter numerous difficulties concerning receiving and actualising ICT”.

Makgopa (2009) commends the South African government for adopting important legislation guided by South Africa's Constitution. English still dominates in business, government, media, education, law and other facets of life. Lawal (2015) emphasises the significance of incorporating native languages into the context of business. The exemplified instances in China, Japan and Germany demonstrates the extensive utilisation of native languages in technological terminologies. In this study, the researcher identified SMEs' failure to use indigenous languages and ICT as a significant drawback to flourishing (Makgopa, 2014). Failure to incorporate indigenous languages and ICT is a severe challenge that affects SMEs' business and potential growth. SMEs are conversant with ICT, supported by indigenous languages thus yielding good results. A model will be developed to conceptualise ICT for SMEs' long-term survival using indigenous languages in Limpopo Province, RSA. Hence, this study seeks to examine how SMEs can utilise indigenous languages within their operation so consumers will be able to respond better and help the performance of SMEs.

1.5 Research Objectives

The study's primary objectives were:

- To develop an ICT model to enhance SME development using indigenous languages in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

The study's secondary objectives:

1. Identify the role of government in promoting ICT in SME development in Limpopo Province.
2. To analyse the importance of incorporating ICT in SME development in Limpopo.

3. To explore ICT services' challenges in incorporating indigenous languages for SME development.
4. Demonstrate how ICT can be conceptualised to address the challenges of incorporating indigenous languages for SMEs' development.

1.6 Research Questions

The study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What is the role of the government in promoting ICT in SME development in Limpopo Province?
2. What is the importance of incorporating ICT in SME development in Limpopo?
3. Are there any challenges using ICT services to incorporate indigenous languages for SME development?
4. How can ICT be conceptualised to address the challenges of incorporating indigenous languages for SMEs' development?

1.7 Chapter outline

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 will present a comprehensive overview of the entire study, focusing on the following aspects: introduction, the rationale for the study, the research problem, research questions, the significance of the research and the definition of concepts.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on SMEs' significance in rural economic development, referencing growing ICT usage and sustaining SMEs by incorporating various ICT tools will be outlined in this chapter. This chapter interrogates the indigenous language's role in SMEs and education's contribution to business growth - further analysis of the role of the South African government and funding agencies in supporting SMEs. Scholarly research on the impact of ICT and indigenous languages on business will be discussed.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study investigated five cognate theoretical underpinnings that will significantly expand into the existing scholarly knowledge and its impact on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in enhancing SMEs development using indigenous languages. Therefore, a theoretical and conceptual framework is influenced by the contributions of various researchers. Later in the study, a conceptual model for enhancing the development of SMEs in Limpopo Province was proposed. This advancement is accomplished through utilising indigenous languages and integrating ICT in their operational practices.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will focus on the methodology used to conduct the research. This research aimed to study and explore the appropriation of ICT by SMEs with the significant utilisation of indigenous languages, the development market and improvement of their business and the challenges experienced. It will encourage the SMEs to see the benefits of utilising innovation in business, improving their daily operations market and increasing their demand. A convergent parallel mixed methodology was employed for this study. The study addresses the research questions and a mixed-methods approach was utilised thus allowing for the development of more effective and refined conclusions.

CHAPTER 5 – DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter discusses data accumulated through the questionnaires that will be examined and analysed. However, data were analysed and coordinated into classifications in the research to introduce research practitioners. The chapter elaborates on the research findings from the data obtained through comprehensive interviews, observations and document analysis. All data accumulated from the interviews will be examined and analysed. Data analysis were conducted within the study. Communicating the results concisely and clearly by providing the maximum required information and reinforcing critical points is essential.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

This chapter will present the discussions to interpret and describe the significance of the research findings and explain the new knowledge or insights that emerged from the study. The chapter ties the interview and questionnaire analysis results with literature, existing theory and research. Moreover, it aims to provide the context of the data presented by comparing information drawn from descriptive statistics and significant tests from mixed methodology data.

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The chapter provides a summary of the research findings based on data presentation and a conclusion derived using data sourced in line with research findings and recommendations. This should relate the results to the real world by making recommendations based on what has been learned from the research project and therefore can be used to discuss future research. The study's recommendations are based on research findings and the responsibility for implementing and benchmarking them against best practices. This chapter discusses the main results of this research objective, which was established at the beginning of the study. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature on the significance of SMEs' in rural economic development, referencing growing ICT usage and sustaining SMEs by incorporating various ICT tools will be outlined in this chapter. This chapter investigates the indigenous language's role in SMEs and contribution to business growth - further analysis of the role of the South African government and funding agencies in supporting SMEs. Scholarly research on the impact of ICT and indigenous languages on business will be discussed. Zuppo (2012) states "that Information and communication technologies (ICT) are based on a vast range of devices and frameworks that support data exchange via a digital medium". Nugroho, Prijadi and Kusumastuti (2022) further explicate that ICT

"as an administrative and support tool, and ICT is employed in manufacturing commodities and services. Notwithstanding the disparities in definition contingent upon the particular context, a common thread still resounds in ICT technologies: ICT technologies facilitate the transmission of information and various forms of electronically mediated communication."

The definition of SMEs varies across countries.

The Republic of South African (1996) constitution outlines the role of Provinces as having the power to cater to all the languages used in that province. It is the responsibility of areas to develop their language policies based on national language policy. District and local municipalities are also expected to develop language policies that cater to that geographical location's language usage. The advancement of innovation has influenced organisations' work, daily operations and reliance. Deyi (2018) outlines the importance of African languages, highlighting their importance in our lives, including our different cultures and identities. Makgopa (2009) argues that teaching African languages is critical as it can help learners grasp concepts more easily, pass well and support their success later in life.

Nugroho *et al.* (2022) further argue that technology has changed business structures and adjusted the organisations' rivalry.

2.2 Definition of the significance of SMEs

A business is a firm or association where products and ventures are traded for each other or cash. There are two kinds of companies; namely, profit and non-profit business organisations. Each business requires some investment and enough clients to whom its yield can be sold on a reliable premise to make a profit (Erasmus, Rudansky-Kloppers & Strydom, 2019). Ayandibu and Houghton (2017) argues that the term SME encompasses many definitions and metrics, varying across countries and regions. It is contended that a universally recognised definition for SMEs has yet to be established. This is because various countries employ different measures or indicators of significance, which are contingent upon their level of development and objectives. Bomani (2015) suggests that several definitions have been proposed based on factors such as employee count, turnover levels, total net assets, capital base, legal structure and formality status. Scholars such as Peprah, Mensah and Akosah (2016) also describe SMEs as entities that employ less than 250 individuals.

According to SEDA (2016), the identification of small businesses was initially documented in 1995. In this documentation, a small business is defined as an enterprise that employs fewer than 50 employees but more than five employees and utilises capital assets, excluding fixed property. Lose (2016) acknowledges that SMEs, compared to micro and small businesses, often have more employees and are typically individually managed. Hong and Lu (2016) argue that for a company to be categorised as an SME, it should not solely satisfy the employee count requirement but also consider the magnitude of financial investment. The classification of SMEs involves various essential attributes, such as size, finance, sector and ownership, contributing to its varied definitions. Scholars commonly use the number of employees to define SMEs. Lose (2016) places great importance on utilising financial resources and recognises the significance of critical indicators like capital turnover. Conversely, other researchers utilise a blend of variables, including employee headcount, invested capital, annual sales turnover and industry.

The National Small Business Amendment Act, 29 of 2004 (Republic of South Africa) defines “SMEs as all individual commercial entities, including cooperative businesses and non-governmental organisations”. One or more proprietors oversee this entity and are predominantly engaged in any sector or subsector of the economy. Table 2.1 illustrates that the classification of SMEs involves categorising businesses into micro, small and medium enterprises. Such categorisation hinges upon the number of employees, the total annual turnover and the total gross asset value, which serves as crucial determining factors in assigning the appropriate label to each enterprise within different sectors of the economy.

Table 2.1: Classification of SMEs in South Africa

Enterprise Size	Number of employees	Total Annual turnover	Total gross asset value, excluding fixed property
Very small	Fewer than 20	Between R200,000 to R500,000	Between R150,000 to R500,000
Small	Fewer than 50	Between R2m to R5m	Between 3m to R4.5m
Medium	100 to 200	R 5m to R64m	R 5 to R 10m
Micro	Fewer than 5	Between R150,000	Between R100,000

Source: National Small Business Amendment Act 26 of 2003.

As previously discussed, there is a requirement for further consensus concerning classifying SMEs, considering the disparities in workforce, revenue and capitalisation levels. Reddy (2022) suggests:

“that the categorisations of SMEs are predicated upon the magnitude, such that when applied to one sector, it may engender the classification of all establishments as diminutive, while the identical quantitative criterion employed within an alternative domain would yield the classification of all establishments as substantial”.

The categorisation is displayed in Table 2.2, delineated by the National Small Business Amendment Act 102 of 1996, which outlines diverse business classifications as provided below.

Table 2.2: Classification of SME categories in South Africa

Enterprise	Definition
Survivalist enterprise:	The revenue falls beneath the minimum income threshold or the poverty threshold. This group is categorised as pre-entrepreneurial and encompasses individuals engaged in street vending, small-scale vending and subsistence farming.
Micro-enterprise:	The turnover falls beneath the threshold for the registration of value-added tax (VAT), which currently stands at 1 million rands annually. These establishments typically exhibit a lack of formality in relation to their registration. Illustrative examples encompass spaza shops, minibus taxis and household industries. The number of individuals employed by these entities does not exceed five.
Very small enterprise	These enterprises employ less than 10 compensated workers, except the mining, electricity, manufacturing and construction industries, where the number increases to 20 employees. They function within the official marketplace and access to technological resources.
Small enterprise	The maximum number of employees allowed is 50. Small enterprises often demonstrate a greater establishment level and employ more intricate business practices than small ones.
Medium enterprise	The mining, electricity, manufacturing and construction sectors have a maximum workforce capacity of either 100 or 200 employees. These enterprises are typically marked by a decentralised power structure, which entails the presence of an extra layer of management. Property that is appraised at a value lower than R2 million and possesses an annual revenue below R6 million.

Source: The National Small Business Amendment Act 102 (1996)

The South African government utilises employee headcount to determine the thresholds for SME classification, unlike the standards of other developed countries. The Department of Trade and Industry (the DTI) (2008) has refined categorising these thresholds according to each sector. Each sector possesses its own distinct set of criteria. In the agriculture sector, a medium-sized company employs a maximum of 100 individuals, while the Manufacturing and Construction sectors hire 200 individuals.

Table 2.3 provides an in-depth analysis of the classification of SMEs in South Africa.

Table 2.3: Classification of SMEs categories in South Africa

Sector	Class	Employee	Turnover in South Africa	Total net asset
		(maximum limit)	(million rand)	(million rand)
Agriculture	Medium	100	5	5
	Small	50	3	3
Manufacturing	Medium	200	51	19
	Small	50	13	5
Construction	Medium	200	26	5
	Small	50	6	1
Catering, accommodation, and other trade	Medium	200	13	3
	Small	50	6	1

Source: Department of Trade and Industry (2008:3)

According to the DTI (2020) findings, it is highly improbable that SMEs in various sectors possess distinctive characteristics concerning their labour requirements and investment thresholds. According to the DTI (2020), “there are multiple variables such as labour, turnover, and total assets is crucial due to the varying needs of these enterprises”. The categorisation of SME criteria differs across nations. While SMEs are present in nearly all industries, their inclination and significance vary significantly from sector to government and government.

Scholars such as Leonidou, Christodoulides, Kyrgidou and Palihawadana (2017) argue that the terminology SMEs in the South African framework and further elucidate SMEs as "singular and distinctive establishments with a staff of more than ten but less than 250 individuals, conducting operations within a division or subdivision of the economy, overseen by one or more proprietors." Leonidou *et al.* (2017) argue that SMEs are of utmost importance to the economy. Section 2.3 elaborates on the significance of these enterprises within the context of South Africa. Furthermore, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation employs qualitative and quantitative characteristics to delineate SMEs. Table 2.4 below outlines qualitative definition features in defining SMEs.

Table 2.4: Use of qualitative indicators in defining SMEs

Indicator	SMEs	Large Businesses
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proprietorship in entrepreneurship pertains to the ownership and operation of a business establishment. • The various functions of a proprietorship are closely connected to the inherent characteristics and traits of the proprietors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager entrepreneurship • Division of labour is according to the subject matter
Human resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of individuals achieving their degrees from higher education institutions. • Should know the whole business. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have many university graduates. • There is specialisation
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication is personalised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication is highly formalised
Relationships with customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instability of the situation results from a lack of enduring contacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The stability of this phenomenon depends on its foundation of enduring connections and effective discourse.
Production process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour is used intensively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is the intensive use of capital
Research development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually, no research is conducted, and the business operates based on market conditions. The business utilises an intuitive approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research is usually integrated into the company's strategy. Hence, it is institutionalised.
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family funded. • Self-financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have access to many sources of finance from the capital market

Sources: Faloye and Akinkoye (2013: 180)

The National Small Business Amendment Act, 29 of 2004 (Republic of South Africa 2004) defines;

"an SME as any distinct business entity, including cooperative enterprises and non-governmental organisations, managed by one or more owners and primarily engaged in any sector or subsector of the economy that can be categorised as a micro-, very small, small, or medium enterprise based on the number of employees, total annual turnover, and total gross asset value" (Republic of South Africa, 2004).

According to Moghavvemi, Salleh and Standing (2016), scholars recognise that SMEs possess significant potential to contribute to economic growth and create employment opportunities. Furthermore, entrepreneurs endeavour to increase business operations efficiencies, maximise profits and grow their businesses (Manish & Sutter, 2016; Tajeddini *et al.*, 2013).

According to the Seed Academy (2017), challenges encountered by SMEs in South Africa hinder their progress, including access to business support, particularly in finances, inadequate financial management and planning, limited market access and insufficient operational expertise. Furthermore, the World Bank (2019) states that there is an urgent requirement for 600 million employment prospects within the upcoming 15 years to adequately address the growing international labour force, predominantly in Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. SMEs in developing countries, emerging economies and developed countries are crucial in promoting industrialisation, fostering economic growth, contributing to the gross domestic product (GDP) and generating employment opportunities. Scholars such as Reddy (2022) and Fierro (2015) subsequently affirm that SMEs have gained significant attention worldwide, both in developed and developing countries, even at the institutional level, due to their substantial contribution to a net increase in employment. SMEs are crucial for transforming an economy into a market economy as they encourage competition. In certain economies, specific companies hold monopolies, which compromise the standard of customer service and the quality of products. According to scholars such as Moghavvemi, Salleh and Standing (2016), SMEs also hold significance due to their adaptability and ability to respond to current global macroeconomic and socio-political climate changes.

According to the World Bank (2019), developed countries have made significant economic advancements and possess advanced technological infrastructures. Moreover, it is worth noting that economically developed countries exhibit elevated GDPs, augmented per capita incomes, increased levels of industrialisation, comprehensive infrastructure development and a superior quality of life for their inhabitants. Nonetheless, Ngoma (2017) argues that SMEs do not significantly influence social changes in Africa, while the responsibility for industrial development and economic competitiveness belongs to more than South Africa. A report from SEDA (2018) reveals that “3,829 clients were provided with technological support during the financial year, with 12,132 small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) receiving support in South Africa between 2017 and 2018”. Furthermore, SMEs in the manufacturing industry act as the primary driving force behind economic growth and the creation of employment opportunities. Scholars emphasise that SMEs are critical drivers of national economies and contribute to the sustainable development of nations overall.

Scholars such as Reddy (2022) and Yuliawati, Rofaida, Gautama, Hadian and Aryanti (2021) assert the significance of SMEs, which have served as a pivotal component of the Taiwanese economy, enabling them to contribute to the economy owing to their entrepreneurial disposition. They play a burgeoning role in fostering innovation and generating value-added goods and services. The SME sector forms a substantial proportion of the global GDP. This stands in contrast to the prevailing situation in South Africa. The contribution of SMEs to the GDP in South Africa is comparatively modest. The current unemployment rates highlight the crucial role that SMEs play in a nation's economy and their indispensability to economic stability and job creation. According to Statistics SA (2019), the “South African economy grew by 1,4%¹ in the fourth quarter of 2018, contributing to an overall growth rate of 0.8% for the entire year. The latest gross domestic product (GDP) figures released by Stats SA provide an overview of economic performance 2018”. South Africa found itself in an economic recession in 2018.

2.2.1 The Importance of SMEs in South Africa

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2017a), SMEs in developing nations, emerging markets and advanced economies play a crucial function in the process of industrialisation, fostering economic growth, making substantial contributions to GDP and facilitating employment opportunities. Furthermore, according to the World Bank (2019), the SME sector is critical to economic development on the African continent, contributing up to 60% of all employment and 40% of all GDP in emerging economies. The OECD (2017a) outlines that SMEs will contribute 60% of workers and 40% of GDP in emerging economies. SMEs promote competition among businesses to transform an economy into a market economy. Monopolies in certain economies compromise customer service and product quality. SMEs reduce inefficiency in a monopolistic system.

Moreover, it is essential to understand that SMEs are businesses where products and ventures are traded for each other or cash. There are two kinds of companies; namely, profit and non-profit (Erasmus, Rudansky-Kloppers & Strydom, 2019). Investment in SMEs is significant; Erasmus *et al.* (2019) outline the importance of enough clients to whom its yield can be sold on a reliable premise to make a profit. Furthermore, the World Bank (2019) states that SMEs represent most businesses worldwide and significantly contribute to economic development. Moreover, they constitute approximately 90% of companies and over 50% of employment on a global scale. Kachembere (2011) presents “the initial report of the Commission on SMEs in 2010, revealing that SMEs account for more than 99% of businesses in the United States and encompass 99.9% of the 27 million employers and non-employee non-farm companies in the country”. The author also highlights the significant role of SMEs in the Japanese economy, comprising more than 99% of the overall business landscape. This phenomenon has resulted in employment opportunities for most of the population and has contributed substantially to the economic output.

The government of the Republic of South Africa has decided to facilitate the transformative process of the economy by promoting and enhancing sustainable and competitive entrepreneurs, small-scale enterprises and collaborative partners who contribute to generating employment opportunities and advancing economic progress (Republic of South Africa, 2017). SMEs are essential to economic transformation since

they contribute more towards improving work than massive affiliations. Statistics South Africa (2023) “outlines the current unemployment rate has increased to 27.7 per cent in the first quarter of 2017 from 26.5 per cent in the previous period of the population without a job, the highest in 13 years”.

The number of unemployed persons increased by 46 000 in Q4:2023 compared to Q3:2023. In comparison, the number of employed employees decreased by 22 000 in the same quarter. The most significant industry employment losses were recorded in Community and social services (171 000), Construction (36 000), and Agriculture (35 000). While the most significant industry employment gains were recorded in Finance (128 000), Transport (57 000), and Mining (37 000). The prevailing unemployment rate suggests that SMEs play a crucial role in a nation's economy and substantially impact its economic stability and employment creation. Statistics SA (2017) states that "the South African economy entered into a state of recession, experiencing a reported decrease of 0.7% in GDP during the first quarter of 2017, following a contraction of 0.3% in the fourth quarter of 2016".

According to Statistics South Africa (2019):

“there is a decline in employment (down by 237 000) and an increase in unemployment (up by 62 000) in the 1st quarter of 2019, compared to the 4th quarter of 2018, led to a decline in the labour force participation rate, which is now standing at 59,3%. Unemployment in the first quarter of 2019 increased by 0.5 percentage points, bringing the rate to 27.6%”.

The present unemployment perceives that SMEs play a crucial role in a country's economy and are essential for its economic strength and job creation. Furthermore, Yuliawati, Rofaida, Gautama, Hadian and Aryanti (2021) contend that while numerous start-ups and SMEs thrive in Africa, entrepreneurs hold modest aspirations regarding expanding their enterprises.

SMEs need to utilise ICT resources more adequately within their operations; accordingly, they do not develop and contribute towards monetary advancement and poverty alleviation in their areas (Mahembe, 2011). Consoli (2012) states that “SMEs are underutilising the potential ICT as they encounter numerous difficulties concerning

receiving and actualising ICT”. The NDP (2012) aspires to diminish the unemployment rate to 14% by 2020 and lower it to 6% by 2030. Given the present unemployment rate, this objective appears unrealistic, considering the surging unemployment rate.

Therefore, there is a need to support SMEs to facilitate their establishment and growth. According to the OECD (2017a), SMEs “play a significant role in the economy and the broader network of firms”. Moreover, it is essential to empower them to adapt and thrive in a more inclusive environment and actively engage in the digital revolution to foster economic growth and promote a more comprehensive form of globalisation. Scholars such as Herrington and Kew (2014) emphasise in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Report for South Africa that the generation of employment opportunities in South Africa is more than just reliant on the corporate and public sectors.

The South African government is committed to generating employment and reducing poverty levels in the country. SMEs have a significant impact on a global scale as they not only serve as catalysts for economic growth and social cohesion but also act as a driving force behind the cultivation of innovative ideas and the fostering of entrepreneurial aptitude. Reddy (2022) and Ngoma (2017) outline that SMEs in the African context influence and impact societal transformations. In contrast, South Africa fosters industrial development and economic competitiveness. Moreover, the SEDA (2017) acknowledges the importance of SMEs in the manufacturing sector in skills development, contributing to economic growth and job creation. Despite this sector's contribution, unemployment is rapidly growing and job opportunities must be improved. The small enterprises of the South African government are categorised as having less than 50 employees, a revenue below R32 million and assets below R6 million. In contrast, medium enterprises typically have less than 200 employees, an annual turnover of less than R90 million and total assets worth less than R19 million. In contrast, micro-enterprises are characterised by a maximum of five employees, an annual revenue below R2 million and total assets below R1 million.

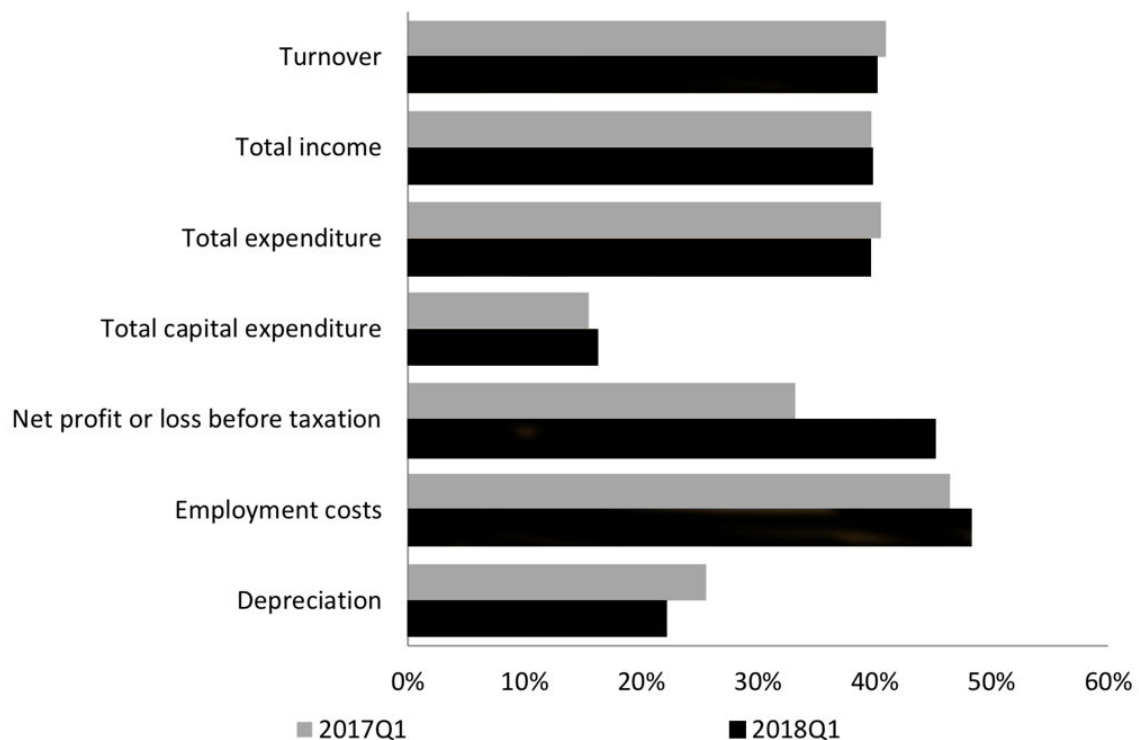
Reddy (2022) “outlines the Commission’s first report on SMEs of 2010 that more than 99 per cent of US businesses are SMEs and that they accounted for 99.9 per cent of the 27 million employers and non-employee, non-farm businesses in the US. The author further outlines SMEs’ contribution to the Japanese economy as more than

99% of total business”. This has brought about work for most of the populace and represented substantial economic output. Pandya (2012) asserts that SMEs are crucial in advancing grassroots financial and equitable sustainable development. They play a critical role in South Africa as they facilitate and stimulate progress and advancement in economic and societal aspects. “The South African government is committed to facilitating competition and private investment, ensuring effective regulation where market failure is apparent, and intervening directly to meet specific social goals” (National Development Plan, 2012). The Ministry of Small Business Development’s establishment in 2014 denoted a defining moment in the history of SMEs and co-agents' improvement in South Africa, showing the government’s sense of duty regarding placing SMEs and co-agents at the focal point of economic development and employment creation. The estimation provided by the Banking Association of South Africa (2019) indicates that SMEs in South Africa constitute a significant portion of formalised businesses, accounting for approximately 91%. In terms of employment, these SMEs contribute around 60% and about 34% to the GDP. In contrast to this positive influence, Reddy (2022) contends that SMEs face the highest failure rate globally, ranging between 70 and 80%. Additionally, Reddy identifies various factors that facilitate the failure of new SMEs in South Africa, including lack of access to financial resources, lack of investment in information technology, suitable location choices, lack of sufficient managerial expertise, high crime rates and corruption, cumbersome labour relations, inadequate infrastructure and lethargic regulatory policies. These factors collectively contribute to the high failure rate experienced by SMEs in the country.

The National Development Plan (2012) outlines the state's commitment to developing ICT by introducing digital networks and services to connect public administration, underpin nation-building and to strengthen social cohesion. Moreover, the role of SMEs addresses how high rates of money-related advancement add to financial and social improvement and poverty reduction. SMEs in the US and Japan are thriving and Pandya (2012) further describes their economic role as an essential element of the economy’s growth. According to the existing financial evaluation, “the number of employed individuals experienced a decline of 237,000, reaching 16.3 million in Q1 2019. Conversely, the number of unemployed individuals increased by 62,000, reaching 6.2 million compared to Q4 2018”.

Accordingly, this reduced the labour pool by 176,000 individuals (a decrease of 0.8%). According to Statistics SA (2019), it is further elucidated that the prevailing unemployment rate escalated by 0.5 percentage points, reaching a total of 27.6%, compared to the previous quarter of 2018. In Q4 of 2023, the labour force participation rate and absorption rate both decreased by 0,2 of a percentage point to 60,0% and 40,8%, respectively. The expanded unemployment rate decreased by 0,1 of a percentage point to 41,1% when comparing Q4:2023 and Q3:2023. This recent upsurge in unemployment intensifies the government's anticipation of creating employment opportunities and fostering consistent economic growth. Statistics SA (2019) shows that SMEs had a slightly lower revenue contribution. From the first quarter of 2018, the proportion of SMEs decreased slightly from 41% to 40%. Despite this, SMEs showed positive trends in financial indicators. Their net profit share increased significantly from 33% to 45%. SMEs also increased expenditure on employment from 46% to 48%. SMEs attracted a smaller proportion of total business compared to larger enterprises. However, they were more flexible in adapting to change and generated significant surpluses for both capital and labour.

Figure 2.1: SME contribution to all enterprises by indicator



Source: Statistics South Africa (2019)

Makgopa (2014) highlights the significance of SMEs in mitigating the repercussions associated with the alternating periods of economic expansion and contraction in numerous developed and developing nations. The South African government is essential for SMEs' development and support; however, corruption has undermined the Constitutional rights to human dignity, equality and freedom. It endangers the stability and security of our societies and undermines the institutions and values of democracy. "Corruption seriously jeopardises sustainable development, the rule of law, and our governments' credibility and provides a breeding ground for organised and syndicated crime" (Mutezo, 2015). Most South Africans feel that corruption has increased in the public sector and all government projects benefit the politically connected. This is seen as a growth-delaying factor that negatively affects youth employment. According to Mutezo (2015), SMEs significantly engender jobs and household income for rural and urban populations. Additionally, they are highly regarded for their capacity to expand into more significant, more efficient entities, allocate resources towards and embrace novel technologies and adjust to distinctive economic situations. Mutezo (2015) reasserts that SMEs positively contribute to developing the nations' economic and social advancement. Furthermore, SMEs are recognised as a means by which the growth objectives of developing countries can be achieved.

2.2.2 The role of government funding agencies

According to the OECD (2017a:2), the prerequisite for the development of SMEs in "developing countries has a minimal impact on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, providing employment and decent work opportunities for all, fostering sustainable industrialisation and innovation, and reducing income inequalities". Scholars such as Jade (2019) asserts that SMEs are indispensable in promoting entrepreneurial skills, mitigating the dominance of massive corporations and offering supplementary services to larger firms.

Moreover, scholars such as Berger and Udell (2002) argue that banks are reluctant to provide financial assistance to SMEs due to information asymmetry, challenges verifying creditworthiness, adverse selection and moral hazard problems. This has occasioned SMEs to experience regulatory challenges and need more access to

finance. Moreover, this obstructs SME growth; financial assistance is a common obstacle to development in all African regions, holding back the sector's capacity to contribute significantly to GDP, job creation and economic upliftment. Lose (2016) elucidates that South Africa is currently confronted with a pressing and lacking proficiency deficit, necessitating immediate attention owing to the imperative nature of a proficient labour force for preserving continuity. Additionally, Malemela and Yingji (2016) emphasise the significance of government funding and skills development to secure the sustainability of SMEs. However, the training and skills development needed to be adequately addressed as a potential solution for enhancing SMEs' competitive advantage and long-term viability. Given SMEs' critical role in promoting economic growth and reducing poverty, evaluating the effectiveness of the policies and strategies implemented for these enterprises is of utmost importance. Designing suitable policies and procedures to tackle the obstacles SMEs encounter is vital to lessen the high failure rate of such businesses. It is within this context that this research assumes a vital role. SMEs are crucial in advancing grassroots financial and equitable sustainable development.

The Department of Small Business Development was officially launched in 2014. A framework for launching a new business was endorsed after consultations with the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) in April 2015. Consequently, the DPSA devised an operational and organisational framework to support this strategic initiative. The DSBD and its affiliated public bodies receive their primary mandate from the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, specifically Act 108 of 1996, and more specifically (the Republic of South Africa, 1996).

- **Section 22** of the Constitution guarantees the right to engage in trade, occupation and profession: "Each citizen possesses the freedom to select their trade, occupation, or profession without any hindrance. The regulation of engaging in a trade, occupation, or profession may be enforced by legislation".
- **Section 217** necessitates that when an entity of the government enters into agreements to acquire commodities and provisions, it must adhere to a framework characterised by impartiality, justness, openness, competitiveness and efficiency. Furthermore, this framework should not impede government

entities from executing a procurement policy that caters to the safeguarding or progression of individuals or groups subjected to prejudiced discrimination.

According to Angela Motsa and associates (2004), several challenges have been recognised in acquiring bank funding in South Africa. These challenges encompass the lack of collateral security, the failure to make a significant contribution, being subjected to blacklisting and the incapability to present compelling financial records and business plans and the elevated risk level that SMEs face. The Department of Small Business Development of the Republic of Southern Africa (2019) states that its primary goal is to establish an environment that enables small businesses and cooperatives to access finance, investment, trade equitability and markets. Moreover, facilitating market entry ensures sustainability and promotes radical economic transformation by encouraging greater participation of small businesses and cooperatives in the mainstream economy. The responsibility falls upon the department to redirect financial aid towards a multitude of economic endeavours, encompassing but not limited to manufacturing, business competitiveness, export advancement, market-entry and foreign direct investment (FDI). According to Reddy (2022:1), “Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are the lifeblood of South Africa’s economy, making up more than 98% of businesses across the country and contributing 39% towards the country’s GDP”.

According to the NDP (2012), the primary objective of the South African government is to establish a competitive business milieu by enhancing the subsequent goals by 2030:

- Establishing a conducive legislative and policy milieu for Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) and cooperatives.
- Spearheading integrated planning and monitoring for developing SMMEs and cooperatives in townships and rural areas.
- Administering a comprehensive research agenda on crucial support areas for SMMEs and cooperatives.
- Formulating and executing a pertinent international strategy.

Moreover, Mutezo (2015) offers insights into the limited availability of comprehensive credit history or favourable credit records among SMEs, which banks can depend on

when making investment choices. SMEs are further burdened by banks perceiving lending to them as risky due to the costs and time involved in collecting creditworthiness information. The issue of SMEs obtaining bank financing has consistently presented a hurdle for policymakers and banks, who serve as the primary sources of credit. Scholars such as Musara and Fatoki (2012) evaluate the need for more collateral and insufficient financial data within SMEs. These issues substantially constrain the availability of financial investment from banking institutions despite non-financial and financial support services for small businesses established by the government.

The future years are anticipated to see a growth in that contribution, further reinforcing the pivotal role of SMEs in the economy. However, these enterprises are also highly vulnerable to economic fluctuations driven by external factors. Reddy (2022) contends that a pivotal opportunity exists for both governmental bodies and the private sector, who possess the authority and capacity to facilitate the success of entrepreneurs and SMEs in ensuring long-term sustainability, encompassing financial, operational and environmental aspects. The Department of Small Business Development oversees two public organisations, the SEDA and the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA), instituted under the National Small Business Amendment Act, Act 29 of 2004. The primary objective of the SEFA (2017) is to bolster the growth of small enterprises in South Africa while fostering an improved regulatory framework and promoting a culture of entrepreneurship. Furthermore, they offer guidance to potential and existing small business owners, which will aid in creating sustainable enterprises. As stated by the SEFA (2017), it is a government-owned enterprise established in 2012 through the amalgamation of Khula Enterprise, South Africa Micro Apex Fund (SAMAF) and the small business operations of the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC). The primary purpose is to support the establishment, enlargement and enhancement of SMMEs and Cooperatives and to play a role in poverty reduction, employment generation and economic advancement.

Table 2.6: Classification of SEDA and SEFA Source

	Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA)	Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA)
Role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The actualisation of the governmental strategy for small businesses can be observed. • Develop and execute a universally accepted and collective nationwide system for advancing the growth of small-scale enterprises. • Merge government-funded institutions that assist small businesses at all levels of governance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognising the hurdles that SMMEs encounter, such as the challenge of acquiring financial aid is essential. • The endeavour to focus on the sustainability of SMMEs and cooperatives is hindered by the inability to secure commercial credit due to applicants being placed on a blacklist, absence of collateral or dearth of initial cash flow.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To design and implement delivery networks. • To promote a service delivery network. • To strengthen the capacity for service providers to support small enterprises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide wholesale and direct lending credit facilities or commodities. • To enhance the financial intermediaries' institutional capacity to effectively support small and micro-enterprises and cooperatives by providing credit guarantees. • To support the institutional enhancement of financial intermediaries to aid small and micro-enterprises and cooperatives effectively.

Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide wholesale and direct lending credit facilities or commodities. • To enhance the financial intermediaries' institutional capacity to effectively support small and micro-enterprises and cooperatives by providing credit guarantees. • To bolster the institutional enhancement of financial intermediaries to aid small and micro-enterprises and cooperatives effectively. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To deepen institutional culture. • To assist in organisational cohesion and support business purpose and aspiration. • To serve as the leading catalyst in the progress of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) and cooperatives through the provision of financial backing.
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Source: Enterprise Development Agency (2017) and Small Enterprise Finance Agency (2017)

The government of South Africa has more financial programs to support SMEs, ensuring the stability of the business. According to Reddy (2022), “the objective is to facilitate access to finance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and cooperatives throughout South Africa”. However, the government is constitutionally bound by legislation to support and improve “the sustainability and competitiveness of most small-medium enterprises and integrate them into the mainstream economy”, Reddy (2022). SMEs can be expanded by incorporating educational programs focusing on sustainable financial strategies, increasing awareness of potential opportunities, establishing collaborative partnerships and adopting technological advancements to ensure ongoing prosperity” (Reddy, 2022).

Enhancing the understanding of sustainable financial best practices is paramount for SMEs aspiring for expansion. Numerous SMEs need more essential financial documentation to obtain funding. According to Reddy (2022), some entrepreneurs have embraced contemporary tools; however, many still need to rely on outdated paper-based systems. Demonstrating sound financial behaviour is a prerequisite imposed by various financial institutions, including banks when assessing loan applications. Although several banks have initiated efforts to assist SMEs and collaborate with the government, additional measures must be taken to educate entrepreneurs on banking profits to facilitate monitoring and recording. Such measures would greatly simplify the loan application process.

Table 2.7: Classification of South African Legislation Supporting Businesses

Legislation	Purpose
<i>National Small Business Act (Act No.102 of 1996), as amended in 2004, and the future referred to as the National Small Business Amendment Act (Act No. 29 of 2004)</i>	To facilitate the establishment of the National Small Business Advisory Council and the Small Enterprise Development Agency, governmental entities are provided with instructions to promote small enterprises within the Republic and address related concerns.
<i>Public Service Act, as amended (Act No. 103 of 1994)</i>	To facilitate the establishment and management of the governmental sector and oversee the terms and conditions of employment, tenures, disciplinary actions, retirement, and dismissal of individuals within the accessible sector.
<i>Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Act (Act No. 53 of 2003)</i>	To establish a legal framework that promotes black economic empowerment, the Minister should be empowered to release Good Practice Codes, publish transformation charters, establish the Black Economic Empowerment Advisory Council, and address related matters.
<i>Public Finance Management Act (Act No. 1 of 1999)</i>	To regulate financial management in the national and provincial governments and ensure that government resources are managed efficiently and effectively.
<i>Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (Act No. 5 of 2000) (PPPFA)</i>	The PPPFA's objective is to guarantee that the government's preferential procurement processes are by the Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment Act (Act No. 53 of 2003) and the associated Codes of Good Practices.
<i>Cooperatives Act, (Act No. 14 of 2005)</i>	To facilitate the creation and enrolment of cooperative organisations, the implementation of a Cooperative Advisory Board, the dissolution of cooperative entities, the repeal of Act 91 of 1981, and other related matters.

Source: Republic of Southern Africa: Department of Small Business Development (2017)

Despite the significant role played by SMEs in promoting economic growth, generating employment opportunities, reducing poverty and even fostering political stability, entrepreneurship is a crucial catalyst for economic development and recovery. According to the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) (2015), entrepreneurs commonly acknowledge that limited access to investment significantly hampers the growth of SMEs. The report additionally delineates a range of challenges and impediments associated with obtaining bank capital in South Africa, encompassing the following:

- *Discrepancies in the alignment between funding mandates and the eligibility of entrepreneurs must be addressed*

The interaction between banks and SMEs rarely poses difficulties. According to a study conducted by the GIBS in 2015, entrepreneurs often present applications that veer from the instructions provided by the funding institution. As a general trend, South African SMEs seek financing without possessing the necessary scale and contemporary attributes to serve as collateral for their applications.

- *Oversupply of entrepreneurs in highly saturated markets and industries*

Banks are regularly approached by small businesses operating in fully saturated markets and needing more competitive advantage. Due to the absence of innovation, SMEs need support in demonstrating exclusive business models and opportunities to funding institutions (GIBS, 2015).

- *The lack of awareness and preparedness among entrepreneurs*

The GIBS (2015) states that financial exposure is essential for SME growth. There is a need for increased consciousness regarding the regulations governing financial applications, leading to unprepared entrepreneurs needing more investigation. Moreover, submitting applications is frequently rigid, encumbered by entrenched practices and bureaucratic hurdles as banks endeavour to foster confidence in small business owners, According to the GIBS (2015) “there is a specific and clutching need for hard data-driven evidence on entrepreneurship. Robust data is a policy base for governments, businesses, and individuals”.

According to Kalidas, Magwentshu and Rajagopaul (2021), SMEs in South Africa constitute under 2% of the business landscape, serving the employment needs of around 50 to 60% of the nation's labour force across various industries. Moreover, these enterprises play a significant role in fostering a quarter of the private sector's job expansion. According to Reddy (2022), "SMEs' ability to meet demands for eco-conscious consumers and products can work to add improvements to public health and the environment and increase positive brand association - ultimately creating business environments that are future-ready and positively impacting the economy at large".

2.2.3 The Impact of COVID-19 on SMEs in South Africa

Scholars such as Huang, Liu, Teng, Chen, Zhao, Wang and Wu (2020) propose an explanation of COVID-19 as a sickness caused by a new coronavirus, presently labelled as "severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2, previously referred to as 2019-nCoV)". They initially detected this virus during an outbreak of respiratory illness cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China in 2019. Additionally, they expound upon the fact that Coronaviruses form a vast collection of viruses that possess the potential to cause afflictions in both animals and humans. Moreover, Morrissa, Rogersa, Kissmera, Du Preeza and Dufourqa (2020) "contend that various strains of coronaviruses are accountable for respiratory conditions ranging from the common cold to more severe illnesses such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the recently recognised coronavirus that causes the development of the coronavirus disease COVID-19". The South African government introduced means to deal with the outbreak. The Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (2020), on the 23rd of March 2020 introduced "new measures were reported to battle the spread of the Covid-19 Covid in South Africa". The approach comprised a three-week national lockdown with severe limitations on travel and movement to curb the spread of the virus; people could only be outside residence on a restricted basis solely to procure food, seek medical assistance or in exceptional circumstances.

President Cyril Ramaphosa (2020) “declared a national state of disaster in terms of the Disaster Management Act 2002 (Act 57 of 2002) on the 16th of March 2020, which empowers the executive to coordinate disaster management mechanism that focuses on preventing and reducing the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus”. According to the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) (2003), the national state of disaster is described as an integrated and coordinated policy in disaster management. This policy focuses on avoiding or lessening calamity hazards, moderating calamity intensity, emergency readiness, swift and efficient response to calamities and post-calamity recuperation. Besides, the Act aims to form national, provincial and municipal disaster management centres. Additionally, it addresses the involvement of disaster management volunteers and other related matters.

The significance of the national state of disaster is that the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (2020), enables the “government to have an integrated and coordinated disaster management mechanism that will focus on preventing and reducing the outbreak of this virus”. Furthermore, it enables the establishment of emergency, practical and effective response systems to alleviate the severity of the virus's consequences. Despite the stringent measures implemented to address the global health crisis, individuals strive to comply with the lockdown regulations; however, according to Naidu (2020), vulnerabilities arise in the most fragile areas, where fear, uncertainty and helplessness persist. Moreover, Bradshaw, Alley, Huggins, Lloyd and Esvelt (2021) emphasise “the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on individuals with low incomes, exacerbating pre-existing inequalities despite the government's persistent and pro-poor approach through transfer programs that partially mitigated the adverse effects of the pandemic”.

According to Ramaphosa (2022), “the current situation allows for relaxed restrictions or regulations as part of efforts by the government to open the economy”. Workers earning less income experienced nearly four times the amount of job losses compared to high-earning individuals. In addition, Thornton (2020) provides an extensive description of the socioeconomic disparities in South African society, where the overwhelming majority of individuals live below the poverty line and reside in overcrowded households with multiple generations. The pandemic has had a detrimental impact on the already contracting economy and the additional shocks from COVID-19 are further straining their operations. According to Kalidas *et al.* (2021),

"Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) make up over 98% of businesses in South Africa, employing between 50 and 60% of the country's workforce across various industries and contributing to a quarter of job growth in the private sector". Furthermore, they argue that the lockdown measures have caused a steep revenue fall for many SMEs while forcing them to cut back on their spending in their businesses. Furthermore, Ahmad, Mueller and Tsamakidis (2020) "argue that it severely impacts production, the viability of companies, job retention and job creation. The South African government had an economic response to stabilise the economy, address the extreme decline in supply and demand, and protect the jobs".

Furthermore, Ramaphosa (2020) stated that an "economic strategy aimed at driving the economy's recovery as the country emerges from this pandemic, economic recovery strategy will be measured to stimulate demand and supply through interventions such as a substantial infrastructure build programme, the speedy implementation of economic reforms, and other steps that will ignite inclusive economic growth". In the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (2020), multiple measures were adopted to lessen the projected effect of COVID-19 on our economy. Over the years, the GIBS (2015) notes that financing access is one of the most significant challenges that SMEs faces in South Africa. Considering the worsening pandemic, this has become one of the most effective tests for SMEs. Despite the challenges of excess funding, the COVID-19 pandemic brought much instability and shut down many SMEs. Moreover, the South African economy emphasises the importance of SMEs and outlines the disruptions in entrepreneurship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, entrepreneurship solves many of the world's most challenging economic, environmental and social issues (Kalidas *et al.*, 2021). According to the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (2020), the coronavirus pandemic has introduced new support measures to support SMEs during the pandemic.

Furthermore, the support of SMEs has been fundamentally important for the government while implementing policies and plans to manage hindrances to SME development. The Department of Small Business Development (2021b) maintains that the “COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in adversity regarding job losses, declines in business profitability and business closures”. Despite SME challenges, the government has implemented subsequent COVID-19 relief initiatives to support the business community as indicated by the Department of Small Business Development (2021b):

- **Debt Relief Finance Scheme**

The financial scheme is meant to support small and medium businesses that have been negatively affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. According to the Department of Small Business Development (2021b), the soft-loan scheme aims to support established SMMEs in sustaining their operations amidst the COVID-19 pandemic for six months starting in April 2020.

- **Restructuring of SEFA-funded loans**

According to the Department of Small Business Development (2021b:1), “specifically geared towards small, medium, and micro enterprises (SMMEs) that receive funding from the Small Enterprise Finance Agency (SEFA) and have been negatively impacted by the pandemic”. This facility offered qualifying SMEs a six-month moratorium, anticipating reduced financial instalment obligations.

- **Business Growth/Resilience Facility**

To curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the manufacture or supply of hygiene, medical products and food items were supported. According to the Department of Small Business Development (2021b), SMEs were offered working capital, bridging finance and equipment finance and the amount were be based on the funding needs of the actual business.

- **Spaza Support Scheme**

According to the Department of Small Business Development (2021b), the “scheme aims to strengthen Spaza shops as locals’ convenient access to essential goods, facilitate bulk buying opportunities, and realise the potential for Spaza shops to serve as a market for locally manufactured goods”.

- **Tourism Relief Fund**

The COVID-19 pandemic has plunged the tourism sector into an unprecedented crisis. The fund granted once-off assistance to SMEs in the sustainability of the tourism value chain in South Africa which is of utmost significance, particularly given the government's endeavours to contain the spread of COVID-19. In addition, the Department of Small Business Development (2021b) indicates that the fund has imposed a limit of "R50 000 per entity". It is worth noting that grant funding can be utilised to subsidise various expenses such as fixed costs, operational costs, supplies, and other cost items that may create financial pressure.

- **Loan guarantee scheme**

According to the Department of Small Business Development (2021b), eligible organisations can get this financial relief measure by contacting their banking institutions directly. Furthermore, the scheme provides government guarantee loans to an organisation with an annual turnover of less than R300 million to meet operational expenses such as salaries, rent and lease agreements, contracts with suppliers, etc. Moreover, the Department of Small Business Development (2021b) outlines that “government and commercial banks are sharing the risks of these loans with the option to increase the guarantee to R200 billion if necessary and if the scheme is deemed successful”.

- **COVID-19 Agricultural Disaster Support Fund**

The Department of Small Business Development (2021b:2) provides “Covid-19 Agricultural Disaster Support Fund for the smallholder and communal farmers with a minimum turnover of R20 000, but not exceeding R1 million per annum”. The fund was available to South African citizens and eligible farmers who had already been farming for at least 12 months. According to Ramaphosa (2021), the South African government is committed to serving as “a key player in the SME ecosystem, and post-COVID-19, there will be new pressures, forcing them to be even more careful about ensuring that scarce funds are effectively deployed and utilised”. Furthermore, the South African government's role is to enable the growth of SMEs. Delivering support is critical during the pandemic. Moreover, the Department of Small Business Development (2021b) outlines that support given to SMEs was insufficient with the total economic damage caused by COVID-19 and the lockdowns are challenging to measure. According to the Department of Small Business Development (2021b), the damage of a pandemic is severe; “it will take several months, indeed years, to better understand where the damage has occurred and how severe it is”. Furthermore, the Centre for Development and Enterprise (2020) is uncertain; it is already clear that the country is seeing a sharp decline in incomes, rising unemployment and widespread business closure affecting youth-owned businesses.

2.2.4 South African Government Support for SMEs

According to the NDP (2012), the South African government is committed to facilitating competition and private investment, ensuring effective regulation where market failure is apparent and intervening directly to meet specific social goals. Bosma and Kelley (2019) outline “that government policies’ support and relevance assess whether experts believe their national governments demonstrate support for entrepreneurs: whether policymakers mention entrepreneurship in public discourse and press for specific regulations to improve conditions for self-employed workforce and small and medium enterprises (SMEs)”. Due to their flexibility and aptitude for inventive measures, SMEs are integral in nurturing economic progress, engendering job openings and advancing regional and local development.

According to the Republic of South Africa: Department of Small Business Development (2019), the government has introduced various support services and programs to stimulate small business development. According to the Department of Small Business Development (2019), the primary objectives of this system are:

- Financial support;
- Development and adoption of the relevant legislative framework;
- Capacity building programs; and
- Provision of physical infrastructure.

Moreover, the Department of Small Business Development (2019) in the Republic of South Africa has implemented various measures to accomplish the subsequent objectives:

- Address the issue of unemployment;
- Contribute to the economic transformation in South Africa; and
- Alleviate poverty through initiatives such as empowering the youth, developing rural communities, generating income, implementing Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and creating employment opportunities.

Furthermore, the government introduced several incentives and strategies for the suitability of SMEs. The business rescue approach aims to formulate methodologies to effectively combat the high failure rate in the small business environment and salvage those small businesses on the brink of collapse. The primary reason for the non-performance of this endeavour can be attributed to the need for more personnel resources to fulfil this objective. While certain milestones were attained, Mutezo (2015) maintains that it still needed to achieve the ultimate target. Moreover, new market entrants must ensure strategic partnerships with other government and private sectors to sustain SMMEs and cooperatives by providing access to markets and expanding into new markets and innovation. The Republic of South Africa (2019) acknowledges the number of units within the department tasked with ensuring the following:

- The coordination of the 30% allocation for SMMEs as well as cooperative enterprises in the public sector is being undertaken.
- Numerous efforts are underway to advance product quality, facilitating local suppliers' growth in production capacity.

- Establishing and cultivating enduring and fruitful supplier collaborations between SMMEs and cooperatives with established enterprises are being pursued.
- We are actively engaging in ongoing discussions with all relevant stakeholders concerning the different facets of corporate partnerships.

According to Statistics South Africa (2022), “the actual gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 1,2% in the fourth quarter (October–December), taking the annual growth rate for 2021 to 4,9%”. The fourth quarter was upbeat, with the critical growth drivers of personal services, trade, manufacturing and agriculture. An increase in demand for goods and services drove up the expenditure side of the economy. The government has implemented a development finance division to promote growth and oversee the implementation of incentives aimed at a wide range of cooperatives, informal businesses and small and SMEs. The Department of Small Business Development (2019) aims to enhance interactions with stakeholders and clients by providing high-quality services. This department has overseen the implementation of six programs:

- **Black Business Supplier Development Programme (BBSDP)**

Black Business Supplier Development Programme provides grants to small black-owned enterprises. The Department of Small Business Development (2019) aims to improve the sustainability and competitiveness of most black-owned enterprises and integrate them into the mainstream economy. The Black Business Supplier Development Programme provides a grant to its clients, with a split of 80% from the programme and a mandatory 20% contribution from the clients. Unfortunately, the programme fell short of its goal of supporting 600 small businesses as it only managed to assist 589. The primary reason for this failure was the internal administrative difficulties faced by the Development Finance Unit. Additionally, the programme aimed to provide support specifically to youth-owned enterprises within the overall small business sector. It set a target of 30% youth-owned enterprises, 50% small enterprises from the townships and 30% from rural areas.

However, the programme still needs to achieve these targets (Department of Small Business Development, 2019). The percentage of youth-owned enterprises supported was only 12%, while the percentages of small enterprises from the townships and rural areas were 21% and 28%, respectively.

- **Shared Economic Infrastructure Facility (SEIF)**

According to the Department of Small Business Development (2019), the objective of SEIF is to utilise public sector investment to establish essential infrastructure by facilitating the attraction of investment from businesses, particularly in townships, rural areas, and the inner city where business activity is apparent. Furthermore, the primary aim is to foster collaborations with the public sector to establish and enhance SEIF to assist businesses in improving their accessibility, generating local economic advantages, and optimising the operations of companies utilising these facilities. A shared Economic Infrastructure Facility (SEIF) is a grant that involves a 50:50 cost-sharing arrangement which is reimbursable. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) contributes 50% towards qualifying infrastructure projects upon reaching an agreement on project milestones. The DTI's contribution is limited to a maximum budget of R5 million (including value-added tax) per eligible applicant (Department of Small Business Development, 2019).

- **Informal and Micro Enterprise Development Programme (IMEDP)**

The initiation of the Shared Economic Infrastructure Facility (SEIF) by the Department of Small Business Development (2019) constitutes a sub-program of the Black Business Support Development Programme (BBSDP) to aid black-owned small enterprises in enhancing their competitiveness and sustainability as they strive to integrate into the dominant economy. The SEIF functions as a tool to address the interventions of the National Informal Business Upliftment Strategy (NIBUS) that have been identified.

- **Enterprise Incubation Programme (EIP)**

According to the Department of Small Business Development (2019:4), the “Enterprise Incubation Programme (EIP) is a market-driven Technology Business Incubation /Acceleration initiative”. Under the program, start-up Enterprises (SMMEs and Cooperatives) are developed to supply goods and services from various sectors and business disciplines to the broader spectra of available and viable local markets. The Department of Small Business Development (2019:4), “EIP is focused on Enterprise Supplier Development (ESD) and centred on affording participating SMMEs and Cooperatives access to:

- Skills and Support Infrastructure;
- Business Development Support following a structured service continuum;
- Best practice standards within a specific discipline and sector; and
- Market Access.

- **Cooperative Incentive Scheme (CIS)**

According to the Department of Small Business Development (2019) findings, the Cooperative Incentive Scheme is a financial grant with a 90:10 matching ratio, whereby registered primary cooperatives receive a cash boost. Additionally, it should be noted that a primary cooperative comprises a minimum of five members who have historically faced disadvantages. The primary aim of this scheme is to enhance the viability and competitiveness of cooperative enterprises by reducing their operational expenses through an incentive that supports Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE). Another noteworthy program under the umbrella of the Cooperative Incentive Scheme is the Secondary Marketing Cooperative (SMCIS), which operates as a sub-program and the Emerging Enterprise Development Programme (EEDP). Based on the most recent data from Statistics South Africa (2019), the third quarter's conclusion has observed a growth rate of 2.2% in the economy compared to the preceding quarter. This positive performance is anticipated to have a favourable impact on business confidence throughout 2019.

- **National Integrated Small Enterprise Development Masterplan (NISED)**

The primary objective of the “National Integrated Small Enterprise Development Masterplan (NISED) is to enhance the involvement of SMEs in the legal economy” as stated by the Department of Small Business Development (2021a). Additionally, the Masterplan acts as a comprehensive nationwide strategy intended to organise the cooperative endeavours of the government and private sector entities to produce a beneficial environment that nurtures the development and success of smaller businesses. Nevertheless, the Department of Small Business Development (2021a) seeks approval for the NISED master plan.

- **Sector policy and research**

According to the Department of Small Business Development (2021a), “the programme is conscientious for creating an enabling environment for developing and growing sustainable small businesses and cooperatives through commissioning research on the action and review of policy and legislation”. Moreover, the programme enables the coordination and promotion of good intergovernmental relationships; and promotes the sector interests in the regional and global arena. According to the Department of Small Business Development (2021a), sector policy and research programmes ensure the desired impact in creating employment opportunities and economic growth by utilising effective monitoring and evaluation.

- **Integrated Co-operatives Development**

According to the Department of Small Business Development (2021a), the programme creates an enabling environment that facilitates Cooperatives’ establishment, growth and development. Furthermore, “the programme enables the review of legislation and policy, the design, piloting and monitoring of the impact of support services and instruments”. The department is the champion of functional partnerships and cooperation agreements, as well as the advocacy and thought leadership in advancing economic growth, job creation and social cohesion.

- **Enterprise development and entrepreneurship**

The enterprise development and entrepreneurship programme were created to enable an environment for the development and growth of sustainable small businesses through the development and review of policy and legislation. According to the Department of Small Business Development (2021a), the programme aids with designing and piloting support instruments, promoting entrepreneurship and facilitating the development of small enterprises in the township and rural areas. Moreover, it also assists with an opportunity to expand access to financial and non-financial support and implement responsive programmes for new and existing SMMEs and Co-operatives. Additionally, this presents a unique opportunity to enhance the accessibility of financial and non-financial assistance and implement responsive initiatives for new and existing SMMEs and Co-operatives. SMEs usually opt for a product-selling approach based on the observation of other businesses, often without conducting thorough market research. As the Department of Small Business Development (2021a) states, "the SMME sector, despite its critical role in the South African economy and development objectives, remains susceptible to exploitation and faces challenges in accessing legal remedies due to the associated high costs". Moreover, the employment significance of SMEs lies in their contribution to the overall economic reconstruction efforts. Moreover, Smith (2019) acknowledges the economic challenges and specific industries that have performed better and five sectors that "are likely to offer the best opportunities for small and medium enterprise (SME) owners to grow their enterprises in the coming year".

- **Tourism**

Statistics South Africa (2019) anticipates that the direct contribution of the travel and tourism sector to the GDP of South Africa will experience an increase from R136bn in 2016 to R197.9bn by the year 2028. This exponential growth is anticipated to constitute 3.3% of the nation's overall GDP. Despite encountering some impediments during 2018, such as the drought experienced in the Western Cape and more stringent visa regulations for minors entering the country, it is noteworthy that both the water restrictions and visa regulations have been eased. As a result, the sector is again positioned for expansion (Smith, 2019).

- **Manufacturing**

According to Statistics South Africa (2019), the above-mentioned sector assumes a paramount role in propelling the nation's GDP growth, as evidenced by its substantial expansion of 7.5% in September 2018. Concurring with this, the Department of Small Business Development (2017) asserts that the government has exerted considerable efforts to invigorate the growth of small enterprises within this domain by implementing various initiatives, including the Black Industrialist Programme and the SA Automotive Masterplan. Thulo (2019) elucidates the multifaceted contributions of businesses in the manufacturing domain and postulates that they may encounter considerable prospects through outsourcing agreements and novel collaborations with prominent corporate entities.

1. Infrastructure

South Africa faces socioeconomic challenges, the dire need for infrastructure investment and the country's rail, water, electricity and road infrastructure face significant difficulties (Thulo, 2019). Ramaphosa (2019a) has committed to allocate funds for the construction and improvement of various projects in the upcoming fiscal year as mentioned in his State of the Nation address. These projects seeks to engage participants in public-private partnerships. Additionally, he has announced the formation of a cabinet task team responsible for developing a five-year plan for Eskom. This plan will focus on initiating projects aimed at repairing the current electricity grid and increasing the generation capacity. The implementation of this plan is imminent. Moreover, the President's Economic stimulus and recovery plan includes planned infrastructure spending in 57 priority pilot municipalities. Thulo (2019) asserts that different forms of infrastructure present significant opportunities for small businesses to participate either through sub-contracting agreements or as participants in public-private partnerships (PPA).

2. Agriculture

According to Thulo (2019) "the debate around land expropriation has occupied most of the discussions surrounding the agricultural sector in 2018, with some questioning the growth prospects of this sector. However, this industry has much growth forecast

ahead as demonstrated by its 6.5% growth over the last three months of 2018”. Besides, the industry is taking significant advantage of seven climatic regions in South Africa, with the export of a wide variety of high-quality fruit and vegetables increasing substantially. Thulo (2019) “predicts that rural and underdeveloped areas will create SME opportunities. Insufficient transportation, state-of-the-art cold storage, better irrigation, and private power generation will make agriculture projects more productive and competitive in the export market”.

3. Data and information technology

According to Thulo (2019), “connectivity and information technology infrastructure are crucial to business and employment growth in South Africa”. “With many municipalities and the Western Cape government committing to providing all its residents with free data as part of a plan to expand public Wi-Fi network access, it is clear that this is also becoming a high priority on a state level. South Africa is awaiting the arrival of three international data centres”. Large players in the communications sphere, including Vodacom, Telkom and Vumatel are making huge strides in drastically growing the country’s fibre-optic backbone. As such, SMEs in the construction, communications and electrical fields are all likely to benefit from supply and sub-contracting agreements over the coming years.”

According to the Department of Small Business Development (2021b), the role played by SMEs in the South African economy is of utmost importance. They are responsible for creating over three million employment opportunities for the youth by 2020. The NDP also predicts that the country should produce 11 million job positions by 2030. However, achieving this goal presents a significant challenge, placing considerable pressure on the government to create 90% of these jobs through establishing and expanding SMEs. However, SMEs encounter numerous. Smith (2019) recognises the economic barriers in South Africa, while the lack of access to financing is a constraint that hampers their growth and sustainability. The Department of Small Business Development (2021b) highlights the factors contributing to this limited access, including the absence of tailored financial products specifically designed for SMEs.

2.2.5 Challenges facing SMEs in South Africa

Despite the acknowledged beneficial impacts that SMEs have on a nations' economy, South Africa is confronted with one of the world's highest rates of SME failures (Herrington, Kew & Kew, 2009). Moreover, Rabie, Cant and Wiid (2016) posits that approximately 75% of SMEs in South Africa only endure the initial two years of their establishment due to various hindrances that impede their ability to survive.

Table 2.8: Challenges facing SMEs in South Africa

Legislation	Source	Purpose
<i>The absence of access to financial resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mavimbela and Dube (2016) • Lai, Saridakis, Blackburn and Johnstone (2016) 	Securing capital is a lengthy and complicated procedure. The volatility of their business cycles often results in income challenges. The unpredictability of their business cycles frequently causes income problems.
<i>Production and operational issues</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shilinge (2016) • Herrington, Kew, J., and Kew, P (2014) 	The need for a well-defined process for locating markets, identifying customers and validating assumptions makes SMEs unprofitable due to their inadequate planning and management capabilities in acquiring and developing skills.
<i>Inadequate human resource services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mavimbela and Dube (2016) • Parida, Westerberg and Frishammar (2012) 	The inability to attract and retain a skilled labour force is accompanied by a need for more adaptable skills resulting from restricted exposure.
<i>Poor entrepreneurial skills</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shilinge (2016) • Eftekhari and Bogers (2015) 	The lack of expertise or any knowledge in business administration. The limitations in capability and a need for more resources to enhance capacity. A more structured approach is needed to uncover markets for their product, identify customers and verify assumptions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Herrington, Kew, J., and Kew, P (2014) 	
<i>Few mentorships, monitoring and evaluation interventions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rabie, Cant and Wiid (2016) 	The inability to invest in mentorship, monitoring and evaluation programs.
<i>The lack of time to undertake training</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mavimbela and Dube (2016) 	Small workforce with employees performing multiple tasks. Production cannot be sacrificed for training.
<i>The inability to source training providers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rabie, Cant and Wiid (2016) 	Sourcing suitably qualified training providers involves high costs and time.
<i>Complex government legislation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shilinge (2016) Parida, Westerberg and Frishammar (2012) 	Numerous labour regulations and red tape obstacles exist in recruiting, retaining and developing staff members. The lack of well-defined procedures given that SMEs are acknowledged for their agile and informal approach to conducting business operations.
<i>External factors</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lai, Saridakis, Blackburn and Johnstone (2016) Eftekhari and Bogers (2015) 	SMEs individually exhibit limited influence over their external surroundings owing to their lack of substantial authority (insufficient research and development).

Source: Various scholars

Low (2021) outlines SMEs' vital role in South Africa's future. Furthermore, many SMEs have been touted as critical drivers of South Africa's developing economy. However, Naidu (2020) argues that as far as the COVID-19 is concerned, cracks are most prominent in vulnerable areas with a prevailing feeling of fear, uncertainty and helplessness. Moreover, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been emphasised by scholars such as Bradshaw, Alley, Huggins, Lloyd and Esvelt (2021) who observed

that the adverse effects of the pandemic were disproportionately concentrated among individuals with low incomes, thereby exacerbating pre-existing inequalities despite the government's persistent and pro-poor response through the implementation of transfer programs that partially alleviated the adverse effects of the pandemic.

Moreover, the provision of market access for new participants ensures sustainability. It promotes significant economic change by encouraging the involvement of small enterprises and cooperative organisations in the dominant economy. Lowe (2021) states that “South Africa requires a reboot based on a new paradigm of thinking focused on reality and not fixated on dogma that presents a clear-eyed vision for people to creatively – and freely – engage in economic opportunities in a world of new facts. His reflective note has focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on small businesses; already, it shows emerging lessons for policymakers”. The significant difficulties SMEs encountered in South Africa involved requiring more financial opportunities, uncertainty surrounding economic conditions and restricted profitability. Mavimbela and Dube (2016) emphasise that SMEs need more instruction and skill enhancement to propel their businesses forward, obtain funds for growth and achieve endurance. According to a study conducted by the Gordon Institute of Business Science in 2015, entrepreneurs commonly believe that minimal access to investment significantly holds back the growth of SMEs. The report goes on to detail a range of challenges and obstacles related to obtaining bank capital in South Africa, including the following:

- **Discrepancies between the funding criteria set by banks and the eligibility of entrepreneurs**

The relationship between banks and SMEs is often fraught with difficulties. The Gordon Institute of Business Science (2015) highlights that entrepreneurs frequently submit applications that do not align with the funders' requirements. In general, SMEs in South Africa seek financing without possessing the necessary business scale and modernity to serve as collateral for their applications.

- **Oversupply of entrepreneurs in highly saturated markets and industries**

Banks are regularly approached by small businesses operating in highly saturated markets and industries without any competitive advantage. Without innovation, SMEs require assistance presenting distinctive business models and opportunities to financial institutions.

- **The lack of awareness and preparedness among entrepreneurs**

According to the GIBS (2015), entrepreneurs need more awareness and preparedness to be addressed. Increasing awareness about the financial application procedures is crucial as this leaves entrepreneurs ill-prepared and inadequately researched. Additionally, the application process could be more flexible, burdened with formalities and bureaucratic procedures as banks strive to establish trust in small business entrepreneurs.

2.2.6 Significance of SMEs in Rural Economic Development

Jade (2019) acknowledges the South African government's role in easing unemployment's encumbrance and stimulating economic growth. Despite the strategic inventions, the SME sector must be revitalised with only a quarter of a million formal SMEs globally, with millions of smaller survivalist businesses that do not create additional employment opportunities. According to the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) report 2017, the Republic of South Africa is committed to creating a sustainable environment for small businesses and cooperatives in rural areas and in the townships. Additionally, the NDP 2012 emphasises the importance of promoting vibrant, equitable and robust communities through township and rural development. A key strategic objective is establishing small business cooperatives linked to market value chains and increasing participation in the mainstream economy. Small firms activate untapped resources and skills in South African rural areas, contributing to equitable income distribution and eradicating poverty.

Jade (2019) highlights “that SMEs account for 98% of all Kenya businesses and create 30% of jobs. Kenya’s GDP growth – which reached 6.4% in 2017 – is strongly driven by SMEs, contributing 3% of that growth. Moreover, Africa is becoming a critical partner of development SMEs, increasing business efficiency and scalability for East and West Africa and deploying South Africa”. The empowerment of rural communities is an African government priority, ensuring rural economies will be activated through improved infrastructure and service delivery, a review of land tenure, service to small and micro farmers and mining industry commitments to social investment and tourism investments (NDP, 2012). Moreover, the NDP aims to create tenure security for communal farmers, especially women to investigate financing and vest private property rights to land reform beneficiaries who do not hamper a high debt burden. SMEs in South Africa contributes to the national product by providing goods and services to consumers and suppliers. SMEs are also vital in achieving broader socio-economic goals, including poverty alleviation.

The DSBD (2017) provides cooperatives with training in business skills, primarily in rural and township areas. The aim is to create and execute specific initiatives that aid new and established SMEs in these areas. Furthermore, the objective is to enhance the involvement of SMMEs and cooperatives in the mainstream economy. The aim is to synchronise and optimise support for SMMEs and cooperatives through collaborations between the public and private sectors. According to the DSBD (2021a), the facilitation of increasing the number of SMEs focuses on the township economies and rural development. Additionally, the department intends to attain this objective by implementing recently devised initiatives such as the Business Viability Programme, Small Enterprise Manufacturing Support Programme and the Co-operatives Development Support Programme. Moreover, the DSBD (2021a) outlines that the programs are designed to foster the township economy. The evaluation and assessment of the effectiveness of the initiatives will be conducted by documenting the number of competitive small businesses and cooperatives that receive support.

Furthermore, the DSBD (2021a) outlines the new programs that target new and existing SMEs and Cooperatives to facilitate their access to financial and non-financial support. Furthermore, these programs aim to achieve the following:

- Reduction in the regulatory burdens placed on Small Enterprises.

- Increase the participation of SMMEs and Cooperatives in domestic and international markets.
- A decrease in the regulatory obligations imposed on Small Enterprises.
- Expanding the availability of financial and non-financial support and implementing responsive programs for both new and existing SMMEs and Cooperatives.
- Enhance the level of support provided to SMMEs, cooperatives and village and township economies.

The DSBD (2021a) programs have been implemented to assist township and rural businesses, focusing on businesses owned by specific groups. These programs have provided financial and non-financial support to 13,987 enterprises. Moreover, the programs aim to support businesses in townships and rural areas while demonstrating efforts to promote the growth and development of the rural economy. Implementing the Township and Rural Entrepreneurship programs has led to increased design and conceptualisation of collaborative approaches within the DSBD Portfolio thus creating various platforms. Moreover, the DSBD (2021a) has established platforms to introduce new systems and processes for the department, SEDA and SEFA enabling them to plan and implement the programs jointly. Moreover, this enables township and rural enterprises to operate within the programme's guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOP) aligned with a unified approach.

According to Jade (2019), the South African government's role is to ease unemployment encumbrance and stimulate economic growth. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the DSBD (2021b) portfolio had not significantly impacted the broader terrain of uplifting and formalising informal businesses with previous interventions. However, the Township and Rural Entrepreneurship programme will enable them to achieve better outcomes.

Table 2.9: TREP financial implications

Programme	Financial implications
Spaza Shops Support Programme:	R138.5 million
Tshisanyama and cooked food Support Programme	R 50 million
Bakeries and confectionaries Support Programme	R 100 million
Autobody repairers and mechanics Support Programme	R 225 million
Personal Care Support Programme	R 90 million
Clothing, Leather and Textile Support Programme	R 105 million
Fruit and vegetable Hawkers	R 135 million
Butcheries Support Programme	R 95 million

Source: Department of Small Business Development (2021b)

According to the DSBD (2021b), 938,5 million was spent on the Township and Rural Entrepreneurship programmes. The interventions were aimed to develop operational strategies that are readily aligned with rural economic development and have seen various businesses supported financially. Additionally, the department established more robust collaborative agreements with each of the 44 district municipalities and 8 metros in the country by deploying a team of over 50 officials from the Department. This strategic move was implemented to guarantee the successful implementation of various programs, which were effectively accomplished through collaborative efforts with the Provincial and District structures of SEDA and SEFA throughout the country (Department of Small Business Development, 2021b). Furthermore, the contribution of the township and rural entrepreneurship programme has equipped communities with an opportunity for economic activity while increasing their portfolio on economic development matters within their respective communities. Moreover, the DSBD (2021b) has further committed to developing SMEs in rural areas for economic growth while contributing to sustainable business development and more economic opportunities.

2.3 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

According to Zuppo (2012) “information and communication technologies (ICT) revolves around the various forms of devices and frameworks that encourage the exchange of data through a digital medium”. Modimogale and Kroeze (2011) further outline ICT “as an administrative and support tool and ICT used in producing goods and services. Despite the differences in definition depending on the context, a common thread still resonates in ICT technologies, namely ICT technologies facilitating the transfer of information and various types of electronically mediated communication”. Innovative advancements provides a significant upper hand for organisations that have embraced ICTs in their business forms. It can be contended that innovation influenced business operations. These improvements have obliged SMEs to get ICTs to adjust to the association’s conditions and changes in their business procedures. The effect of globalisation has constrained SMEs to get ICTs to survive and contend with extensive organisations (Ongori & Migiro, 2013).

2.3.1 Definition of Information and Communication Technology

The terms Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Information Technology (IT) and Information Systems (IS) are standard terms utilised daily and Table 2.10 provides definitions of the terms as described in the literature.

Table 2.10: Classification of ICT

Terms	Definitions
ICT	The organisation’s computing and communication infrastructure includes computer systems, telecommunication networks and multimedia hardware and software (Frenzel, 1999).
Information Technology (IT)	The combination of computer technology (hardware and software) with telecommunications technology (data, image and voice networks), (Bentley & Witten, 2007).
Information System (IS)	The arrangement of people, data, processes and information technology interact to collect, process, store and provide the information needed to support an organisation (Bentley & Witten, 2007).

Source: Frenzel (1999), Bentley and Witten (2007)

According to Owoseni (2018), ICTs represent technological advancements that allow individuals to obtain information via telecommunication channels. These telecommunication technologies are fused into different mediums such as the internet, wireless networks, cell phones and other forms of communication. Over the past few decades, ICTs have provided society with various new communication capabilities. Modimogale and Kroeze (2011) outline that using ICT has been a significant part of business sustainability and provides a competitive advantage to firms by increasing and maintaining markets/clients. ICT is further defined by Ismail, Jeffery and Belle (2011) as an essential tool for SMEs, distinguishing between three types of Information Communication Technology usage:

Table 2.11: Three types of ICT

General ICT usage	Production	Advanced ICT usage technology
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet access • Email • Bulk SMS • Organisational website and intranet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientated usage i.e. • Accounting • Production, Inventory • Human Resource • Enterprise Planning systems • Customer Relationship Management (CRM); and • Supply Chain (SCM) packages/systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software: Service, Content Management • Mobile CRM • Mobile payment systems

Source: Ismail, Jeffery and Belle (2011)

Scholars provide numerous definitions of ICT, whereas Pierson, Baelden, Lievens and Marsigny (2009) contend that “ICT encompasses primary and secondary categories. Primary ICT relates to the automation of the production process. In contrast, secondary ICT relates to using ICT as a support function in administration, such as email, internet, CRM and accounting systems”. Ismail, Jeffery and Belle (2011) asserts that integrating ICT services contributes value. Their findings indicate that the most prevalent type of ICT usage is general ICT usage, followed by generation-oriented and progressive ICT usage (Zuppo, 2012).

2.3.2 The Role of ICT in Business

Scholars such as Modimogale and Kroeze (2011) posit that ICT in business is a significant part of business sustainability and provides a competitive advantage for businesses primarily through increasing and maintaining markets/clients. According to Rogers (1995), ICT adoption defines a willingness to innovate computers and the internet. Rogers (1995) divides innovation adopters into five categories; namely, (1) innovator (2) early adopter (3) early majority (4) late majority and (5) laggard. According to Thomson and Reuters (2015), the ICT sector was the most innovative industry; consequently, SMEs in the ICT sector was chosen for this study.

The ICT sector is rapidly transforming and is one of the main influential forces in the transition towards an increasingly interconnected and information-rich global society. It has yet to contribute to the development of closed innovation, resulting in the extinction of the open innovation paradigm. Ongori and Migiro (2013) argue that new technologies empower and encourage various business practices related to information's capacity, processing, distribution, transmission and reproduction. Despite the opportunities provided by technological advancements, ICT has been a key enabler within the business spectrum, enabling customers, suppliers and networking with the business sphere. Furthermore, ICT has enhanced organisational development; below is a summary of the vital advantages of the role of ICT within organisations.

- **Enhanced communications by adopting ICT**

Bentley and Witten (2007) provide evidence that implementing correspondence and collaboration systems greatly augments the efficacy of communication and collaboration among individuals within and outside an organisation.

- **Enhanced efficiency of business operations utilising ICT**

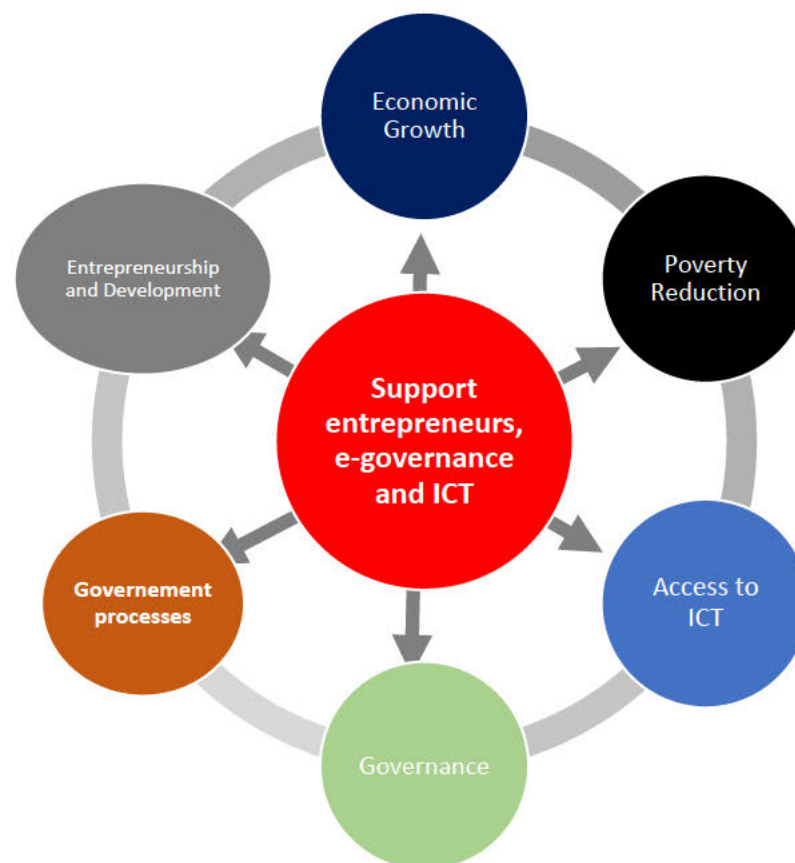
Bocij, Chaffey, Greasley and Hickie (2006) demonstrates that ICTs advance better working approaches and encourage various ways to deal with running organisations. They are establishing connections between different business divisions to implement standardised operational procedures with video conferencing.

This form of communication enables organisations to decrease expenses in comparison to conventional methods of communication.

- **ICT enables managerial decision-making through Management Information System**

Erasmus, Ferreira and Groenewald (2017) indicate that managers and employees must possess information systems to make decisions and resolve predicaments within their routine work. This facilitation is made possible by information systems that furnish management with precise and punctual data essential for decision-making.

Figure 2.2.: The benefits of ICT in facilitating socio-economic development



Source: Mawela, Ochara and Twinomurizi (2017)

- **Economic growth:** the primary focus should be on prioritising the exchange and investment of information and communication technology (ICT) and integrating ICT into crucial sectors of the economy.
- **Poverty reduction:** help community organisations use ICT
- **Access to ICT:** promoting favourable access to ICT

- **Governance:** broad stakeholder communication before implementation
- **Government processes:** enhance service provision by utilising information and communication technology personnel and training.
- **Entrepreneurship and development:** facilitate employment opportunities and stimulate the growth of emerging business owners and SMMEs.

Lopez-Nicolas and Soto-Acosta (2010) propose that ICT can enhance an SMEs' organisational performance if used appropriately. ICT-based procedures ought to be re-structured in a manner that outperforms traditional work practices.

2.3.3 The use of ICT in growing and sustaining SMEs

Mawela, Ochara and Twinomurinzi (2017) argue that ICT adoption is complex and determined by many factors, one being demographics. They further highlight the importance of education, gender and age in influencing ICT adoption. Information and Communication Technology has been essential for technological innovation in developed countries, while numerous studies have inspected ICT use in developed countries. More research on ICT uses in developing countries is needed. During the State of Nation address, Ramaphosa (2019a) said "in 25 years of democracy, we have made remarkable progress in building a new nation where all South Africans have equal rights and broadening opportunities. Over 25 years, we have done much to meet people's basic needs, reduce poverty and transform a devastated economy built to serve the interests of the few".

Additionally, the DSBD intends to attain this objective by implementing recently devised initiatives such as the Business Viability Programme, Small Enterprise Manufacturing Support Programme and the Co-operatives Development Support Programme. Moreover, the DSBD (2021a) outlines that the programs are designed to foster and grow the township economy. The evaluation and assessment of the effectiveness of the initiatives will be conducted by documenting the number of competitive small businesses and cooperatives that receive support.

The NDP (2012) aimed to lower the unemployment rate to 14% by 2020 and 6% by 2030. Deliberating the current increase in unemployment, achieving this target appears improbable. Thus, there is a significant emphasis on supporting SMEs to facilitate their establishment and expansion. However, despite having a decade until 2030, substantial progress towards the targets set by the NDP has yet to be made. Ramaphosa, (2019a) maintains that “we must focus on actions that will have the most significant impact and expedite progress in the immediate term and over the next ten years. Despite previous administrative challenges, Ramaphosa’s (2019b) new administration will focus on seven priorities:

1. Economic transformation and job creation;
2. Education, skills and health;
3. Consolidating the social wage through reliable and quality essential services is another critical priority;
4. Spatial integration, human settlements and local government;
5. Social cohesion and safe communities are other key priority;
6. Building a capable, ethical and developmental state; and
7. A better Africa and a better world.

Furthermore, in his State of the Nation address (2019), Ramaphosa (2019b) “acknowledges the significant contribution of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to the enhancement and development of the economy”. This acknowledgement results in opportunities in various sectors, such as global business processing services, agricultural value chains, technical installation, repair and maintenance and the emerging prospects offered by the digital economy and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). Despite the current economic status, the government of South Africa ensures the employment of young people in social economy jobs such as early childhood development and healthcare. The honourable President, Ramaphosa (2019a), commits to creating opportunities for young people and enabling the expansion of the National Youth Service to take on 50,000 young people a year in attempting to manage the high unemployment rates, support for tech-enabled platforms for self-employed youth in rural areas and townships.

Furthermore, “these programmes will enable young people to gain paid work experience through initiatives like the Youth Employment Service and work-based internships”. Fraser-Moleketi (2008) recognised that the critical focal point of electronic government is improving service delivery and guaranteeing value for every tax rand, making progress towards the country’s economic and social change. Furthermore, the South African government initiated a journey to improve service delivery by transforming public service through ICT. Moreover, Fraser-Moleketi (2008) acknowledges the government’s role in the past years in improving the quality of service to South African citizens clouded with difficulties, introducing several initiatives to address the challenges focusing on four fundamental objectives, which are:

- To create a robust, growing and sustainable ICT sector.
- To increase the use of ICT as an enabler of socio-economic development.
- To create a knowledgeable and growing ICT workforce; and
- To create a world-class culture of ICT innovation.

According to Khanagha, Volberda, Sidhu and Oshri (2013) “the government of South Africa is committed to achieving economic stability, generating employment opportunities and eliminating poverty in rural communities”. The utilisation of technology plays a “crucial role in ensuring economic progress and the creation of jobs. Khanagha *et al.* (2013) state that adopting new technology can profoundly impact institutions, mainly, the adopted technology differs from the core technologies already established internally. Furthermore, by demonstrating the influence of technologies in enhancing investments, a competitive industry can be fostered thus encouraging the adoption of adaptive technologies and internal practices and procedures.

Moreover, Khanagha *et al.* (2013) outline the importance of adopting technology in organisations, contributing positively towards an advanced innovation towards efficiency and competitive advantage. Furthermore, organisations must understand the importance of innovation, influencing sustainability and growth. Moreover, administrators and business owners also need to recognise the role of technology, understand the various technological life cycles of products or services and analyse the potential strategic benefits before adopting the technology. “Innovation is one of the drivers of ICT adoption. Innovation factors are product-related characteristics that contribute positively to ICT adoption” (Khanagha *et al.*, 2013).

Although innovative elements are essential in ICT adoption, they may only sometimes be a significant predictor of adoption, as social pressures and organisational practices may dictate otherwise. According to the findings of Garcia and Calantone (2002), “innovation is a cyclical process that commences with the recognition of a new market and a fresh service opportunity for a technology-driven invention”. Moreover, development, production and marketing tasks are executed to attain commercial success for the said invention. Most scholarly articles on innovation expound upon the foundational contributions of Everett Roger’s diffusion of innovation theory.

By utilising Roger’s innovation theory as a foundation, combined with the insights derived from the literature, the articles presented in Table 5.2, the ensuing factors have been identified as the most vital characteristics of innovation to be considered when embracing novel technology:

Table 2.12: Innovation Characteristics

innovation	characteristics
Relative advantage	The concept of ‘perceived advantage’ refers to the extent to which a new concept is considered superior to the previous notions it replaces. This metric signifies how a prospective adopter perceives the innovations as enhancing previous methods of achieving similar objectives.
Compatibility	The concept of “perceived compatibility” pertains to the extent to which an innovation is seen as aligning with established values, prior experiences and the requirements of potential adopters. This signifies that the technology must fit the specific context in which it will be implemented.
Complexity	The degree to which innovation is perceived as demanding implies that new technological advancements are seen as challenging. This indicates that the technology is relatively easy to learn and use and not complicated.

Observability	The term 'visibility of innovation outcomes' signifies the level to which other individuals can witness the effects of an innovation.
Operational effectiveness	Refers to the 'perceived usefulness of the technology'. This denotes that the technology will increase individual job performance and improve outputs.
Systems openness	The term "compatibility" pertains to the capacity of technological functions to function alongside other technologies on various platforms. Technologies that can integrate with other technologies that complement them seamlessly are favoured.
Resource intensiveness	Refers to peripheral technologies vital for obtaining the utmost value from the implemented technology. This pertains to peripheral technologies crucial for achieving the maximum value from the implemented technology. Organisations often prefer to utilise established technologies to maximise the value derived from previously implemented technology.

Source: Garcia and Calantone (2002)

2.3.4 Information and Communication technology tools to support SMEs

Basri, Alandejani and Almadani (2018) acknowledge the importance of ICT as an essential source of innovation and efficiency improvement for many global sectors. Furthermore, the education sector has also become a critical part of university students' learning process outside and inside the classroom. Moreover, Lawrence (2015) highlights the importance and contribution of ICT in changing business and organisations' outlook. ICTs (especially the computer, Internet and mobile telephony) provide many opportunities and challenges for SMEs. Furthermore, Basri *et al.* (2018) have posited that skills characterise ICT and various research endeavours have been undertaken to explore the interplay between the utilisation of ICT and the demand for proficient labour. The connection between experienced labour and early ICT implementation could be intrinsically linked to labour as innovation-driven relationships necessitate a greater degree of technological adoption that requires skilled

professionals. Organisations that rely heavily on information tend to augment their utilisation and implementation of ICT.

Lawrence (2015) is of the view that SMEs benefit from technological advancements, ensuring improved virtual communication through mobile phone and web technology. Moreover, innovation is a critical enabler in adopting new technologies; the internet can influence business, offering a competitive edge in global markets. Lawrence (2015) recognises the role of electronic commerce in empowering ICT usage to enable widespread presence on the increasing use of networks incorporating the internet that can deliver cost-effective online services for SMEs. Basri *et al.* (2018) states that ICT can directly influence job context, experience and practice. Furthermore, acquiring knowledge, introducing technological advancements and the surrounding work environment play a significant role in determining the acceptance of information and communication technology (ICT) and ultimately establishing customary procedures in an organisation. ICT is critical for SMEs' competitiveness in the emerging global market. In an increasingly global world, information and information technology are significant to organisations of all sizes. The effect of information and various technological tools is essential in the succession of large and small businesses. Data processing and information when conducting the day-to-day operations is important (Lawrence, 2015). Moreover, adopting ICT within organisations can gain a competitive advantage and assist companies to compete successfully.

Additionally, the effective utilisation of ICT can enhance organisational productivity and performance improvement. Furthermore, in his SONA speech (2019), Ramaphosa (2019a) acknowledges the role of technology in providing new opportunities for the digital economy and the 4IR. The organisation has vast demands and expectations to conduct e-commerce to perform business transactions. According to Lawrence (2015), the integration of e-commerce into organisations allows them to establish connections with their trading partners for the purpose of "just-in-time production" and "just-in-time delivery" thereby enhancing their global competitiveness. Additionally, adopting and utilising information and communication technologies (ICT) offer considerable benefits to SMEs in numerous crucial areas essential for achieving business success. A subsequent study by Lawrence (2015) reveals that SMEs' appropriate utilisation of electronic commerce technologies can facilitate business growth, enhance production efficiency and provide access to the global market.

Kalakota and Whinston (1997) argue that the role of SMEs in developing economies and the emerging electronic marketplace is of utmost importance. The proliferation of the internet has created a vast and expansive domain. Basri, Alandejani and Almadani (2018) acknowledge the importance of the internet in providing SMEs with opportunities to conduct business and sell products and services to a global audience than they would have been able to afford to reach using traditional methods. Internet technology presents a unique opportunity for SMEs to participate in electronic commerce, extend their capabilities and grow globally. The sustainability of SMEs' depends on the operation environment, providing an opportunity for growth and proposal in emerging global business markets, creating critical development and expansion of businesses in the economy.

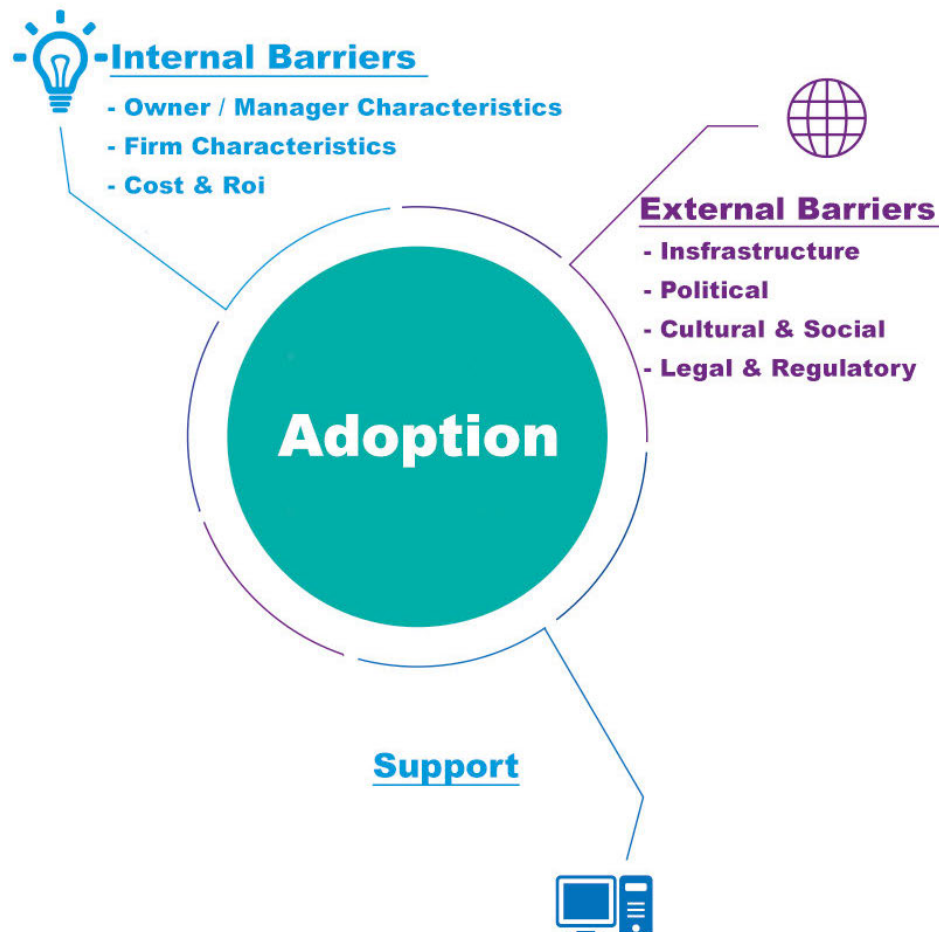
2.3.5 Challenges posed by using ICT services in SMEs

The adoption and utilisation of ICT support can significantly enhance SMEs' growth. Pandya (2012) further argues that rural-based SMEs must use ICT to promote themselves and realise its impact on operational strategies. These have disadvantaged the SMEs in capturing the large market and growing their businesses (Makgopa, 2014). Lawrence (2015) acknowledge that the significant improvement of technology is profoundly embedded and part of other social advancements. Moreover, the relationship between technology and economic development is worth observing as innovation is essential in adopting technology. Despite the importance of technology, challenges arise from adopting innovation within organisations. Lawrence (2015) outlines the importance of infrastructure in technology as an essential entity; this could require a moral vision prescribing technology's importance to society.

Furthermore, the exchange of information and communication is facilitated by technology, rendering them attractive and almost inconceivable alternatives. Allenby and Sarew (2011) also delineate the trajectory of advanced and sophisticated technological advancements within trans-humanism. They interpret the discourse on trans-humanism as merely another manifestations of mechanical idealism. They emphasise that the ambitions of techno-humanism encompass a wide range, extending beyond matters of health and longevity to encompass significantly enhanced intellectual, creative and emotional capacities. They also caution that we need to be more aware of the world we are constructing, in which technology plays a

central role. They articulate the challenge by stating that ‘individuals need an understanding of the intricacies and the repercussions that this technology engenders’. Makgopa (2014) discusses these significant developments. Some rural-based business owners need help in understanding the meaning of the term and some also need to outline the importance of ICT in their businesses or any other business and see ICT as mainly a cost rather than an aid in their companies. According to Makgopa (2014), SMEs prefer to adopt simple ICT infrastructure, such as essential Internet services (e-mail and web services), which are progressively vital to them on an operational level instead of a critical level. SMEs in South Africa face critical barriers to ICT adoption. Key barriers include excessive ICT expenses, lack of finance and the need for more awareness about ICT adoption benefits. Furthermore, Pillay (2016) outlines “low skills levels, security concerns, and ICT applications not tailored to SMEs’ way of doing business. ICT can benefit various intra- and inter-firm business operations and transactions”. The barriers to SMEs using ICT can be categorised into internal and external as seen in Figure 2.3 below.

Figure 2.3: Barriers to ICT Adoption



Source: Pillay (2016), Kapurubandara and Lawson (2009:5)

The challenges faced by SMEs in utilising ICT can be categorised into two main groups: internal and external. These categories are further discussed and explained in detail in Table 2.13.

Table 2.13: Barriers to ICT adoption

Barrier	Description
Internal Barriers	<p>Despite internal factors hindering the organisation's growth, SMEs can still change internal factors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The lack of resources and knowledge on the part of the owner/manager.</i>
External Barriers	<p>The SME cannot settle these barriers. They have no power over these and are constrained to work inside the requirements. The partnership with other SMEs might assist in addressing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Constraints caused by insufficient telecommunication infrastructure, service providers or government policy.</i> • <i>In South Africa, certain urban areas boast advanced technologies, whereas the rural areas continue to be underdeveloped and do not possess even the necessary infrastructure.</i>
The lack of knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The absence of knowledge about ICT uses and understanding of the potential benefits. • Understanding the ICT strategies for supporting SMEs in achieving their business objectives is often another significant barrier to ICT adoption.
Inadequate skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing ICT in SMEs is contingent solely on the proprietor's proficiency in ICT, disposition and technological inclinations. • The owner/manager's views significantly impact how the firm views the role of ICT. • The lack of formal training and qualifications from owners/managers.

Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There must be a need for more necessary infrastructures, including but not limited to electricity, bandwidth within financial reach and governmental frameworks. The requirement for more in the rural regions of South Africa continues to present significant challenges to adopting the Internet. • The improvement of ICT accessibility can only be achieved if we address concerns about telecommunications costs and the availability of ICT infrastructure. • Financial constraints and high costs of establishing ICT infrastructure in SMEs.
Individual factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The commitment exhibited by management, the personality traits and capabilities of personnel, the organisational environment surrounding an information system and the established mechanisms for acquiring knowledge and expertise all contribute to the overall outcome.
Organisational factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size of the business, its culture and human capital and the employees' participation level.
Environmental factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government policies, consumers' innovation requirements and competitive pressures.
Technological factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The business' existing technological infrastructure.
Economic factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Macroeconomic costs.

Source: Pillay (2016), Consoli (2012), Kapurubandara and Lawson (2009)

2.3.6 The impact of ICT in the SME Sector

Evans and Wurster (1997) argue that ICTs have the potential to serve as conduits for information. This is due to their ability to facilitate the detachment of data from its physical storage, representing these technologies' groundbreaking aspects. Academic professionals contend that SMEs rely more heavily on unconventional information systems than larger ones. Additionally, information scarcity has imposed restrictions on SMEs regarding rendering logical decisions. Consequently, a proclivity exists for a sole decision-maker, typically the proprietor or manager, who necessitates increased personal resources.

SMEs enjoy the advantage of reduced internal coordination costs, given that fewer individuals are involved in the decision-making process (Blili & Raymond, 1993). Over time, ICT has exhibited the capacity to foster SMEs using its efficacious utilisation and enhanced amalgamated commercial framework, thereby facilitating the advancement of SMEs in making progressively constructive determinations that bear relevance to their operational efficacy. ICT can create and change the organisation, enabling it to be more competitive and innovative within its daily operations. The role of technology within SMEs allows for an improved process of managing information and knowledge management methods. Furthermore, it increases transaction costs and hinders the pace of business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) transactions. ICT enhances communication with external stakeholders and improves the services provided to established and prospective customers (Pillay, 2016).

Nevertheless, despite the beneficial impact of ICT adoption, challenges do arise. Small businesses in South Africa are mindful of the indispensability of technology in their operations. Numerous small enterprises are enthusiastic about embracing novel technologies. Goldstuck (2018) contends that 45% of small companies acknowledge that they could be more proactive regarding technology adoption, while 52% indicate that they are merely keeping up.

Moreover, small businesses still use tools like Excel spreadsheets (83%), printed invoices (73%) and flash drives to transfer documents (56%). This is concerning, with 41% of small businesses needing more internet connectivity. Barriers to accepting ICT are stirred up again as small businesses in South Africa duly acknowledge the importance of technology in their operations. Numerous small-scale enterprises are keenly interested in embracing novel technologies (Goldstuck, 2018). Consoli (2012) classifies and distinguishes the influence of ICT in an organization into four distinct categories; namely, performance, growth, expansion and new products. Every category contains various components; namely, efficiency, productivity and product quality.

Figure 2.4. The impact of ICT on the organisation



Source: Consoli (2012)

Due to their positive commitment to ICT, SMEs in South Africa are proactive about keeping up to date with technology. Be that as it may, the prevalence of obsolete inheritance procedures and frameworks suggests they have some way to go. Moreover, Goldstuck (2018) highlights the lack of a robust internet connection, which poses a significant obstacle in numerous regions of South Africa and undeniably hinders the process of adopting technology. The benefits of technological advancements can only be fully realised when individuals have access to dependable and reasonably priced connections. However, businesses with a well-defined strategy for adopting technology will likely face significantly less promising prospects than those with such a plan. Cant, Wiid and Hung (2016) and Goldstuck (2018) emphasise the importance of a reliable, fast internet access as a concern for South African small businesses. There are numerous advantages to be gained from utilising modern technologies. Unfortunately, these advantages are more sophisticated when time is lost due to an unstable internet connection. Support centres will help educate communities in these rural-based communities about the importance of ICT in their daily lives.

Table 2.14: Five independent variables affect the adoption of ICT

Barrier	Description
Perceived benefits	The more benefits SMEs perceive from implementing ICT; the more specific they adopt ICT.
Perceived costs of adoption	The higher the anticipated costs of implementing ICT, the less likely SMEs will adopt ICT.
ICT knowledge and skills of employees	The less knowledgeable or experienced owners or managers of SMEs, the less likely SMEs will adopt ICT.
External pressure	The more industry stakeholders use ICT, the more likely an SME will adopt ICT.
Government support	The more government supports and promotes ICT usage, the more likely SMEs will adopt ICT.

Source: Cant, Wiid and Hung (2016)

According to Ismail, Jeffery and Van Belle (2011), “small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in South Africa perceive the adoption of information and communication technology (ICT) as advantageous and valuable”. However, they encounter various obstacles that hinder the implementation of these value-adding factors. Additionally, Gono, Hariandranath and Özlan (2014) “contend that SMEs operating in the manufacturing and logistics sector must seek external expertise due to the lack of ICT knowledge among many survey participants”. These findings indicate that the workforce of South African SMEs needs to gain ICT skills. Be that as it may, stakeholders (customers, suppliers and competitors) are central to adopting ICT for SMEs. Underestimating the significance of ICT is crucial as it constitutes the essential ingredient of any contemporary business. ICT’s nonexistence or insufficient utilisation will undeniably impact the industry’s endurance and success. Cant, Wiid and Hung (2016) illustrate potential obstructive factors in the integration of ICT, emphasising the scarcity of financial resources, exorbitant expenses linked to ICT systems, the absence of skilled personnel capable of managing or preserving ICT systems, the lack of expertise in establishing the ICT systems and the deficiency in comprehension and familiarity with ICT.

2.3.7 The COVID-19 Pandemic impact on ICT in South Africa

Morrisa, Rogersa, Kissmera, Du Preeza and Dufourqa (2020:1) “argue that a range of respiratory infections, spanning from the common cold to more grave afflictions like Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)”, can be attributed to numerous coronaviruses. Furthermore, the most recently detected coronavirus is responsible for causing the coronavirus disease COVID-19. The South African government introduced measures to deal with the outbreak. The Parliament of the Republic of South Africa (2020), on the 23rd of March 2020, introduced “new measures to battle the spread of the Covid-19 Covid in South Africa. The approach comprised a three-week national lockdown with severe limitations on travel and movement. The President said more was needed to avoid an enormous catastrophe among the population. This meant people could only leave their homes to buy food, seek medical help or under other extreme circumstances”.

Ramaphosa (2020) “declared a national state of disaster in terms of the Disaster Management Act 2002 (Act 57 of 2002) on the 16th of March 2020, which empowers the executive to coordinate disaster management mechanism that focuses on preventing and reducing the coronavirus outbreak”. Maleka (2020) states that the impact on South Africa’s has been significant and the situation continues to advance. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the significance of ICT within the economy and society in the 21st century. Mkhize and Davids (2021) argue that the “ICT sector has experienced rapid growth of the digital economy and the globalised nature of economic systems; there is no doubt that the global COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the complex world economy and will reshape all sectors in the foreseeable future”.

According to the COGTA (2003), the national state of disaster is “an integrated and co-ordinated 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”. Moreover, the Act seeks to:

- establish national, provincial and municipal disaster management centres;
- disaster management volunteers; and
- matters incidental to that.

The significance of the national state of disaster was that it enables the “government to have an integrated and coordinated disaster management mechanism that will focus on preventing and reducing the outbreak of this virus” (Parliament of the South Africa, 2020). Furthermore, it facilitates the establishment of emergency, rapid and efficient plans to alleviate the severity of the impact of the virus. Despite the stringent measures implemented to combat the pandemic, individuals did strive to conform to the restrictions imposed during the lockdown period; however, Naidu (2020) contends that cracks manifested themselves in the areas of most extraordinary fragility, where fear, uncertainty and helplessness prevailed.

According to Mkhize and Davids (2021), the ICT sector has rapidly grown in the digital economy and the globalised nature of economic systems. Moreover, Badroodien and Fataar (2020) outline that the “COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the complex world economy and will reshape all sectors in the foreseeable future”. However, this is despite the positive contribution to the ICT sector, the rapid growth of the digital economy and the globalised nature of economic systems. Ramaphosa (2019b) acknowledges the role of SMEs’ in economic development and the creation of opportunities for the economic development of South Africa. These SMEs provide opportunities in various sectors, such as global business processing services, agricultural value chains, technical installation, repair and maintenance through the digital economy and the 4IR. ICT can create and change the organisation, enabling it to be more competitive and innovative in its daily operations. Lowe (2021) underscores the significance of SMEs In shaping the future of South Africa.

Furthermore, SMEs are commonly recognised as pivotal catalysts for the country’s burgeoning economy. According to scholars Peters, Rizvi, McCulloch, Gibbs, Gorur, Hong, Hwang, Zipin, Brennan, Robertson, Quay, Malbon, Taglietti, Barnett, Chengbing, McLaren, Apple, Papastepha, Burbules and Misiaszek (2020), the pandemic has exposed the inequalities within various countries. The impact of COVID-19 exposed the way in which numerous South Africans need, besides not just access to the internet, but “also access to digital devices that would empower them to work from a distance and go on with different parts of their lives through internet-based channels”. Furthermore, Peters *et al.* (2020) highlights that individuals in South Africa are constrained to engage in studying or educational activities from the comfort of their homes.

Furthermore, the current global health crisis caused by the novel coronavirus underlines the significance of ICT in South Africa. Dube (2020) argues that the ICT industry has experienced substantial repercussions as customers, governments and businesses face unprecedented disruption. Consequently, this has resulted in significant changes within the ICT market. Over the years, ICT has exhibited its potential to stimulate the development of SMEs through its successful use and improved integration within businesses. Furthermore, this integration has empowered SMEs to make increasingly informed decisions instrumental to their overall performance.

However, Mahaye (2020) argues that the COVID-19 pandemic brought more challenges to South Africa, which faced multiple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment. Furthermore, the situation was worsened by the announcement of a national lockdown by President Cyril Ramaphosa on 26 March 2020 and more than 14 million learners in the country were temporarily out of school. Sayed and Singh (2020) believe that the quality of education is crucial in eliminating poverty and facilitating economic transformation. Goldstuck (2018) also emphasises that poor internet connectivity, which poses a significant challenge in numerous regions of South Africa, undeniably hinders the adoption of technology. The advantages of technological advancements can only be realised entirely when individuals have access to dependable and inexpensive connections.

Nonetheless, those businesses with a clear plan for technological adoption will have significantly better prospects than those without. ICT was an integral entity during the COVID-19 pandemic and exposed the digital divide when township schools could not transition to online teaching (Dube, 2020). Moreover, it impacted rural communities while exposing the educational imbalances between various groups, resulting in a growing digital divide. Rural schools were left exposed. Tapala, van Niekerk and Mentz (2020) reaffirm “that rural-based and township school stakeholders recounted the non-responsiveness of the Department of Basic Education in providing support to enable online learning and ensure continuity of teaching and learning during the pandemic”. Economic inequality in South Africa will continue to deprive learners in township and rural schools. The South African education sector was also negatively affected due to the lack of infrastructure and resources.

Furthermore, Dube (2020) recommended that the “Department of Education should provide learners and teachers with devices they can use for online learning”. As per Reimers and Schleicher (2020), gadgets, internet connection and suitable physical surroundings challenge students to gain knowledge amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the absence of access to ICT amplifies a feeling of inadequacy, thereby perpetuating the current situation and the notion that individuals living in townships passively receive government aid rather than actively contribute to shaping their future. As a result, Tapala, van Niekerk and Mentz (2020) based on resource mobilisation theory, argue that schools should recognise and utilise their tangible and human resources to address the problem of digital exclusion in township communities.

2.4 Indigenous languages

South Africa experienced colonialism, leading to the marginalisation of indigenous communities. The Native Land Act of 1913 granted the white minority ownership of 87% of the land, further perpetuating the marginalisation of black South Africans. The Group Areas Act of 1950 further marginalised indigenous communities by restricting their movements. Furthermore, the racial grouping of the population consisted of Whites, Coloureds, Indians and Africans. Africans were frequently referred to as Natives or Bantus. This study uses Blacks, Africans and indigenous communities interchangeably. Racial segregation prevented Africans, Coloureds and Indians from accessing services exclusively reserved for the white population. In the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Republic of South Africa 1996), there are a total of 11 official languages that are approved. English and Afrikaans, two of these 11 languages, have always enjoyed special privileges in various sectors, including libraries. This study employs the previous marginalisation of a language as a benchmark for identifying indigenous languages.

As far as Brown (1994) in Mawela is concerned, the task of providing a comprehensive definition of language is indeed an arduous endeavour:

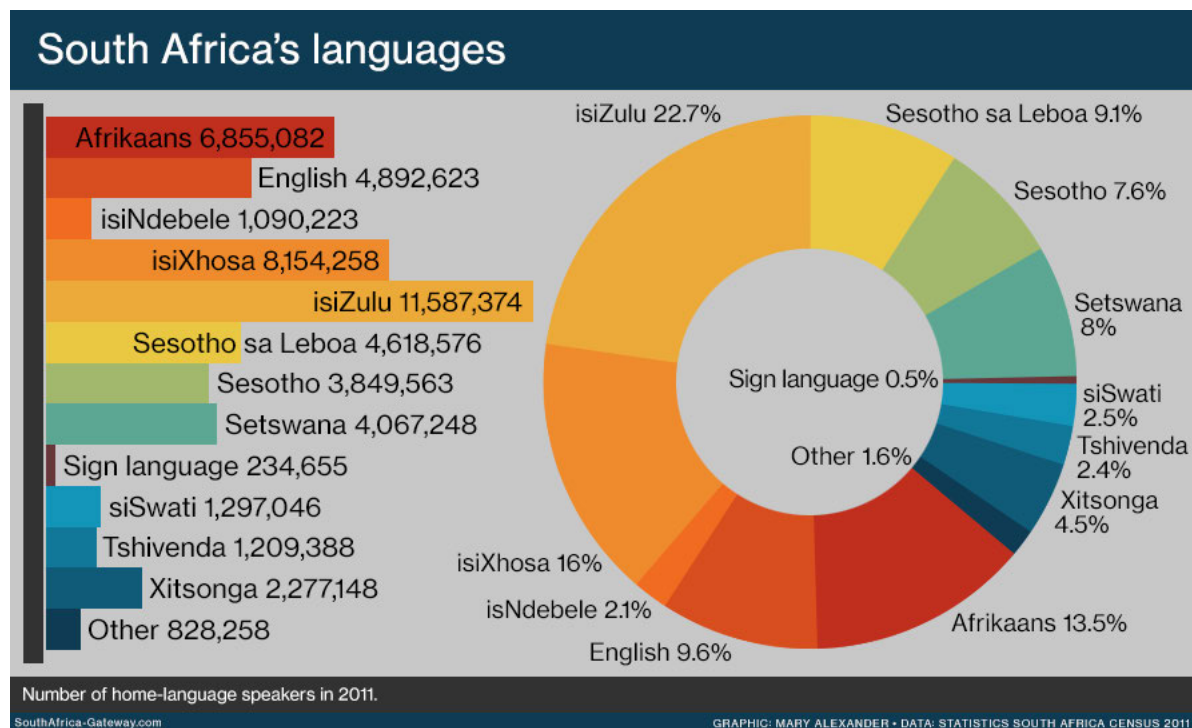
Attempting to delineate the essence of language adequately would be an exercise in futility. Scholars specialising in linguistics and philology have grappled with this task for centuries. A definition

represents a concise rendition of a theoretical construct, while an approach encompasses simplicity and intricacy more expansively.

Language is the medium of communication between different dialect speakers. A standard language is the only variety that counts as a "proper language". Standard languages result from direct and deliberate intervention by society. The Republic of South Africa (1996) reaffirms the commitment to promoting indigenous languages since the inception of democracy and reaffirms that all languages should enjoy equal status. The Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) was established through the Pan South African Language Board Act 59 of 1995, amended as the PANSALB Amendment Act of 1999. The Republic of South Africa's Constitution refers to the establishment of PanSALB in Section 6 when describing language rights. The PanSALB Act mandates that it initiate studies and research to promote and create conditions for developing all 11 official languages, plus the Khoi, San and the SASL (PANSALB, 1999). The PANSALB uses appropriate language for a proper audience. It has been 16 years since those acknowledgements and suggestions were made, yet South Africa still has the same concern about the gradual extinction of indigenous languages. The National Language Policy Framework (2003) underscores that South Africa is a nation characterised by linguistic diversity as evidenced by the official recognition of 11 languages in Section 6 of the Constitution of 1996. These 11 languages are; namely, Xitsonga, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, isiXhosa, isiZulu, isiNdebele, SiSwati, Tshivenda, English, and Afrikaans, have been accorded official status.

The National Language Policy Framework aims to give all 11 (since 2023 now 12 including SASL) official languages equal status and protect them. In communicating with the public, the language of the citizen's choice can be used. All oral communication must occur in the preferred official language of the target audience. Eberhard, Simons and Fennig (2020), Zulu is by far the most widely spoken language with 27.3 million speakers, of which 11.6 million are first-language speakers and 15.7 million are second-language speakers. Moreover, Xhosa has the second-highest population of speakers at 19.15 million. The other official indigenous languages and corresponding numbers of speakers are Sotho and Northern Sotho (13.72 million speakers); Venda (12.91 million speakers); Setswana (11.77 million speakers); Sotho

and Southern Sotho (11.75 million speakers); Tsonga (5.68 million speakers); Swati (3.7 million speakers); and Ndebele (2.49 million speakers).



Moreover, the comprehensiveness and linguistic rights principles are paramount in the Republic of South Africa constitution. It emphasises the necessity of achieving 'parity of esteem across all 12 official languages. Yu and Dumisa (2015) are of the view that, before the abolishment of apartheid, the indigenous languages faced historical oppression and marginalisation. Consequently, the state is entrusted with implementing "practical and positive measure" to enhance the usage and status of these indigenous languages. Furthermore, the language planning policies are mainly implemented through four government departments; namely, (i) Arts, Culture and Heritage; (ii) Communications; (iii) the two ministries of education; as well as (iv) Justice and Constitutional Development. The Republic of South Africa (1996) Constitution outlined the role of Provinces as having the power to cater to all the languages used in that province.

Hill (2016) argues that the 2000 Asmara Declaration is one of the most influential resolutions made by African scholars concerning indigenous languages. Among other things, this Declaration emphasise that:

- African languages should assume the responsibility of representing the continent; the significance and equality of African languages must be acknowledged as a foundation for the future empowerment of African people;
- the multitude of African languages manifests the diverse cultural legacy of Africa and should be utilized as a tool for African solidarity;
- The promotion of research on African languages is imperative for their progress, while the utilisation of African languages will best serve the advancement of African research and documentation;
- The practical and rapid development of science and technology in Africa relies on the utilisation of African languages and contemporary technology and should be employed for the progress of African languages; and
- African languages are essential for decolonising the African mind and the African Renaissance.

Möller and Le Roux (2017) argue that in 2003, Cabinet introduced the National Language Policy Framework. Seshoka (2013) and Mofokeng (2013), opine that this framework acknowledges the need to intensify efforts to establish historically oppressed indigenous languages. Furthermore, it advocates for multilingualism to liberate South Africans from excessive dependence on non-indigenous languages as the dominant official languages of the state. The policy endorses the cultivation of human resources essential for the successful implementation of multilingualism in the field of language facilitation, encompassing the advancement of translation, interpretation and terminology through the establishment of proper legislation and the promotion of targeted restorative initiatives and programmes for marginalised indigenous languages. The policy strives to actualise the principles articulated in the Constitution. However, the strategy of this approach has yet to be realised and at most, the response has been unorganised. Beukes (2006) criticises the PANSALB for its minimal systematic planning and involvement in management. The insufficiency in alignment between language policy and the actual language practice has been attributed to the failure to execute. Moreover, Möller (2014) posits that numerous factors hinder the introduction of such policies. A scarcity is observed in language

experts, such as language instructors, content creators, editors, proofreaders, document design specialists, translators, interpreters and language strategists. Comparable to publishers, producing high-quality African language books poses a challenge. Additionally, there is a deficiency in training programmes for professionals and personnel in these domains, with only a few training establishments, such as universities and technicians are willing to provide the necessary instruction.

The province's responsibility is to develop its language policies from the national language policy. District and local municipalities are also expected to develop language policies that cater to the language used. Technological advancement has influenced how organisations work as well as their daily operations. According to the Republic of South Africa (1996), “recognising the historically diminished use and status of indigenous languages of our people, the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate and advance the use of these languages”. Furthermore, it states that “all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and be treated equally.” Mawela, Ochara and Twinomurinzi (2017) argues that “any language has the right to live and, like any other language, also has the right to transform and die when circumstances so demand.” Moreover, language is a fundamental right that enables people to function fully as members of the linguistic group they are born into. Indigenous languages are an essential source of strength in all human communities. Thus, in this study, indigenous language refers to the five languages that are spoken in the Limpopo province; namely, Sepedi, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, IsiNdebele and Siswati.

2.4.1 ICT services and indigenous languages

According to the United Nations Educational and Scientific Organisation (UNESCO) (1996), all language communities must have equipment adapted to their linguistic systems, tools and products in their language in the ICT sector. They argue that this will derive full advantage from the potential of such technologies for self-expression, education, communication, publication, translation, information processing and general dissemination of culture. Moreover, African indigenous language preservation is vital; preventing the extinction is important because with the end of a language also comes the demise of cultures and their values. UNESCO (2003) argues that half of the world's people speak the eight most common language varieties. If the societies

that speak these other 3 000 languages do not support indigenous language learning, those languages could disappear.

According to Dia (2014), there is a requirement for language preservation and support. The following methods can be used to preserve languages:

1. Podcasts (online audio) can be used to protect spoken languages.
2. Computerising languages can also be helpful. Google has only digitised 36 languages, 28 of which are European.
3. Zimbabwe's largest indigenous language, Shona does not have a text-to-speech voice, yet the technology has been around since the 1980s.
4. Hard-copy documents can also be used but they are prone to destruction by acid and other elements and are expensive to reproduce and distribute.

Dia (2014) "claim that the convergence of mobile phones and the internet, referred to as ICTs, do not have significant implications for communication among immigrants and their families. Moreover, there are numerous modes of usage of ICTs by emigrants, including mobile phones, landlines, faxes, radios, video, email exchanges, Skype, Facebook, online forums, online dating and storage". African migrants use ICT devices to create and strengthen links with their country of origin or to showcase their multiple heritages. The role of technology in facilitating communication is undeniably critical. Nkwashu, Madadzhe and Kubayi (2015) argue that African immigrants play a significant role as authors of websites and blogs, particularly in Europe and North America. These digital platforms offer many possibilities, including access to online news dissemination, online discussions, online radio and audio and video content, including local and national radio and television programmes. Furthermore, Nkwashu *et al.* (2015) outlines that these websites aim to preserve their homeland's culture, language and identity while focusing on business. Through these online practices, the international visibility of their native language and place of origin can be enhanced and transnational or trans-local networks can be established to support the development of their homeland.

ICT can also initiate humanitarian and fundraising activities to address social and economic needs, such as the construction of healthcare facilities and the enhancement of literacy, including in African indigenous languages. However, despite

the growing internet usage, several challenges impede the effective use of ICTs in strengthening the role of African languages in sustainable development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Numerous studies have identified obstacles in using ICTs to promote agriculture, rural development and poverty reduction. These constraints, as outlined by Dia (2014), are several and include the following:

- High costs of telecommunication services and internet access;
- The lack of an integrated approach in establishing information gateways;
- Weak commitment on the part of the government in developing strategies for combating ICTs, legal, financial and infrastructural obstacles; and
- The lack of a coordinated framework for national information communication.

Dia (2014) is of the view that “various applications of ICTs could hold significant results, but one of the main challenges remains the language and technical barriers.” Ndebele (2014) reaffirms challenges that contribute to indigenous languages’ continued low profile, acknowledging the limited utilisation of these languages. Moreover, the limited utilisation can be perceived as teaching and learning languages, needing more documentation, negative attitudes, monolingualism and orthographic inconsistencies. ICT offers multiple opportunities, irrespective of the challenges to promote these language” national corpus development, human language technologies software and web content localisation (Ndebele, 2014). Moreover, the lack of an implementation plan for language policies and the ongoing marginalisation of native African languages may contribute to their limited utilisation in the ICT field despite the significant potential embedded in this endeavour.

Ndebele (2014) and Gudmundsdottir (2010) have identified various factors associated with the lack of indigenous African languages within the ICT domain. Moreover, the language challenges maintain inequalities related to access to ICT among socially disadvantaged learners hence the importance of an appropriate and culturally profound approach whose basis is on capacity and the people's local needs. Besides, Dalvit (2010) maintains that integrating African languages and ICT in education is crucial in addressing linguistic inequality between the indigenous African and English languages and the social disparities of language users. Dia (2014) further analyses the need for content generation in local African languages’ high costs and technical problems (lack of functionalities and speed) impeding the potential of mobile internet

technologies for poverty reduction and social inclusion. There is a need to implement effective policies to regulate ICTs as many ordinary people attempt to control these devices and adapt them to their daily lives. These forms of the renaissance from below represent an assault against failed state policies or the lack of state. Thus, one could question the role of the African states under the conditions of globalisation. Language barriers constitute a significant problem for adopting ICTs by African women's organisations working on gender equality and women empowerment, (Dia, 2014).

2.4.2 South African indigenous languages in ICT platforms

Mawela, Ochara and Twinomurinzi (2017) argue that “any language has the right to live and, like any other language, also has the right to transform and die when circumstances so demand.” Moreover, language is a fundamental right that enables people to function fully as members of the linguistic group they are born in. Although European languages dominate the ICTs, possible avenues exist to promote African indigenous languages in cyberspaces. According to Dia (2014), “these include whether the development model underpinning ICTs helps preserve and strengthen African languages”. Furthermore, Africa can embrace different indigenous African languages and present an opportunity to utilise Africa's linguistic treasure for education and development.

Dia (2014) argues that this “assessment could help address the knowledge gaps relating to the initiatives to mainstream African indigenous languages and ICTs into development programs, the ensuing opportunities and shortcomings and the lessons learned”. ICT is an essential service in South Africa. Ndebele (2014) further reaffirms the role of ICT in most institutions of higher learning as a critical feature of knowledge; even though many students who gain access to university education still experience difficulties with other literacy skills such as writing, reading and listening. Moreover, the ‘advantages and opportunities that ICT purportedly offer should not be exaggerated within the context of indigenous populations of Africa, most of which use ICT gadgets and applications built into languages alien to them’. According to Osborn (2010), producing and disseminating local content on the web is virtually impossible without utilising ICT alongside the local linguistic heritage. Additionally, the multilingual diversity and emergence of an information revolution worldwide create an African

presence for new technologies. Moreover, there is a need to prioritise African-based ICT applications beyond fascination and pessimism.

Ndebele (2014) argues that the lack of financial resources to support localisation projects is another major challenge, outlining the process involving computer software, expertise and translation, which is also a prolonged process. Investors are reluctant to invest in localisation projects with this uncertainty level as they view indigenous African languages as unmarketable. However, negative perceptions towards indigenous African languages hinder localisation projects and Ndebele (2014) acknowledges that universities and localisers should formulate effective marketing strategies for localised software to promote their use by students and the local communities. According to Himel and Munck (2000), the internet's significance is central to communication and trade for enterprises and non-profit organisations. Moreover, consumers have adopted this as a significant source of searching for information, shopping, communication and leisure. Using computers to exchange and access information via internet connections inevitably involves using diverse languages, as other computers do. Ndebele (2014) suggest that within the community, people share their ideas and feelings without paying attention to geographical or social barriers, revolutionising, in this way, emerging markets and transforming already existing ones.

Furthermore, such uses have lagged for discussed reasons (including sociolinguistic, educational and technical issues related to rendering non-ASCII characters until recently). Dia (2014) discusses African language" role on the web, although not prominently, as communication media but the actual level of use is emerging as a discussion topic. Moreover, the impression that African-language content is rare is gradually increasing. Indigenous African language content also represents a significantly small proportion of web content. The translation process may require extensive labour, time and financial resources to enhance localised software and web content. While machine translation is a potential solution to tackle this challenge, the reality is that most existing translation tools need more precision and necessitate further modification and advancement (Dia, 2014). According to Dia (2014), the primary hurdle faced by ICT projects is that they often prioritise the provision of hardware and software, neglecting the importance of transforming the human and social systems to truly impact society.

Furthermore, “access to the internet has obstacles to local information, literacy problems, language barriers and cultural diversity. Access to local news and commercial content providers may be less motivated to create local content if the profit margin is low”. According to Ndebele (2014), “users in developing countries find information adapted to their local needs”. Besides, the sustainability of ICT-related initiatives sponsored by NGOs and non-profit organisations may be difficult due to insufficient funding and short-term orientation. Ndebele (2014) is of the view that “the integration of African languages with information and communication technology is essential in promoting and intellectualising African languages in Higher education”.

Moreover, the significant opportunities include national corpus development, open-source software localisation and technological tools to teach and learn African languages. The availability of content in African languages on the internet opens several opportunities. Adopting a language management approach to promote African languages is also essential. It provides a clearer understanding of the language problems within a specific setting, thus providing an opportunity to evaluate and formulate informed recommendations and implementation strategies.

2.4.3 South African indigenous languages in education

Language serves as the means of interaction between individuals who speak different regional variations. The only variety which will count as a "proper language" is a standard language. Standard languages are the result of direct and deliberate intervention by society. The Republic of South Africa (1996) reaffirms its commitment to advancing native languages since the establishment of democracy, emphasising that all languages should be granted equal recognition. Furthermore, scholars Mawela, Ochara and Twinomurizi (2017) contend that "every language possesses the right to exist and, akin to any other language, also possesses the right to adapt and perish if the circumstances necessitate it". Moreover, language constitutes an inherent entitlement, enabling individuals to participate as members of their respective linguistic communities effectively. Moreover, Mawela, *et al.* (2017) outline that Africa's languages reflect a “rich tapestry of cultures which, by definition, particularly in contemporary Africa, strongly suggests that intercultural communication should be

one of the central pillars of the development policy in the African Union”. The Republic of South Africa has 11 official languages in Zulu, Xhosa, Swati, Ndebele, Tsonga, Sesotho (referred to as “Southern Sotho”), Sepedi (referred to as “Northern Sotho”), Venda, Setswana, Afrikaans and English.

The original language as the medium of instruction is referred to as original-language instruction. According to UNESCO (2003), the term 'native language' encompasses the language(s) that individuals acquire first, the language(s) with which they identify or are recognised as mother tongue by others, the language(s) that they possess the most proficiency in, and the language(s) that they employ most frequently. Scholars Eberhard, Simons, and Fennig (2020) emphasise that South Africa's diversity significantly impacts the ability to allocate state resources over comparable periods, particularly given the current levels of economic growth. Furthermore, Eberhard, Simons and Fennig (2020) state that despite the adjusted time frames for intervention methods in the short, medium and long term and an appropriate action plan, they still warrant attention.

According to the Government of South Africa (1997) Language in Education Policy (LiEP) states:

“The government and the Department of Education “recognise that our cultural diversity is a valuable national asset and hence is tasked, amongst other things, to promote multilingualism, the development of the official languages, and respect for all languages used in the country, including South African Sign Language and the languages referred to in the South African Constitution”.

Mawela, Ochara and Twinomurinzi (2017) define “the medium of instruction as the language employed in teaching the primary curriculum within the educational system”. The number of languages utilised for educational purposes can vary depending on the specific requirements and prevalence of said languages. Additionally, Madadzhe (2019) emphasises the significance of languages spoken by most South Africans, asserting the need for their promotion to foster development and grant dignity to their speakers. Wolff (2018) advocates for the revitalisation of African languages, positing that this would contribute sustainably to societal transformation and economic progress by fully harnessing young African’s cognitive and creative potential.

Menakapriya (2016) contends that proficiency in English is a requirement in both the national and international job markets. Furthermore, Menakapriya (2016) asserts that English, a global language, is extensively used in international communications, science, information technology, business, seafaring, aviation, entertainment, radio and diplomacy.

However, Madadzhe (2019) argue that to promote the use of indigenous languages in education, institutions in South Africa should choose one or a few courses where African languages, in conjunction with English, can serve as the primary languages of instruction and learning. Incorporating African languages into education is ongoing; Madadzhe (2019) recommends that institutions choose a subject to teach in English and an African language of the student's choice. Equal opportunity in education is a priority for the government, but the language in education has yet to receive the attention it deserves. Eberhard, Simons and Fennig (2020) argue that African learners are denied opportunities to succeed due to the marginalisation of indigenous languages in our country's public discourse, especially in the education system.

Madadzhe (2019) emphasises that what pupils and African society, in general, would acquire with their home languages is not only the ability to express themselves in a language with which they are more familiar but the ability to see the world in a way that reflects an appropriate level of linguistic. Furthermore, the cognitive and ontic development and maturity in their human development meet the skills development challenges that render them unproductive in the land of their forefathers. The higher education institutions in South Africa should be committed to redressing past inequalities and providing equal access to all those capable of higher learning.

2.5 Chapter Summary

The current unemployment rates imply that SMEs are of critical significance to a nation's economy and play a crucial role in its economic growth and the creation of employment opportunities. SMEs underutilise ICT resources in their operations; thus they do not develop and contribute to monetary advancement and poverty alleviation. Moreover, integrating African languages with ICT is essential in business development and promoting and intellectualising African languages. There are significant opportunities in developing SMEs with the available government contributions; however, inequalities prevail over the industry's growth and operation. Ndebele (2014) argues for using technological tools to teach and learn African languages. According to Maclean (2018), utilising two or more languages as communication mediums for teaching is commonly referred to as bilingual and multilingual education. In specific instances, the languages used for teaching often consists of the official or prevailing languages. Furthermore, Madadzhe (2019) asserts that having a mother tongue (or a home language) different from a country's official or local language can often disadvantage the learner within an educational system. The educational encounter for learners with instruction in a language other than their indigenous language has the potential not to be effective. Furthermore, the availability of content in African languages on the internet presents numerous opportunities.

Therefore, it remains imperative to continually question the issues relating to teaching, learning and communicating languages in a multilingual society such as ours and to consider how language choices materially impact people's lives. Dia (2014) argues for adopting a language management approach to promote African languages. It provides a clearer understanding of the language problems within a specific setting, thus providing an opportunity to evaluate and formulate informed recommendations and implementation strategies. It, therefore, remains imperative to continually question the issues relating to the languages of teaching, learning and communication in a multilingual society such as South Africa and to consider how language choices materially impact people's lives. The next chapter investigates the five theories that underpinnings this study and will ponder their contribution to the existing scholarly knowledge and its impact on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in enhancing SMEs development using indigenous languages.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This study investigated five cognate theoretical underpinnings that will significantly expand into the existing scholarly knowledge and its impact on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in enhancing Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) development using indigenous languages. Therefore, this chapter presents a comprehensive work motivated by various researcher's contributions to theoretical and conceptual frameworks. The study seeks to develop a conceptual model for improving SMEs' development in Limpopo Province by enhancing the ICT within their operations utilising indigenous language. The thorough study of the current literature mandated the establishment of a conceptual framework to direct this study. This aligns with the observation made by Adom, Hussein and Agyem (2018), that the conceptual framework is derived from the literature review. This will be further substantiated by the contextualisation of these theories, culminating in a bespoke synthesis, thereby facilitating the coherent assimilation of this inquiry to push the scholastic boundary. The entrepreneurship development, Institutional, Resource-Based View and Technology Acceptance Model theories are discussed and serve as a foundation for institutions' role in developing indigenous languages. Furthermore, approaches that adequately explain ICT's role in SMEs' performance informed the proposed model.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

According to Adom *et al.* (2018:2), a "theoretical framework offers several benefits to research work while providing the structure in showing how a researcher defines his/her study philosophically, epistemologically, methodologically and analytically". Moreover, Ravitch and Carl (2016) concur that the "theoretical framework assist researchers in situating and contextualising formal theories into their studies as a guide positioning their studies in scholarly and academic fashion". Moreover, the theoretical framework serves as the focus of the research and is linked to the research problem under study. It is an essential survey component while guiding the researcher's choice of research design and data analysis plan. Adom, Hussein and

Agyem (2018) propose that the utilisation of a theoretical framework facilitates the researcher's identification of an appropriate research approach, selection of analytical tools, determination of the type of data to be gathered for a specific study and the establishment of the procedures to be employed in their research study. Mensah, Agyemang, Acquah, Babah and Dontoh (2020) support the importance of a theoretical framework as a predominant part of the study, making research findings more meaningful and generalisable. According to Adom *et al.* (2018), the lack of a theoretical framework in research leads to an absence of accurate direction towards exploring suitable literature and scholarly discussions of the research findings.

Moreover, Mensah *et al.* (2020) are of the view that “theoretical framework provides a common worldview or lens from which to support one’s thinking about the problem and analysis of data”. Adom, Hussein and Agyem (2018) opine that the theoretical framework guides and should resonate with every aspect of the research process, from the definition of the problem, literature survey, methodology, presentation and discussion of the findings and the conclusions drawn. Using the theoretical framework facilitated the researcher in explaining the research problem, identifying the data to be collected and providing a base for analysing the data. Furthermore, the theoretical framework linked the research objectives and the data collection methods. Thus, Mensah *et al.* (2020) argues that the theoretical framework makes the research process explicit and contends that it helps the researcher consider alternative theories that might challenge their perspective, thereby enriching the study's strengths. This study explores the appropriation of ICT by SMEs with the significant utilisation of indigenous languages, the development market, the improvement of their business and the challenges experienced. It will encourage the SMEs to see the benefits of utilising innovation in business, improving their daily operations, market and increasing their demand.

3.3 The Entrepreneurship Development Theory

Schumpeter's theory of entrepreneurship is understood and comprehended as the bedrock of the theory of entrepreneurship development. Schumpeter's theory of entrepreneurship centred around the idea that entrepreneurship constitutes a critical factor in the advancement of the economy, socio-political aspects, art and all domains of life. As per Schumpeter, the theory of entrepreneurship development concentrates

on the entrepreneur, whom he characterises as "the Man of Action within the economy. He is an economic leader, a real leader rather than merely a perceived leader like the static leader". A theoretical framework refers to how a researcher conceptualises the relationships between variables in a study and illustrate those relationships graphically or diagrammatically. Spinelli (2016) states that "entrepreneurship embodies a thinking, reasoning, and engagement fixated on identifying opportunities, embracing a comprehensive approach, and exhibiting balanced leadership".

Furthermore, entrepreneurs create new business sectors and organisations, prompting increased employment opportunities and multiplying economic effects. Scholar Spinelli (2016) states, "entrepreneurship also helps the developing country progress forward and successfully integrate into the global economy." According to fellow scholars, Edwards-Schachter, García-Granero, Sánchez-Barrioluengo, Quesada-Pineda, and Amara (2015), entrepreneurship has several definitions of schools of thought and disciplines. Moreover, the "diversity of conceptualisations and interpretations of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs can be a challenge and obstacle to research in this field".

Moreover, entrepreneurship is a fundamental driver of economic evolution. This phenomenon manifests itself distinctly and unevenly, which is also a distinctly spatially uneven process and provides an essential explanation of the uneven economic development of regions and nations. Consequently, entrepreneurship assumes a pivotal role within the framework of evolutionary economics. Additionally, Mensah *et al.* (2020) maintains "that allows individuals to continually put themselves into favourable circumstances, regardless of how unfavourable the surroundings".

Edwards-Schachter, García-Granero, Sánchez-Barrioluengo, Quesada-Pineda and Amara (2015) argue that "research has focused on the discovery, exploitation, and consequences without much attention to the nature and sources of opportunity itself." While Eisenmann (2013) argues that opportunities, irrespective of the nature of the chance, make it "impossible to separate it from the individual, others contend that option is an objective construct visible only to the knowledgeable and attuned individuals".

According to Acs and Armingto (2004) and Fritsch (2008), the entrepreneurship development theory is essential in explaining regional economic development. Eisenmann (2013) further argues that entrepreneurs are seen as economic actors and their actions as the determinants of economic growth; however, after this assertion, numerous changes have occurred within the field of entrepreneurship, thereby emphasising the momentousness of comprehending the progression of the theory.

3.3.1 The evolution of entrepreneurship development theory

Eisenmann (2013) defines entrepreneurship as effecting changes, engaging in novel endeavours and pursuing opportunities that surpass the control of available resources. Eisenmann (2013) posits that the entrepreneurial journey comprises three phases: motivational, planning and establishment. Entrepreneurship exhibits variations as scholars employ diverse metrics to ascertain each step. Kerr, P., Kerr, W. and Tina (2017) agree that:

- Entrepreneurial activities can be categorised into phases.
- Organisations evolve a recognisable sequence of evolution and progress.
- Businesses exhibit disparate rates of growth.
- The border between one phase and another lacks distinctiveness.
- The transition between stages does not occur automatically.

Entrepreneurship development was pioneered by Steven Klepper, who deviated from traditional approaches in economics and strategy and explored new territory that emphasises the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship in the growth of companies, industries, regions and economies (Stam, 2009). Gort and Klepper (1982) later documented the industry's evolution through entrepreneurship using a four-stage life cycle proposed by Agarwal and Braguinsky (2014).

Table 3.1: Four stages of the entrepreneurship life cycle

Stages	Description
Stage 1	One or more significant advancements by the product's first entrepreneur (or entrepreneurs) are commercialised.
Stage 2	The time of a profound expansion in the number of entrepreneurs and complete industry production. This stage is accompanied by the natural production value declining repeatedly towards the culmination of this stage.
Stages 3 and 4	The industry subsequently advances towards maturity, frequently through a process similar to a 'shake-out', in which the number of producers decreases dramatically and remains constant. Both production expansion and price reduction manifest at a considerably more leisurely pace.

Source: Agarwal and Braguinsky (2014)

The evolution of entrepreneurship dates to the beginning of the 20th century between (1883-1950) when Schumpeter propounded a theory or model of entrepreneurship, regarded as a breakthrough in entrepreneurship theory. Moreover, the idea/model of entrepreneurship holds great interest as the forerunner of subsequent entrepreneurship models, emphasising entrepreneurship as varied business activity—planning, financing, production and taking responsibility for business success and failure.

According to Spinelli (2016), “Schumpeter emphasised the role of the innovator—the innovator, the developer, the promoter, the person who initiates and recognises technical improvements and succeeds in getting them introduced”. The evolution of the entrepreneurial phenomenon is distinguished by novel entrepreneurs who join the business world. The ‘newcomers’ to the economy are crucial in developing economic systems (Stam, 2009). Schumpeter (1942) maintains that:

“the fundamental impetus that initiates and sustains the capitalist engine in motion emanates from the newcomers’ merchandise, the innovative methodologies of production or transportation, the emerging markets, the fresh models of industrial organisation that capitalist enterprise

generates; this course of Creative Destruction constitutes the fundamental reality about capitalism.”

Through engendering alterations in commodities, procedures and commercial frameworks within the economy, these inventive fledgling entrepreneurs' enterprises confront the established enterprises, compelling the former to enhance or modify their output to persist in the face of the novel rivalry (Schumpeter, 1934).

The creation of the variation is unevenly distributed across geographical regions and these novel discrepancies are consequently engendered in specific locations but do not propagate spontaneously to all locales and utilisations in which they could be advantageous; the innovators perform a substantial function in this dissemination of novel discrepancies as they occupy the vacancies in the marketplace (Eisenmann, 2013). Schumpeter's entrepreneurship model is credited as a dynamic one associated with innovations in new products and processes. Eisenmann (2013) argues that:

“there is the will to conquer the impulse to fight, prove oneself superior to others, and succeed for the sake, not of the fruits of success, but of success itself or simply of exercising one's energy or ingenuity”.

Moreover, the sequence of economic development is entrepreneurship innovations in business and economic development. Entrepreneurship has the instrumental worth that it has concurred in economics; as it accords to the consideration given in management studies on the start-up, growth and exit of firms and state-of-being. It recognises that entrepreneurship is not limited to being instrumental; it is often valued. Kerr, P., Kerr, W. and Tina (2017) define an 'opportunity' as when goods can be sold at a profit. This is inadequate from a development perspective because it implies that entrepreneurship's utility depends only on monetary gains. 'Opportunities' should include situations when persons can create new firms to further their desired pursuits. This study's conceptual framework was Levi-Strauss's (1962) work on bricolage and the extension of the concept of bricolage to social entrepreneurship by Di Domenico, Haugh and Tracey (2010). Effectuation refers to the “cause or bringing about something or to put something into effect or operation including creating, producing, generating, catalysing, to mention a few, which are the hallmarks of entrepreneurshi”'s contribution to the knowledge fraternity. Tsilika, Kakouris, Apostolopoulos and

Dermatis (2020) demonstrated that firms that practice entrepreneurial bricolage thrive on creating something from nothing. Such bricolage drives the resource environments that are unique to the firm. Furthermore, Tsilika *et al.*, (2020) derived the theory of entrepreneurial bricolage by asserting that in a condition of extreme environmental constraint, entrepreneurs make a choice out of three options: (a) seek resources outside the strong domain; (b) avoid new challenges by remaining inactive, downsize, or disband; or (c) enact bricolage by making do with the combination of resources at hand to solve new problems and create new opportunities.

An entrepreneur's ability to avoid being constrained by limited resources and use whatever resources are available to fashion a sustainable future underpins the social bricolage model (Di Domenico *et al.*, 2010). According to Dou, Zhu, Zhang and Wang (2019), entrepreneurship is a critical component of evolutionary economics and development entrepreneurship over time has predominantly been regarded as the catalyst for economic evolution. Conspicuous disparities exist that can be discerned within and amongst nations regarding the rates at which enterprise evolves and the factors that influence its development (Bosma & Schutjens, 2008). Furthermore, these disparities tend to become more pronounced as time elapses, thereby demonstrating a reliance on previous circumstances in the structure of industries (Douglas, Douglas, Muturi and Ochieng, 2017). The development of enterprise theory can be observed in the configuration of sectors, urbanisation, cultural influences and the expansion of knowledge and financial resources within the entrepreneurial system.

3.3.2 Contribution of the entrepreneurship theory to the study

There are various definitions of entrepreneurship as it has developed into a multidimensional concept and the illustrations employed will be contingent upon the emphasis of the research under study. Latypov, Chumak and Yadransky (2019) echoed these sentiments and posited that entrepreneurship is an interdisciplinary phenomenon that concurrently pertains to economics, sociology, psychology and philosophy. The multidisciplinary nature of entrepreneurship was expounded upon by Jean-Baptiste (1832), as mentioned by Latypov *et al.* (2019), who maintained that an entrepreneur could be an agriculturist, a manufacturer, a merchant or an individual who undertakes to fabricate some product at their peril, their expenditure and to their advantage. Ács and Naudé (2013) acknowledge entrepreneurship as beneficial for

economic growth and development. Furthermore, entrepreneurship has been remarkably resurgent over the past three decades in countries with substantial poverty reduction.

This study explores the importance of ICT resources in SMEs and whether they have been adequately implemented within their operations. Entrepreneurship influences development outcomes positively and negatively; third, development dynamics significantly determine entrepreneurship. The study adopted social entrepreneurship, encompassing an innovative combination of resources to pursue opportunities that can lead to societal transformation and fulfil societal necessities. According to Khangarot (2019), “social venture underpinned by societal objectives to enhance prosperity and welfare for the societal group, rather than solely the individual”. Additionally, the primary aim of the societal establishment is sustainable societal development, which plays a pivotal function in addressing crucial concerns and bringing societal and economic welfare to the community.

Furthermore, entrepreneurship is a valid and essential subject of study for development scholars and the product is a worthwhile subject of study for entrepreneurship and management scholars. The theory additionally explores the multidimensional construction that suggests the manifestation of virtuous corporate behaviour to accomplish the societal mission, a unity of coherent purpose and action in ethical intricacy and the capability to identify prospects for societal transformation. According to Dou, Zhu, Zhang and Wang (2019), entrepreneurship is a critical component of evolutionary economics and the development of entrepreneurship over time has primarily been regarded as the catalyst for economic evolution. Apparent differences can be discerned within and among nations in the rates of entrepreneurship progression and their determinants (Khangarot, 2019). There is a general agreement that social entrepreneurs pursue possibilities and generate social value and social change (Bradshaw, Alley, Huggins, Lloyd and Esvelt, 2021). Khangarot (2019) states that social entrepreneurs contribute value to existing services and undertake reasonable risks for the individuals they serve by ensuring social and financial returns on their investments. Social entrepreneurship places the primary objective of its operations on the development of the local community and the people's overall well-being. Lowe (2021) outlines the crucial role of SMEs to the future of South Africa.

Moreover, many scholars have been opined that SMEs are pivotal drivers for South Africa's developing economy. ICT significantly develops and contributes to economic advancement and poverty alleviation. Dastbaz and Pattinson (2014) delineate ICT:

“as an administrative and support tool, and ICT is utilised in the production process of goods and services. ICT technologies facilitate the transfer of information and various forms of electronically mediated communication”.

Social entrepreneurship is a process that involves the innovative utilisation and combination of resources to seek opportunities to catalyse social change and address social needs (Bradshaw *et al.*, 2021). In the entrepreneurial concept, social entrepreneurs demonstrate characteristics and leadership qualities that focus on the desired social change (Bradshaw, Alley, Huggins, Lloyd and Esvelt, 2021). Social entrepreneurial activity is generated through an intersection of innovation, proactivity, risk-taking and these three primary components form an entrepreneurial orientation (Miller, 1983; Mort, Weerawardena and Carnegie, 2003). The innovative disposition of social entrepreneurs supports and engages creativity and novelty; proactivity pertains to their ability to seek opportunities for identifying and fulfilling future needs and risk-taking refers to their ability to venture into the unknown.

For the study, entrepreneurship is the source of SME development as it affirms the importance of creating business opportunities. Pandya (2012) asserts that SMEs are crucial in advancing grassroots financial and equitable sustainable development. They hold significant importance for South Africa as they foster the development and advancement of the economy. The principles of classical economic theory consider the entrepreneur and other elements that determine financial production, such as climatic conditions, governance, political landscape, epidemics and conflicts as an "external force" (Shane & Venkataraman, 2002). Nevertheless, the entrepreneur is acknowledged as a significant contributor to economic advancement.

Within the economic realm, the entrepreneur is defined as an individual capable of recognising, seizing and capitalising on opportunities, actively seeking and managing resources to transform these opportunities into successful business ventures (Filion,

1991; Timmons, 2004; Shane, 2005). Dudkin, as cited by Latypov (2019), summarises the value of entrepreneurship within the economic discipline, stating that entrepreneurship embodies a managerial system in which the entrepreneur assumes a prominent role, rationally amalgamating various factors of production and organising the process of reproduction on an innovative basis, while also shouldering the associated economic risks and responsibilities to achieve entrepreneurial income. Furthermore, the study aims to explore the opportunities within SMEs, their role in developing economies, the growing adoption of rigorous assessment methods in policy assessments and the probability and desirability of closer collaboration across various fields of study, all pointing towards a positive future for the intersection of development and entrepreneurship.

According to the definition, social entrepreneurship can be described as a process that includes an innovative combination of resources to pursue opportunities that have the potential to bring about social transformation and fulfil the societal needs of a community (Bradshaw, Alley, Huggins, Lloyd and Esvelt, 2021). Social objectives form the foundation of social entrepreneurship, aiming to enhance the prosperity and well-being of the community rather than solely focusing on individual gains (Cant, 2007). The primary purpose of social enterprise is to achieve sustainable social development, playing a crucial part in addressing urgent issues and promoting social and economic well-being within the community (Khangarot, 2019). Social entrepreneurship is a multidimensional concept that embodies virtuous business conduct to accomplish the social mission, a cohesion of purpose and action in the face of ethical intricacies and the ability to identify opportunities for social change (Bradshaw *et al.*, 2021). Given this perspective, there is a general agreement that social entrepreneurs pursue opportunities and create social value and transformation. Brinckerhoff (2000) states that social entrepreneurs enhance the value of existing services and undertake reasonable risks for the individuals they assist by ensuring social and financial returns on their investments. Social entrepreneurship prioritises the development of the local community and the overall welfare of the population as the primary objective of its operations. As per Khangarot (2019), the innovative disposition of social entrepreneurs supports and involves creativity and novelty; proactivity pertains to their ability to seek opportunities for identifying and fulfilling future needs and risk-taking refers to their ability to venture into the unexplored.

Social entrepreneurship involves stakeholders in the local community, including government representatives, non-governmental organisations, local leaders, traditional and cultural leaders, citizens and communities who must cooperate to solve social issues. Furthermore, the study aims to investigate the opportunities within SMEs, fostering developing economies, the growing acceptance of rigorous evaluation methods in policy assessments and the possibility and desirability of closer collaboration across disciplines, all boding well for the intersection of development and entrepreneurship.

3.3.3 Critical analysis of the entrepreneurship development theory in the inquiry

According to Spinelli (2016) “furthermore, entrepreneurs create new business sectors and organisations, which prompts increased employment opportunities, has a multiplying effect on the economy. Business opportunities require an understanding of the industries one is venturing into them”. However, Dew and Sarasvathy (2016) outline the effectuation theory as a process theory because it explains how entrepreneurs create new ventures. Latypov (2019) summarises the value of entrepreneurship in the economic discipline as follows:

“Entrepreneurship is a system of management in which the prominent role is played by an entrepreneur who rationally combines a variety of factors of production and organises the process of reproduction on an innovative basis, economic risk and economic responsibility for the final results to obtain entrepreneurial income”.

The approach is of top significance in the study as it describes the expert processes and problem-solving strategies skilled entrepreneurs use. The significance of SMEs is not negligible on a global level as they do act as catalysts for economic progress, social cohesion and the fostering of innovation as well as the fostering of entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurship is characterised by pursuing opportunities, which can manifest in various contexts, including initiating a new business venture (Brush *et al.*, 2003; Hornsby *et al.*, 1999).

A third category consists of courses centred around 'entrepreneurship' that emphasise managing small businesses, while the other two approaches concentrate more on the initial stages of the entrepreneurial process. This third approach is more closely aligned with the administration and expansion of existing enterprises (Brand *et al.*, 2007). This paradigm shift has instigated the promotion and cultivation of SMEs as pivotal actors in the economic development of numerous nations as they play a leading role in job creation, contribute significantly to the GDP and foster overall community enhancement.

Ngoma (2017) further outlines SMEs within Africa, highlighting their impact on social changes. Meanwhile, South Africa assumes responsibility for fostering industrial development and enhancing economic competitiveness. Additionally, the SEDA (2017) recognises the significance of SMEs in the manufacturing sector, particularly regarding skills development, which contributes to economic growth and job creation. The initial domain explored in entrepreneurial psychology is the personal differences approach, which aims to comprehend the characteristics of individuals who become entrepreneurs and predict their likelihood of achieving success and enduring in their endeavours (Gorgievski & Stephan, 2016).

This framework focuses on personality traits; namely, the typical cognitive, affective, and behavioural patterns that individuals exhibit. When it comes to entrepreneurship, features relevant to the tasks associated with this vocation show stronger associations with business establishment and performance compared to broad factors such as the "big five" personality dimensions; namely, self-efficacy, achievement, motivation, proactive personality and innovativeness, which are highly correlated with entrepreneurial activities (Frese & Gielnik, 2014). Di Domenico, Haugh and Tracey (2010) state that the composition of innovation requires resources and entrepreneurs use several methods to acquire the resources for their ventures. Furthermore, Dew and Sarasvathy (2016) pivots entrepreneurship's "causation theories". It is proposed that entrepreneurs start with a goal and then acquire the resources to achieve it linearly.

Ngoma (2017) describes intellectual bricolage as a process of utilising the available resources for achieving innovation, that is, "making do with what is at hand". Resources are an integral part of entrepreneurship; effectuation logic involves

evaluating resources available to use today and then deriving goals out of what can be made from the recombination of those resources. Additionally, entrepreneurs accept floating purposes within limits and allow the available resources to guide the evolution of their strategies. The approach plays a vital role in the study, outlining how expert entrepreneurs think about and solve problems.

According to Droll, Shahzad, Ehsanullah and Stoyan (2017), SMEs' global role is enormous, from inspiring economic growth and social unity and fuelling creativity to developing entrepreneurial skills. Entrepreneurship is a process of pursuing opportunities that may take place in different contexts, only one of which is the business start-up. The South African government has more financial programmes to support SMEs and ensuring the stability of the business. Digitalisation affects individual and team behaviours, organisational strategies, practices and processes, industry dynamics and competition among entrepreneurs (Droll *et al.* 2017). They are tasked with providing SMEs and Cooperatives throughout South Africa with simple access to finance, albeit efficiently and sustainably.

Ndebele (2014) and Gudmundsdottir (2010) have identified various factors associated with the lack of indigenous African languages within the ICT domain. Moreover, scholars Fini, Bartolini, Benigni, Ciancarini, Di Iorio, Johnson and Silvi (2018) contend that integrating ICT with entrepreneurship and strategic management is particularly advantageous in the tourism and hospitality sectors. This is due to the significant utilisation of data generated by online searches, accommodation reservations, social media activities (including image and video sharing) and online reviews, which have immensely benefited from the advancements in ICT (Fini *et al.*, 2018). The recent emergence of remote sensing, mobile technologies, innovative transaction systems and high-performance computing has opened avenues to comprehend trends, behaviours and actions in a previously unattainable manner. Resources are essential in any business; Desa (2011) reaffirms this by describing the social bricoleur that combines materials, labour and skills to collect and store materials, personnel, industry best practices and legal regulations to achieve goals.

Mariani emphasised the value of ICT, while Baggio, Fuchs and Höpken (2018) stated that data science techniques are used to collect, analyse, process (through online-analytical processing), report and visualise data. According to Desa (2011), resource

mobilisation and recombination of principles, resources and techniques to institutional change differentiate social bricoleurs from others. Entrepreneurship displays a considerable degree of dynamism in opposition to the stationary nature of traditional, routine-based and cultural organisations.

The static structure of these organisations is characterised by a rational and impersonal framework that relies on centralised decision-making, adherence to formal rules and procedures and the simultaneous fulfilment of organisational responsibilities in a prescribed and uniform manner. An entrepreneurial organisation strives to evade this static structure and instead adopts a dynamic one. By embracing this dynamic system, the organisation fosters increased innovation and entrepreneurship. Consequently, the dynamic organisational structure undergoes constant change and remains flexible, with a minimal hierarchy and a focus on horizontal structure development (Razavi, 2013). The primary objective of this dynamic structure is to sustain innovation and productivity within the organisation, with empowerment serving as the driving force behind the organisational strategy that supports this type of structure (Cornwall & Perlman, 1990).

There is a positive correlation between the high Total Entrepreneurial Activation (TEA) according to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) and economic prosperity, which has as its reflections; Good quality of life (QOL), high Living Standard Measure (LSM) and uplifting of the Bottom of the Pyramid (BoP) sector of the population. This is also evidenced by the Global Competitiveness Index Report, which accentuates education, for instance, as one of the 12 pillars hence entrepreneurship education's nexus with the indigenous languages and the role of ICT could galvanise the efforts of those in charge. The virtual network is an essential aspect of ICT development. It complements fundamental interactions in the real world and facilitates establishing new connections and developing trust relationships (Fini *et al.*, 2017). Research evidence indicates that virtual communication exchanges shift from explicit and codified knowledge to tacit and detailed knowledge as the collaborative relationship matures. Breakthrough innovations often originate from individual entrepreneurs or small start-up firms rather than large incumbent firms (Baumol, 2005; Christensen and Raynor, 2003; Darby and Zucker, 2003; Gilder, 1993; Klein, 1977).

Baumol (2005), for instance, has documented that many significant innovations have emerged from small firms driven by entrepreneurial spirit rather than from the research and development labs of large incumbent corporations. There are various grounds for this occurrence. Christensen and Raynor (2003) argue that disruptive innovations require significant development time and effort. Initially, they may not generate enough profits to support the infrastructure of a large incumbent firm or meet the short-term performance expectations of Wall Street. Entrepreneurship is dynamic, whereas traditional organisations are static and routine-based, driven by established culture. The static structure of organisations is based on centralised decision-making, formal rules and procedures, simultaneous execution of organisational tasks and a uniform approach to standard and specialised tasks.

3.4 Institutional Theory

Bill and Hargrave (1981) described the early institutional hypothesis in political science at the beginning of the 20th century. They attested that it focused on legal systems and formal structures, emphasised detailed descriptions of governmental processes and centred on institutional origins, not change:

“At the beginning of the mid-1930s and continuing through the 1960s, the institutional perspective was challenged and largely supplanted by the behaviourist approach (not to be confused with ‘behavioralism’ in psychology), which attempted to sever the tie to moral philosophy and rebuild political science as a theoretically guided, empirical science” (Berkenpas, 2016).

According to the investigation performed by Reddy (2012), creating institutions is critical in developing entrepreneurial activity. Furthermore, the formulation and enforcement of rules, regulations, property rights and the implementation of proper mechanisms are significant contributing factors to this development. Transaction trust, which can be defined as the level of trust the involved parties have in each other during a business transaction, also plays a vital role. The government's engagement in establishing and enforcing the rules and regulated property rights is necessary. Mazzarol (2014) argues that the government positively impacts transactional trust,

facilitating entrepreneurship. Additionally, culture plays a significant role in societies prioritising hierarchy and failing to recognise and appreciate self-made success. Social status is also a part of the rewards that entrepreneurs receive.

Furthermore, our primary institutions, much like basic education, provide potential entrepreneurs with the realisation that opportunities are available. Opposing openness to the outside world obstructs the introduction of foreign ideas, opportunities, goods, and capital. As Mazzarol (2014) points out, diversity is essential as it exposes individuals to new ideas, stimulating entrepreneurship. These factors directly impact entrepreneurship as they facilitate the exchange of information and generating new ideas is a prerequisite for successful entrepreneurship. Various scholars, such as Reddy (2012), have extensively discussed the concept of institutions and identified several frameworks for understanding them. One widely acknowledged framework, as proposed by North (1990), categorises institutions into formal and informal rules. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) have categorised institutions into three isomorphic processes: coercive, mimetic and normative. Another scholar, Berkenpas (2016), has identified regulatory, cognitive and normative institutions as the key categories. These various frameworks help in understanding the complexity and diversity of institutions.

3.4.1 Components of Institutional Theory

Mongiello (2016) outlines institutionalisation as a framework instead of what is generally considered a formal theory. It places the potency of collective action as the foundation for understanding social and political institutions. Institutionalisation views organisations as social contracts bounded by norms, rules and expectations that restrict groups and individuals' choices and behaviours. Berkenpas (2016) contends the three pillars of Institutional Theory; namely, the regulative, normative and cognitive pillars. Institutions become more similar to one another due to these three different forces. According to Hatch and Zilber (2012), institutions are "cultural, normative and regulatory structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behaviour".

The institutional theory has gained popularity and prominence among scholars as a vibrant theory synthesised and compared with various approaches to explaining the

actions of individuals and organisations (Dacin *et al.*, 2002). According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), the institutional theory explains that organisational strategies or actions are responses to external environmental pressures. The institutional theory states that the environment of an institution exerts a potent influence on the development of structures within a firm, surpassing any other force. The term "institution" broadly refers to the formal rules, agreements and organisational behaviour in compliance with the laws (Jepperson, 1991). A cohort of scholars echoed these sentiments, defining an institution as socially sanctioned and relatively stable rules, norms, values and beliefs that prescribe appropriate behaviour within society or industry (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Scott, 2008; Jepperson, 1991; Meyer & Rowan, 1977).

Institutions are characterised by various facets – cultures, structures and routines – and they operate at multiple levels of jurisdiction. Moreover, Hatch and Zilber (2012) state that “institutions are composed of cultural-cognitive, normative and regulative elements that together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life”. Berkenpas (2016) wrote that processes initiated by regulative, normative and cultural cognitive elements stabilise institutions and cause them to exhibit meaning-making properties. These elements are the foundation of institutional structures that direct behaviour and resist change. Institutions have socially accepted rules, norms, values and beliefs that define appropriate behaviour in a society or industry (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Scott, 2008). When organisations incorporate these institutions into their practices, stakeholders such as regulators, politicians, industry associations, customers and the broader public bestow upon them a 'public license to operate', which subsequently drives similar behaviour across organisations within a given industry (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Scott, 2008).

3.4.1.1 Regulatory Pillar

According to Peyton and Pez  (2014), “the regulative pillar of institutionalisation includes rules, laws or structures that seek to regulate or constrain behaviour”. Moreover, Hatch and Zilber (2012) classify the use of some coercive force to gain compliance, focussing on the ability of institutions to deny and regularise behaviour.

3.4.1.2 Cultural-cognitive Pillar

The cultural-cognitive pillar of institutionalisation involves peoples' shared beliefs generally taken for granted. Cultural-cognitive aspects are usually more challenging to recognise and identify because they are typically more entrenched (Peton & Pez , 2014). Moreover, the beliefs of unstated expectations and embedded feelings influenced educational leaders. According to Hatch and Zilber (2012), institutionalisation's cultural-cognitive pillar involves shared beliefs generally taken for granted. Cultural-cognitive aspects are usually more challenging to recognise and identify because they are typically more entrenched. Furthermore, Peton and Pez  (2014) stress the shared conceptions that constitute the nature of social reality and the frames through which meaning is made.

3.4.1.3 Normative Pillar

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) expounded on the normative dimension of institutionalisation when they wrote about normative isomorphism in organisations as a mechanism that creates:

“a pool of almost interchangeable individuals who occupy similar positions across a range of organisations and possess a similarity of orientation and disposition that may override variations in tradition and control that might otherwise shape organisational behaviour”.

Hatch and Zilber (2012) outline the pillar prescriptive element and define suitable and appropriate. The normative post's primary components include a system of norms, expectations, values and roles seeking to influence behaviour (Peton & Pez , 2014).

Table 3.2: Various forms of institutions

Form of institution	Source	Description
Formal	North (1990)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprise of statutes, constitutions, common law, and other governmental regulations. • They determine the governance structure, individual and property rights, contracts and the enforcement system. • They are enacted, changed and enforced by legislators, judges, bureaucrats and other rule-makers.
Informal	North (1990)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customs, moral values, religious beliefs and other forms of behaviour have stood the test of time.
Regulatory	Scott (1995)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formally codified, enacted and enforced structure of laws in a community, society or country. Based on experience.
Cognitive	Scott (1995)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beliefs about the expected standards of behaviour specific to a culture. • Based on shared understandings or taken-for-grantees.
Normative	Scott (1995)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manifest in standards and commercial conventions such as those established by professional and trade associations and business groups. Based on social obligation.
Coercive process	DiMaggio and Powell (1983)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results from formal and informal pressures exerted on organisations by other influential organisations and cultural expectations in the society within which organisations function. • Such pressures may be felt as force, persuasion or invitations to join the collaboration. • In some circumstances, organisational change directly responds to government mandate.

Mimetic process	DiMaggio and Powell (1983)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When organisational technologies are poorly understood, when goals are ambiguous or when the environment creates symbolic uncertainty, organisations may model themselves on other organisations.
Normative process	DiMaggio and Powell (1983)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stems primarily from professionalisation and are viewed as the collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work, control production and establish a cognitive base and legitimation for their occupational autonomy.

Source: Various scholars

North (1990) defines institutions as “the rules of the game in a society or, more formally, the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction”. The government ensures that the institution is set up and enforces formal institutions. Furthermore, Mazzarol (2014) discussed the role of government and those who influence it in controlling many institutions, including law enforcement, judicial efficiency and regulations. The institution can develop because of economic conditions, such as new business sectors, information and flexible sources. Such changes bring about new open doors for human connections. According to Pejovich (1998), “potential entrepreneurs will seek new contractual arrangements to exploit these opportunities”. Furthermore, Mazzarol (2014) argue, “market-friendly contractual arrangements can become institutions when they result in sustained and lower transaction costs”.

3.4.2 Institutional theory in the GIG Economy

In its various forms and manifestations, the European Parliament defines the gig economy as “peer transactions, with platforms that take on the role of intermediaries”. The European Commission (2016) defines it, referring mainly to the sharing economy and crowd economy, as “business models in which collaborative platforms facilitate the activities that create an open market for the temporary use of goods or services often provided by private individuals”. Sundararajan (2016) defines physical services

as “work on demand through app/ internet” and virtual ones with the term “crowd work.” Furthermore, Schmidt (2017) “divides the platform work into two categories: cloud work (web-based digital work, individual or cooperative creative work) and gig work (result found digitally to perform a task in a specific physical location, i.e., home delivery)”.

Crews (2010) argues that institutional theory is utilised to comprehend how the environment impacts an organisation's ability to acquire effective learning to achieve sustainable performance. Furthermore, it pertains to replicating or altering cognitive, normative and regulative abilities through imitation or exchanging experiences within the environment. Olivier and Page (2017) argue that formal learning does not occur in isolation but is embedded in social contexts. This perspective has prompted numerous scholars to incorporate the social environment in elucidating the learning process (Anderson *et al.*, 2009). Illeris (2007) “states that the theory encompasses three dimensions of learning and two fundamental approaches”.

Today, education has moved to the top of the business priority list regarding sharpening skills, enlarging the leadership pipeline and stimulating employee incentives” (Xing, Marwala, L. & Marwala, T., 2018). Every organisation must reassess its learning environment; a novel vision must be implemented to cultivate a favourable learning experience that impacts individuals involved in the learning system. Giaconia and Terzo (2018) argue that the gig economy outlines the labour market that wholly incorporates a specific company's digital (online) platform. Moreover, these opportunities permit individuals to find a short-term job which regularly finishes with the provision of single work performance (often without a contract), on the front of which a modest profit is obtained.

According to Carvalho, da Cunha, de Lima and Carstens (2017), the institutional theory assumes that the institutional environment influences the performance of organisations. The institutional theory primarily focuses on the strategies that groups and organisations employ to ensure their survival and legal operation through adherence to regulatory structures, governmental agencies, laws, courts, professions, scripts and other societal and cultural practices that encourage conformity. This proposition also underscores the significance of sticking to the standards and values of the institutional environment. Furthermore, Fernández (2018) argues that the gig

economy considers short-term employment contracts and unjustifiable working conditions. Classification of gig platforms is based on the content of their transactions: those exchange goods (such as eBay and Amazon) and media that exchange services (such as Uber and Airbnb). Furthermore, Schmidt (2017) distinguishes between online services and local services, “service platforms can also be differentiated according to the types of tasks/assignments required (social or intellectual)”.

Giaconia and Terzo (2018) outline characteristics that make the gig economy a completely new models which are:

- The role of coordinating interest and offers for work is assigned to platforms. “No direct contact between worker and client is allowed outside the platform, not for the first interaction nor the following”.
- “Tasks are obtained online and performed physically and the working relation starts and ends with every assignment”.
- Compensation is professed to the workers through the platform, with practically no control by the workers.

According to Ainsworth (2017), “frequent jobs of the gig economy, which are consolidated mainly in the services sector, includes the use of one’s private car as a taxi on request (i.e., Uber), deliveries of food at home on a scooter or bicycle (i.e., Foodora, Deliveroo), couriers of goods, skilled and unskilled labour and professional, creative and administrative work”.

The 4IR requires reconsidering and shifting the mindset regarding the manufacturing of products and the production, distribution, supply, sale and utilisation of services within the supply chain as “this will drive a significant structural and theoretical transformation and revolution for operations and supply chain management” (Spath, 2013). This implies a shift in the theoretical perspective from classical theories to focusing on the novel technological movement, the 4IR. The 4IR refers to the confluences of various digital technologies, including 3D printing, the Internet of Things, advanced robotics, new materials such as bio or nano-based and unique processes such as data-driven production, Artificial Intelligence and synthetic biology (OECD, 2016). Furthermore, institutional theory outlines the critical role of the

government in ensuring sustainable and productive systems for optimal growth in the gig economy. The government is responsible for providing employment opportunities and fostering development prospects. The government is crucial in establishing and enforcing regulations and property rights.

According to Kearney and Meynhardt (2016), the economy is undergoing rapid change due to digital platforms and their overall impact has been likened to the 4IR. These platforms can best be understood as facilitating social and economic interactions online. Most notable platforms have enabled individuals to connect and trade directly, bypassing traditional corporations. Such platforms are called "peer-to-peer" platforms (Siegel & Kenney, 2018). The first wave of digital platforms revolves around sharing digital content, such as music and movies. The second phase focuses on selling second-hand goods, exemplified by platforms like eBay. The third phase, which has permeated the global community, encompasses social media platforms like Facebook (Frenken *et al.*, 2018). The European Commission (2016) highlights that developed economies have a notable advantage in employing specialised capital goods, such as machinery in the consumer goods industries. These industries also benefit from access to various producer services, including equipment repair and maintenance, transportation and communication services, engineering and legal support, accounting, advertising and financial services.

The rise of online gig work can be a conjunction of all three trends. Instead of undertaking full-time employment at the premises of a single employer, workers serve multiple clients at varying hours remotely from their homes or co-working spaces. This mode of working is becoming more common in some countries and occupations. In the research literature and among policymakers, the current economic statistics need to be better suited to measuring the online gig economy. It captures its full extent and distinguishes its impact from other activities because of its exponential growth and development (Abbasi, Sarker and Chiang, 2016) "as gig economy platforms are expanding into many sectors, including education, care and delivery, a comprehensive approach to media may be desirable without denying sectoral and national specificities".

3.4.3 Contribution of the institutional theory to the inquiry

According to Ainsworth's (2017), the delineation of institutions is due to their simplicity and the economic arguments associated with utilising the economic structure as an explanatory variable of institutional theory. Fogel, Hawk, Morck, and Yeung (2006) argue that the noble government enhances transactional trust thus facilitating entrepreneurship. Additionally, culture plays a crucial role in societies characterised by demand and hierarchy, where self-made success is not adequately acknowledged and social status contributes to the rewards of entrepreneurs. Institutional Theory suggests that organisations exist within an environment where organisational changes, whether structural or behavioural, are primarily driven by pressures to conform.

This conformity is the foundation of Institutional Theory (Teo, Wei & Benbasat, 2003). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) proposes three types of pressures that lead to agreement: mimetic, coercive and normative. Mimetic pressures can result in an organisation gradually transforming to resemble other organisations. Coercive effects arise from the pressure exerted on an organisation to comply. These pressures may stem from environmental sources that are internal, external or a combination of both. Normative pressures arise from dyadic relationships, in which companies share information, norms and rules within a network. This study explores institutions' role in developing SMEs within a society to develop and grow within human interaction, which is a critical institution in the development and sustainability of organisations.

The survival of SMEs depends on government's commitment to ensure that the institution is set up and enforced as a formal institution. The study explores institutions set up by government institutions to develop because of economic conditions that will enhance and establish SMEs in the Limpopo Province. There are various forms of institutions and the study explores the different forms of institutions in incorporating the development of SMEs and undertaking the organisations' growth and sustainability. The mimetic pressures have been centred around how organisations replicate the adoption behaviours of prominent peers to address unpredictability and auspicious advancements; the coercive forces have been focused on the explicit and implicit adoption, as well as the pressures of conformity imposed on firms by other

organisations, which are reliant. Remarkably, so are the government's responsibilities to guarantee employment prospects and possibilities for prospects.

Institutional logic platforms are corporations that organise markets. They readjust the institutional logic of both the market and the corporation innovatively through an institutional logic perspective and generate a novel rationale for economic exchange that is based on platforms (Thornton, 2020) hence “the global community has observed the emergence of sharing-economy platforms that empower individuals to lease consumer goods and residences. For instance, Airbnb as well as gig-economy platforms where individuals offer personal services encompassing taxi rides, house cleaning and tutoring, for example Uber, Helping, Taskrabbit.

The platform's rapid growth and influence substantially impact the economies of numerous nations (Frenken *et al.*, 2018). Nevertheless, gig workers must not only bear responsibility for operational expenses and risks and relinquish the protections enjoyed by traditional employees but they must also conform to the temporal patterns of customer demand, thus significantly curtailing their autonomy (Ravenelle, 2019; Rosenblat, 2018; Schor, 2020). The online gig economy represents a convergence of three noteworthy transformations: a shift from local to remote, a transition from full-time to flexible working arrangements and a change from permanent to occasional employment (Kässi, 2019).

There is growing scholarly recognition that entrepreneurship is intimately linked to the the institutional context in which it occurs (Bruton *et al.*, 2010). Institutions encompass notions of culture, legal environment, tradition and history and economic incentives, which organise social interaction by constraining and enabling activities and decisions (Greenman, 2013). As opposed to more individualistic, resource-based and rationalistic perspectives (Tolbert *et al.*, 2010), the core premise of the institutional embeddedness of entrepreneurial activities is that prevailing values, rules, expectations and material infrastructure in countries often shape entrepreneurial activities (Jain & Sharma, 2013). ICT played an integral role during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the digital divide was felt when township schools needed help transitioning to online instruction (Dube, 2020). Furthermore, it impacted rural communities, exposing the educational imbalances among different groups and

resulting in a growing digital divide. Rural schools were particularly vulnerable. Tapala, van Niekerk and Mentz (2020) reaffirm that stakeholders from rural and township schools have reported the need for more support from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in facilitating online learning and ensuring the continuity of teaching and understanding during the pandemic. As demonstrated in the excerpts above, the persistent economic inequality in South Africa will continue to hinder educational opportunities for learners in township and rural schools.

According to Reimers and Schleicher (2020), it was challenging for learners to acquire knowledge during the COVID-19 pandemic without devices, internet connectivity and suitable physical environments. However, the lack of access to ICT accentuates a sense of inadequacy, thereby perpetuating the existing situation and the narrative of township dwellers as passive beneficiaries of government assistance rather than active contributors in shaping their future hence Tapala, van Niekerk, and Mentz (2020) advocate for applying resource mobilisation theory in schools to identify and harness their material and human resources to tackle the issue of digital exclusion in township communities. The study's institutional theory is vital as it undertakes innovation within organisations, guaranteeing the growth, development and sustainability of organisations adopting institutions.

However, the government's role is essential in establishing and enforcing the rules, regulations and property rights; "normative pressures have focused on the prevalent professional norms and widespread agreements shared by organisations in a relational network" (Su *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, this study will examine the conceptual aspects of mimetic, coercive and normative institutional pressures and describe how these pressures can be hypothesised to explain organisations. Furthermore, applying institutional theory to entrepreneurship suggests that entrepreneurs must conform to existing institutions to obtain validation, credibility and the necessary resources from critical audiences and stakeholders (Su *et al.*, 2017). Entrepreneurs strive to acquire essential human and financial resources by persuading potential resource constituents of their proposed activities' legitimacy, appropriateness and desirability vis-à-vis socially constructed evaluation frameworks (Suchman, 1995; Tolbert *et al.*, 2010). Institutions play a pivotal role in shaping the perceptions and behaviours of entrepreneurs, customers, suppliers and investors by establishing a shared

understanding of social reality (Thornton, 2020). Common institutional factors that influence entrepreneurial endeavours include market conditions and property rights.

3.4.4 Critical analysis of the institutional theory

Reddy (2012) posits that institutional theory is a conceptual framework to analyse social phenomena, particularly within organisations. This theory posits that the social world is predominantly composed of institutions. Additionally, these institutions establish rules, practices and structures that dictate action parameters. Institutions are fundamental in explaining the social world because they are built into the social order and direct social life flow. Various government policies and strategies aim to address the SME sector's challenges. These measures encompass government financial support for SMEs, facilitating access to both local and international markets, providing SME assistance through government procurement, tax relief, business advice, business incubation, supportive regulations (with a particular emphasis on tax incentives) and human resource development through training. These factors remain constant and dictate the rules of variation.

According to Giaconia and Terzo (2018):

“the institution’s condition is action because departures are automatically counteracted by social controls that deviate from the social order. These controls associate nonconformity with increased costs through increased risk, greater cognitive demands, reduced legitimacy and accompanying resources”.

Digital platforms are swiftly changing the economy and their overall impact has been compared to the 4IR. The platforms can be best understood in a generic context, specifically as intermediaries facilitating social and economic interactions in the online realm (Kenney & Zysman, 2016). Numerous influential media outlets have empowered individuals to connect and engage in commerce, bypassing traditional corporations. These platforms are called "peer-to-peer" (Frenken & Schor, 2017). According to Hamann, Luiz, Ramaboa, Khan and Dhlamini (2020), the significant criticisms of institutional theory have been its assumptions of organisational passivity, failure to address strategic behaviour and the exercise of influence in its conceptions

of institutionalisation. Given resource dependence theory's focus on the methods and benefits of noncompliance in response to external demands, this theory provides a particularly appropriate basis of comparison for revealing institutional theory's delimiting assumptions, identifying the entire repertoire of alternative strategies available to organisations that confront institutional demands and expectations and determining the factors that predict when organisations will resist or conform to institutional pressures.

According to Frenken *et al.* (2018), “the first wave of digital platforms deals with the sharing of digital content such as music and movies and the second wave is concerned with the selling of second-hand goods, for example, eBay and the third, which has populated the global village, is the social media like the Facebook”. The institution's role is to understand the emergence, functioning and institutional change entailed by dealing with particular social stakeholders' ability to provide arrangements that serve their interests. While institutional theory-led entrepreneurship research has grown over the past few years, most of this research focuses on entrepreneurship in developed countries (Su *et al.*, 2017).

Nevertheless, recent studies have investigated institutional influences in developing countries. De Soto (2000) argues “that entrepreneurs can only be allowed to formally register and start businesses if forced to comply with fewer rules and procedural requirements”. Furthermore, they must report to various institutions and spend substantial time and money fulfilling documentation requirements. According to Khan and Naguib (2019), “the theoretical perspectives and approaches are illustrated above to explain the institutional theory, its issues and the concerns the researchers and authors raised while analysing it. From the researcher" perspective, more direct measures should be developed”.

Further factors that we expect to impact institutionalisation include the scope or range of organisations. Some structures are considered relevant in the broader perspective of organisations, making it more challenging to present proof of the structure's effectiveness. Furthermore, Kourula, Moon, Salles-Djelic and Wickert (2019) suggested that “identifying determinants of changes in institutional structures represents an important area for theoretical/empirical work. Extant studies have already suggested potential determinants of how specific structures are taken for

granted and how strong incentives for maintaining the system increase it instead of decreasing it". No significant actors attempt to compel organisations to adopt a given approach through law or withhold critical resources. Hamann, Luiz, Ramaboa, Khan, and Dhlamini (2020) argue that addressing the general issue of applicability requires consideration of how and when choices of action become socially defined, who acts to cause change and how to diffuse that change to other organisations.

The expected benefits the researchers often look for must be considered. Khan and Naguib (2019) feel that changes that take place in organisations are outcomes of subsequent developments. So, inertia within organisations prevents internal change or makes it extremely difficult. Following up on these themes and issues in researcher'' agendas would improve and develop organisational theories. They will significantly contribute to the literature and our understanding of institutional/organisational development. Moreover, the dominance of bureaucracy as an institution in societies characterised by rational-legal authority reflects its substantial advantages over alternative organisational forms.

This has also delayed the growth of marginalised organisations, impacting their performance and competitiveness. Lawrence and Shadnam (2008) outline the general issue applicability, which requires consideration of how and when choices of action become socially defined, who acts to cause change and how to diffuse that change to other organisations. Khan and Naguib (2019) argue "that institutionalisation allows us to specify the impact of more social aspects of decision-making, such as the effects of social position on choices made". A specific choice is possible only if the social aspects are direct parts of the analysis. Addressing this general issue of conditions of applicability requires solving some problems such as:

- 1) how and when choices or alternative lines of action become socially defined?
- 2) who acts to cause change and to diffuse that change to multiple organisations?
and
- 3) why/what are the potential benefits of creating similar structures or converging towards similar structures leading to organisational isomorphism?

To make institutional theory grow as a coherent paradigm and make lasting contributions to organisational analyses, such questions about institutionalisation

processes require conceptual/empirical answers. In this analysis, we have outlined some initial solutions to the above-mentioned problems, answers whose extension and modification must be awaited until finding more theoretical/solutions (Tolbert & Zocker, 1996). This theory underwent significant advancements and gained popularity; however, several important theoretical/methodological issues must be revised for its applicability and effectiveness. The most critical problems include static institutional explanations and difficulty calculating some institutional variables. In this study, we have addressed a significant issue with this theory: its static nature, the “institutionalisation” concept, explaining institutional structures and developing better institutional explanations.

3.5 Resource-Based View Theory

Barney (1986); Hamel and Prahalad (1996) outlined that the “Resource-Based View (RBV) analysis and interprets resources of the organisations to understand how organisations achieve sustainable competitive advantage”. Furthermore, the theory “focuses on the concept of difficult-to-imitate attributes of the firm as sources of superior performance and competitive advantage”. According to Porter (2020):

“Resources that can be easily moved or purchased require an all-encompassing expectation to absorb information or a significant change in the organisation climate. Furthermore, the culture is more likely to be unique to the organisation and, therefore, more difficult for competitors to imitate. Performance variance between firms depends on its possession of individual inputs and capabilities”.

Boso (2010) outlines that the "early proponents of the Resource-Based View (Penrose 1959; Barney 1991) asserted that firms can attain competitive advantage through the acquisition and utilisation of valuable internal resources that are rare, inimitable and non-substitutable". In addition, the resource-based view theory, as described by Boso (2010), aims to explicate the "internal sources of a firm's sustained competitive advantage" while Jang (2013) argues “that organisations must possess robust capabilities and dynamic capacities to surpass their competitors”. Moreover, he delineates distinctive capabilities as "those attributes that necessitate an organisation to enact pre-emptive strategies more effectively than its competitors". Various

scholars, Ali and Habib (2012), lauds the "significance of dynamic capabilities. Furthermore, they propose that a firm must possess dynamic capabilities that foster future value for the organisation. According to Jang (2013), "firms can attain competitive advantage based on the relative superiority of their resources" and emphasises not only the importance of superior resources for enhanced competitive performance but also the firm's ability to outpace competitors in the accumulation of said resources.

Furthermore, Barney, Ketchen and Wright (2011) argue that it is crucial to consider the concept of healthy competition to safeguard one's valuable resources from competitors. This can be achieved by ensuring that competitors compete by employing competent personnel. Jang (2013) emphasises that it is achievable through enacting regulations that restrain the transfer of a company human resources as these resources are recognised as a company's most valuable internal assets. Foss (2011) also argues that effective human resource management within organisations enhances overall performance. Furthermore, Jang (2013) outlines that a competitive advantage can be attained by strategically focusing on resource micro-foundations, including human resources, HR systems, people management, human capital and organisational learning. Lengler, Sousa, Perin, Sampaio and Martínez-López (2016) contend that customer satisfaction, being market-driven, should be regarded as an asset for a firm, as it can be leveraged to convert information into actions, thereby serving as a powerful incentive for clients.

Moreover, Lee, Olson and Trimi (2010) emphasise the significance of resources within an organisation as they serve as a critical attribute for developing innovative products, industry architectures, social capital, buyer-seller relations and creative breakthroughs. According to Jang (2013), innovations are considered valuable resources for a firm only if they can diminish the value of a competitor's resources. Furthermore, it is recognised that firms possessing rare resources relative to their rivals can enjoy a comparative advantage by offering market offerings that are perceived to deliver superior value at a lower cost (Boso, 2011). Additionally, resources may be rare, influential and yet not a source of sustained competitive advantage if they can be easily imitated and replicated by rival firms. If competitors can duplicate valuable and rare resources, in that case, a firm's ability to gain a competitive advantage from those resources is compromised as expounded by Boso

(2011). It is understood that organisational resources extend beyond tangible assets and encompass anything available to a company with an enabling capacity.

Table 3.3: Summary of intangible assets resources

Assets	Description
Financial	Cash in the bank and access to credit in the financial market.
Legal	Trademarks, licenses, copyrights and patents.
Human	Skills, experiences and knowledge of individual employees and managers.
Organisational	Competencies, controls, routines, cultures and behaviours.
Relational	Relationships with customers, suppliers, competitors, distributors and regulators.
Informational	Intelligence about customers.

Source: Boso (2011)

Lengler *et al.* (2016) contend that “managerial experience needs to be taken into account as a significant intangible resource that impacts firm” export operations since export market knowledge acquired through experience constitutes a valuable resource that is hard to replicate”. According to Barney, Ketchen and Wright (2011), “a Resource-Based View of the firm reveals the need to have a better appreciation of how organisations orchestrate their profound resources and capabilities”. According to Sirmon, Hitt, Ireland and Gilbert (2011), “possessing assets alone doesn’t ensure the improvement of competitiveness; rather, assets must be accumulated, packaged, and utilized. Therefore, implying that the full value of assets for making upper hands is acknowledged when assets are managed successfully”. Furthermore, the above researchers outline the strain on resource management, highlighting that resource management is a “comprehensive process of structuring, bundling, and leveraging the firm’s resources to create value for customers and competitive advantages for the firm”. Furthermore, Sirmon, Hitt, Ireland and Gilbert (2011) describes the process of “structuring that involves acquiring, accumulating and divesting resources to form the firm’s resource portfolio”. The researchers mentioned above, outline that the two comprehensive processes have three sub-processes; namely:

- *Bundling*, which refers to integrating resources to form capabilities, has three sub-processes; namely, *stabilizing* or minor incremental improvements to existing capabilities; (2) *enriching*, which extends current abilities; and (3) *pioneering*, which creates new capabilities.
- *Leveraging* involves a sequence of processes to exploit the firm's capabilities and take advantage of specific market opportunities; it includes *mobilising*, which provides a plan or vision for capabilities needed to form requisite capability configurations; *coordinating*, which involves integrating capability configurations.

Moreover, as previously stated, the academicians have described the resource management procedure as the aptitudes of managers, "over the course of time, managers must cultivate novel competencies, necessitating the amalgamation of resources, to maintain a competitive edge or establish a fresh one". The Resource-Based View theory (RBV) is grounded on the concept that a firm can accomplish a competitive advantage based on ownership and control of resources. According to Chen, Sousa and He (2016), it has been observed that SMEs lack enough resources. This implies that utilising the Resource-Based View (RBV) only partially describes the motivation for their exporting activities and the mechanism of their internationalisation.

Furthermore, Wright and Stigliani (2012) suggests that entrepreneurial firms, which face constraints in resources in certain areas can gain a competitive advantage by developing complementary resources in other areas. Additionally, this highlights the importance of considering resources as bundles. Different combinations of these bundles may result in a competitive advantage, which in turn necessitates the need for growth. Furthermore, they emphasise that apart from the different configurations of resource bundles, entrepreneurial firms with limited resources may also need to adopt various modes and patterns of growth to achieve a competitive advantage.

The Resource-Based View theory analyses and translates the internal resources of firms. Furthermore, it emphasises resources and capabilities in formulating a strategy to achieve sustainable competitive advantages. Madhani (2010) states, "resources may be considered inputs that enable firms to carry out their activities". Moreover, "internal resources and capabilities determine strategic choices firms make while

competing in their external business environment”. The theory offers a firm abilities to add value in the customer value chain, develop new products and expand in the modern marketplace. Madhani (2010) argues that the theory draws upon the organisation’s resources and capabilities to create sustainable competitive advantages. Furthermore, not all of the firm’s resources will be strategic and produce a dependable competitive advantage hence “competitive advantage occurs only when there is a situation of resource heterogeneity and resource immobility” (Madhani, 2010).

3.5.1 Components of RBV Theory

Barney (1991); Amit and Shoemaker (1993) highlight valuable organisational resources as a physical, human and administrative resource collection. Furthermore, these “resources of organisations that are helpful, rare, imperfectly imitable and substitutable are the main source of sustainable competitive advantage for sustained superior performance (Barney, 1991). For a resource to provide a substantial competitive advantage and sustainable performance, a ‘VRIN’ model must be satisfied. A ‘VRIN’ model comprises four criteria; valuable (V), Rare), Imperfect Imitability (I), and Non-Substitutability (N), as explained below:

Table 3.4: Summary of “VRIN” model principles of a resource

Criteria	Explanation
Valuable (V)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources are essential when they provide an incentive to the firm. • Resources provide value if they help firms exploit market opportunities or help reduce market threats. • There is no advantage of possessing a resource if it does not add or enhance the value of the firm.
RI (R)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources must be challenging to find among the existing and potential competitors of the firm. • Resources must be rare or unique to offer competitive advantages. • Resources that several firms possess in the marketplace cannot provide a competitive advantage as they cannot design and execute a unique business strategy compared with other competitors.
Imperfect Imitability (I):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imperfect imitability means making a copy or imitating the resources will not be feasible. • Resources can be the basis of sustained competitive advantage only if firms that do not hold these resources cannot acquire them.
Non-Substitutability (N):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources imply that another alternative resource cannot substitute them. • Competitors cannot achieve the same performance by replacing resources with alternative resources.

Source: Madhani (2010)

According to Barney (1986), a valuable resource ‘must enable a firm to do things and behave in ways that lead to high sales, low costs, high margins or add financial value to the firm’. Furthermore, it emphasised that ‘resources are valuable when they enable a firm to conceive or implement strategies that improve its efficiency and effectiveness’. Madhani (2010) argues that the RBV helps “managers of firms to understand why competencies, most essential assets, and appreciates how those assets can be used to improve business performance”. Furthermore, Campbell and

Luchs (1997); and Hamel and Prahalad (1996) reaffirm that firms can accept attributes related to past experiences, organisational culture and competencies that are critical for the firm's success". Daft (1983) and Barney (1991) describe resources that can be comprehensively characterised to incorporate assets, organisational processes, firm attributes, information or knowledge controlled by the firm, which can be developed to consider and implement their techniques.

Table 3.5: Summary of the examples of resources

Scholars	Type of resources
Wernerfelt (1984); Olavarrieta and Ellinger (1997) Spanos and Lioukas (2001)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources classified as brand names, technological abilities and efficient procedures.
Itami and Roehl (1987) Hall (1992) Hall (1993)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources classified as tangible and intangible.
Hitt and Ireland (1985) Grant (1991) Amit and Schoemaker (1993) Black and Boal (1994) Bogaert, Maertens and Van Cauwenbergh (1994) Wade and Hulland(2004).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources that may be crucial to enable firms to conceive and implement value-creating business strategies.
Barney (1991)	<p>Resources are classified into three:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical capital resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Physical, technological, plant and equipment.</i> • Human capital resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Training, experience and insights.</i> • Organisational capital resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Formal structure.</i>
Brumagim (1994)	<p>Corporate resources are classified into four different levels:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Production/maintenance resources <i>It is considered the most basic or lowest level.</i>

	<p>2. Administrative resources</p> <p>3. Organisational learning resources</p> <p>4. Strategic vision resources</p> <p><i>It is regarded as the most advanced or the highest level.</i></p>
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Source: Various scholars

According to Barney (1991) and Hall (1992), resources are classified into two categories: tangible and intangible. Furthermore, all firms possess a broad spectrum of resources and capabilities. Table 3.4 summarises the type of resources and capabilities.

Table 3.6: Summary of types of Resources and Capabilities

Tangible Resources and Capabilities	Examples
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capability to generate internal funds. • Capacity to raise external capital.
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of plants, machines, offices and their geographic locations. • Access to raw materials and distribution channels.
Technological	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possession of patents, trademarks, copyrights and trade secrets.
Organisational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal planning, command and control systems. • Integrated management information systems.

Intangible resources and capabilities	Examples
Human	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative ability. • Organisational culture.
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and development (R&D). • Ability to innovate new products, processes and services. • Capacities for organisational innovation and change.
Reputational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceptions of product quality, strength and dependability among customers. • Successful product branding and positioning with a contented and trustworthy customer base. • Reputation as a good employer. • Reputation as a socially capable corporate citizen.

Source: Barney (1991) and Hall (1992)

3.5.2 The role of RBV Theory in addressing the societal gap in entrepreneurship

Alvarez and Busenitz (2001) state that “the Resource-based theory of entrepreneurship argues that access to resources by founders is an essential predictor of opportunity-based entrepreneurship and new venture growth”. Furthermore, Aldrich (1999) stresses the importance of financial, social and human resources. Davidson and Honing (2003) contends the significance of admittance to resources enhances the individual’s capacity to recognise and act upon discovered opportunities. Furthermore, financial, social and human capital represents three resource-based entrepreneurship theories.

The intellectual origins of the resource-based view (RBV) can be traced back to the scholarly works of Penrose (1959), who underscored the importance of resources in either facilitating or impeding the progress of organisations. Over more than five decades, scholars have expanded upon Penrose's insights and as the RBV has evolved, researchers have increasingly directed their attention towards "strategic resources" (Amit & Schoemaker, 1993). According to Barney, Wright and Ketchen (2001), RBV has emerged as one of the most influential theoretical perspectives in the field of organisational sciences.

The underlying principle of the resource-based view posits that firms compete based on their resources and capabilities (Peteraf & Bergen, 2003). Rantakari (2010) characterises "the resource-based view theory as one where the decision to outsource depends on the client company's capacity to invest in internal capabilities, thereby fostering sustainable competitive advantage". Lacity and Will (2008) reflect upon the resources possessed by a firm, which serve as the "primary determinants of its performance and can contribute to the establishment of sustainable competitive advantage". The core proposition of this theory assumes that a firm's competitive advantage is rooted in its ability to employ its internal resources efficiently.

According to Penrose (1959), a significant relationship exists between the various resources a firm operates and the development of skills, experience and technical knowledge among its management and entrepreneurs. The resource-based perspective argues that firms possess resources critical in achieving a competitive advantage and a specific group of resources that result in superior long-term performance (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1991; Penrose, 1959; Wernerfelt, 1984). Barney (1991) defines resources as:

"all assets, capabilities, organisational processes, firm dimensions, information, knowledge, etc., controlled by a firm that empower it to conceive and implement strategies aimed at enhancing its efficiency and effectiveness".

Demoah (2011) argues that more internal capacity is needed, particularly when considering a firm in a developing African country. The accumulation of resources within a firm's network relations allows it to attain success in exporting. However,

Wright and Stigliani (2011) have emphasised the appropriateness of resources in enhancing the performance of an organisation. They argue that the environment may be dynamic, negatively impacting a firm's performance. Additionally, Boso (2010) posits that the outcome of the performance of these resources is contingent upon the degree to which they are employed.

Moreover, according to Kraaijenbrink, Spender and Groen (2010), the resource-based theory clarifies the difference in the export performance of entities with similar resource endowments. Moreover, Villar, Alegre and Pla-Barber (2014), the theory is “static and comprehensibly explains how and why some businesses have gained a competitive advantage in turbulent markets or why other firms fail even when they have adequate resources.” Given the limitations, Chen, Sousa and He (2016) recommend that “new theories should be deliberated to progress in this current theoretical discourse.” Chen *et al.* (2016) suggests that “future research-based views may better understand performance in an unpredictable environment”. Eisenmann (2013), however, opines that the definition of entrepreneurship is still developing.

Additionally, other scholars have identified entrepreneurship in various categories throughout its history. More recent history has specifically defined entrepreneurship as venture capital-backed start-ups, corporate entrepreneurship or small business development. Eisenmann (2013) defines entrepreneurship as pursuing opportunities beyond currently controlled resources. The resource-based theory emphasises the significance of resources, although Villar *et al.* (2014) argue that this approach is considered static. Therefore, they propose the adoption of the Dynamic Capability Theory (DCT) to further enhance the understanding of the Resource-Based View (RBV) by capitalising on its weaknesses. Moreover, the DCT asserts that sustainable competitive advantage is achieved by promptly, accurately and appropriately responding to market conditions compared to competitors.

Teece (2014) asserts “that dynamic capability refers to the routines within a firm's managerial and operational processes that can be designed to acquire, release, integrate and reconfigure resources”. Despite the positive impact of the Dynamic Capability Theory, fellow scholars Chen, Sousa and He (2016) argue that RBV alone may not sufficiently explain the mechanisms of internationalisation for SMEs in emerging economies. Furthermore, Yi, Wang and Kafouros (2012) emphasise the

importance of resources in addressing the social inequality that arises during economic advancement as well as the role of SMEs in such economies. Whilst entrepreneurs do play a crucial role in economic development, the need for access to resources exacerbate the societal gap within the realm of entrepreneurship.

Barney (1986) asserts that a firm's internal activities about culture and social processes serve as unique organisational resources that can enhance a firm's performance. Furthermore, if a company takes on a plan to fulfil the requirements of its clients, it transforms into a crucial internal organisational resource. Boso (2010) "observes a growing trend among entrepreneurship researchers to utilise the RBV theory to model the impact of organisational attributes on performance". Furthermore, Kim and Hemmert (2015) use the resource-based theory to model the relationship between international business competence and international performance. The foundation for bridging the social gap lies in the availability of resources, which enables a firm to implement strategies to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Furthermore, Demoah (2011) argues that the resource-based view theory applies to the incidence of worldwide SMEs. This theory is incorporated into the present study, which discusses the significance of organisational resources in influencing performance. In addressing the societal gap within entrepreneurship, resources play a significant role in an organisation's development. Additionally, Aldrich (1999) emphasises the importance of financial, social and human resources. The societal gap within entrepreneurship is predicated on the availability of resources.

Furthermore, given the significance of resources, the question remains: does the RBV theory offer satisfactory justification for the performance of SMEs? Hence, this study is grounded on the importance of the resource-based view theory in the existing literature to tackle this inquiry. The study aims to determine the role of ICT's in enhancing SMEs' development by utilising indigenous languages. Resources are crucial in developing organisations as Barney (1991) and Hall (1992) contend. Resources can be classified into two categories: tangible and intangible. The scarcity of resources is a fundamental aspect of addressing the societal gap within entrepreneurship.

Moreover, various scholars, including Daft (1983) and Barney (1991), describe resources that can be comprehensively characterised to encompass assets, organisational processes, firm attributes, information or knowledge controlled by the firm, which can be developed and employed to formulate and implement strategies.

3.5.3 Contributions of the RBV in the Inquiry

According to Hooley, Broderick and Möller (2006), the original “formulators of the RBV play down the importance of external activity within the market”. They have suggested that the marketing paradigm and the RBV are not unreconcilable and that external strategic planning is still crucial for success. Moreover, leaders should select strategies that best exploit internal resources relative to external opportunities and competition. This can involve many strategic positions due to resources' various forms. Moreover, Boso (2010) argues that the application of these resources significantly influences the performance outcomes they applied. Solli-Sæther (2006) argues that three crucial factors determine the capacity to create value in an outsourcing relationship:

- A critical aspect of the vendor-client relationship is the formal (contractual) dimension.
- The vendor's capabilities represent the third factor that moulds the value proposition of outsourcing.
- Client attributes, the relationship between the vendor and the client and vendor attributes. An essential client attribute involves the adept handling of resources not owned by the firm.

Kumar and Kumar (2017) argue that clients are presented with numerous potential opportunities and benefits through the lens of outsourcing vendors. Furthermore, the resource must be scarce among the firm's current and prospective competitors. If the total of firms possessing this resource is smaller than the total required to establish perfect competition, the firm will have a competitive advantage. Barney's research reveals that resources must be scarce to foster a potential competitive advantage. Resources that lack scarcity cannot serve as sources of competitive advantage; hence resources must possess both value and scarcity to attain a competitive edge. The

theory outlines the role of competitive positions when utilising a resource-based view of the organisation.

The study also identifies the organisation's opportunities to enable competitiveness and growth. Various strategies are posited as significantly less rigid than Porter's well-known competitive system and depend entirely upon the firm's resources. Entrepreneurial teams are critical in making investment decisions, determining growth trajectories and achieving venture success (Agarwal, Campbell, Franco & Ganco, 2016). Mol, Khapova, and Elfring (2015) have conducted extensive research to investigate the connections between the characteristics of entrepreneurial teams and the outcomes that influence entrepreneurial performance. A firm's capability refers to the ability of a group of human resources to carry out a specific task or activity (Mweru & Muya, 2016). The successful execution of such activities requires the cooperation and coordination of various groups of resources. According to Grant (1991), a firm's capability lies in its capacity for a pair of human resources to perform a task or activity derived from societal resources. A firm's capability is determined by the ability and capacity of a group of human resources to undertake a specific task or activity (Mweru & Muya, 2016).

3.5.4 Critical analysis of the RBV in the inquiry

According to Birger, Wernerfelt, Prahalad, Hamel, Spender and Grant, the organisation's resource-based view (RBV) is a strategy for achieving competitive advantage that emerged during the 1980s and 1990s. The theory's core idea is that instead of examining the competitive business environment to get a niche market or an edge over competition and threats, the organisation should look within the resources and potential it already has available. Resources are fundamental in guaranteeing the organisation's sustainability and the study focused on ICT as a resource available within the organisation. However, RBV suggests that competitive advantage is best achieved by utilising present internal resources. However, this has drawn many critics within leadership and management. Other theories and frameworks, such as the industrial organisation view (I/O), emphasise strategic planning, regulatory policy and market competition. Barney, Ketchen and Wright (2011) argue that both factors can significantly explain an organisation's performance. However, internal resources are more critical concerning overall competitive advantage and performance. The study explores an organisation's managers/owners

to find and develop high-potential resources using the VRIO framework. However, the theory does not suggest how this should be done and managers can often do nothing to improve the available resources.

Furthermore, owners and managers must improve the processes and systems that create higher-value resources, significantly impacting the organisation's performance over the longer term. The study also seeks to develop a competitive advantage remarkably quickly. Still, it should be considered in partnership with other frameworks and theories when performing long-term strategic planning. According to scholars Agarwal, M., Agarwal, A., Agarwal, Y., and Agarwal, S. (2018), "social capital is an intangible resource which describes relational resources, occurring in cross-cutting personal ties". Furthermore, social capital can be defined as the network resources, quantified in terms of the number of individuals who own ownership of the respondents' businesses (Agarwal, Campbell, Franco & Ganco, 2016). Thornton (2020) is of the view that "with more social capital, entrepreneurs can overcome resource constraints, improve efficiency, and develop new strategies, competencies, or growth".

Social capital also generates trust and reciprocity among the members of a firm, thereby enabling entrepreneurs to derive benefits from acquiring essential information and knowledge. Furthermore, Burt (1992) and Coleman (1990) state that social capital is a productive business asset. The value of social capital is derived from its emphasis on the positive outcomes of sociability (Portes, 1998). The theory of social capital functions as a tool for elucidating the interaction between local consumers and small business owners. Putnam (1993) reveals a negative correlation between the absence of social capital in a specific setting and the economic poverty of the area. It has been established that social capital positively impacts the attachment of local consumers to a community (Miller & Kim, 1999).

According Gibbs, Singh, Butler and Scott (2018), networks play a crucial role in entrepreneurship by offering emotional support, acquiring start-up skills and exposure to entrepreneurial experiences. A well-established and interconnected network is indispensable for all entrepreneurs, especially those with social orientation, owing to their constrained access to legal resources or structured forms of assistance. As Montgomery *et al.* (2012) observe, "a substantial portion of social entrepreneurship relies on collaboration and collective effort, drawing upon a wide array of support

systems, cooperation and alliances to raise awareness, acquire resources and ultimately effect change". With a robust network and a strong reputation, entrepreneurs can mobilise resources to pursue social value-creation objectives (Mair & Noboa, 2006).

The extent to which an entrepreneur values social plans for the business is positively influenced by the availability of social capital. Social poverty and business inabilities are setbacks holding SMEs back and stifling their performance. According to Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993), social capital "refers to the anticipated actions within a group or organisation that impact the economic objectives of its members. Social capital is an intangible resource used initially to describe the relational resources in diverse personal connections". Runyan (2016) further proposed that social capital is present in firms and communities for specific purposes. In small business owners, social capital might be a valuable resource as it helps expand the customer base within the local community (Runyan, 2016). Social capital is manifested through social structures consisting of relationships.

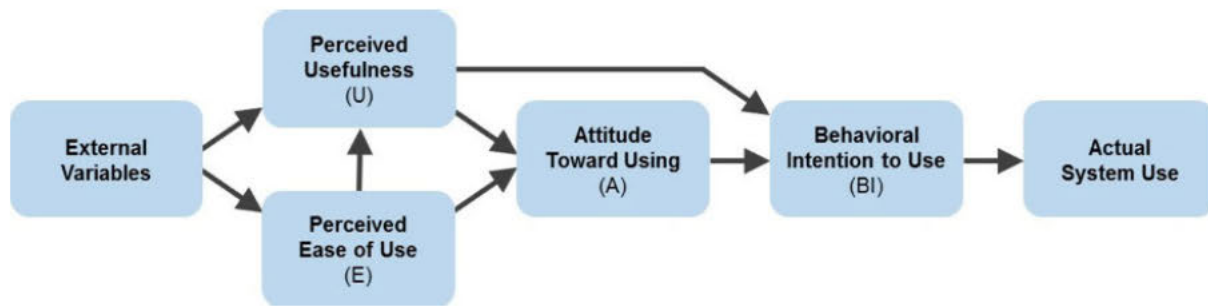
3.6 Technological Acceptance Model (TAM) Theory

The theory was first introduced by Davis (1989), highlighting the importance of a technological acceptance model focusing on perceived usefulness and ease of use. Thus, this could "limit the freedom to act" if not considered. It is proposed that "the Technology Acceptance Model will remain the focal point of research as new technologies advance" (Horton, Buck, Waterson, and Clegg, 2001; Venkatesh, Davis, and Morris, 2007). According to Panicker (2020), "the technology acceptance model is scarcely explored in Information Systems (IS) and is used to evaluate user acceptance of technology systems". According to Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw (1989), "TAM specifically elucidated the factors influencing computer acceptance that possess generalizability and explanatory power regarding user behaviour across various end-user computing technologies and the user population". The TAM was initially introduced by Davis in 1986 and subsequently developed by Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw in 1989 (Mai, Yoshi & Tuan, 2013). TAM was intentionally designed for the adoption of novel technologies, providing insights into how users embrace and utilise these advancements (Lai, 2017).

TAM seeks “to explain the determinants of computer acceptance that is general, capable of explaining user behaviour across a broad range of end-user computing technologies and user populations while simultaneously being both parsimonious and theoretically justified” (Davies *et al.*, 1985). Although TAM was established as a practical, theoretical framework for studying ICT appropriation and use, several limitations have been highlighted, including the original models’ intended generality and not considering a non-organisational setting (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). Resources are essential to SMEs’ advancement; and the study will explore the TAM theory, arguing that SMEs rely upon other institutional conditions to empower them to be aggressive and develop the market. The researcher used the model to assess and determine if there was a means by which an end user could measure the perception of technology acceptance. It is further outlined by Riemenschneider, Harrison and Mykytyn (2003) that TAM is the model used for the adoption of IT in small enterprises due to the social approval of this model. Bagozzi (2007) outlines that TAM has been the principal model for accepting technology for over 20 years.

The variables’ perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) are deemed fundamental factors that directly or indirectly affect the outcomes (Marangunić & Granić, 2015). The common usage of TAM has evolved to become the determinant of the relationship between PU, PEOU and the projected future utilisation of various emerging technologies (Venkatesh, Davis and Morris, 2007). TAM, the primary constructs encompass Perceived Usefulness (PU), Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU), Behavioural Intention (BI) and Actual Usage (AU). PU is defined as the subjective probability of users that employing the computer system will prove advantageous for personal advancement or career progression within the organisation. Conversely, PEOU represents the prospective user’s anticipation that the system is comparatively user-friendly. Behavioural Intention (BI) is considered the immediate antecedent to the actual usage of the system (AU). Moreover, according to Sun and Zhang (2006), TAM overlooks the moderating effects of ICT adoption in various contexts. According to Lai (2017), TAM’s characteristics are the usage of information organisations at work; the theory examines the dispersal of new technologies in social or institutional contexts to the TAM, PU, PEOU, and institutional and organisational norms.

Figure 3.1: The Original Technology Acceptance Model



Source: Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1989)

Table 3.7: Summary of elements: TAM

Model	Characteristics
External variables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External factors usually manifest as social factors, cultural factors and political factors. Social factors include language, skills and facilitating conditions. Political factors mainly impact using technology in politics and political crises.
Perceived Usefulness (PU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Davis defines perceived usefulness as the prospective user's subjective probability of using a specific application system to enhance their job or live performance. One of the most critical determinants of the TAM.
Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceive ease of use (PEOU) can be defined as the degree to which the prospective user expects the target system to be free of effort. One of the essential determinants of the TAM.
Attitude Towards Using (AU)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The user's attitude to using concerns the evaluation of employing a particular information system application.
Behavioural intention to use (BI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behavioural intention is the measure of the likelihood of a person employing the application.

Source: Lai (2017)

The TAM is a resilient and test-researched framework utilised for acceptance of the initial reception by users. The original scale of TAM gauges the constructs of TAM within various technological contexts and across diverse populations. The validity of this framework has been suitably confirmed (Davis & Venkatesh, 1996). TAM has found its application in various settings, including online learning, social networking media, intranet and smartphones. For example, a study of factors influencing attitudes towards the adoption of mobile commerce provided empirical evidence that the TAM model can be applied to mobile businesses and provided a sufficient explanation of consumer adoption intentions (Yang, 2005). The TAM was devised to confirm users' behaviours as they adopt new technology. Subsequently, Venkatesh and Davis (2000) further developed the TAM model by incorporating subjective norms to evaluate how these norms impact the changes in user experience over time concerning the target system. The TAM model identifies two key factors: the perceived usefulness and the perceived ease of use, particularly relevant in computer usage behaviours.

3.7 Extended Technology Acceptance Model (TAM2)

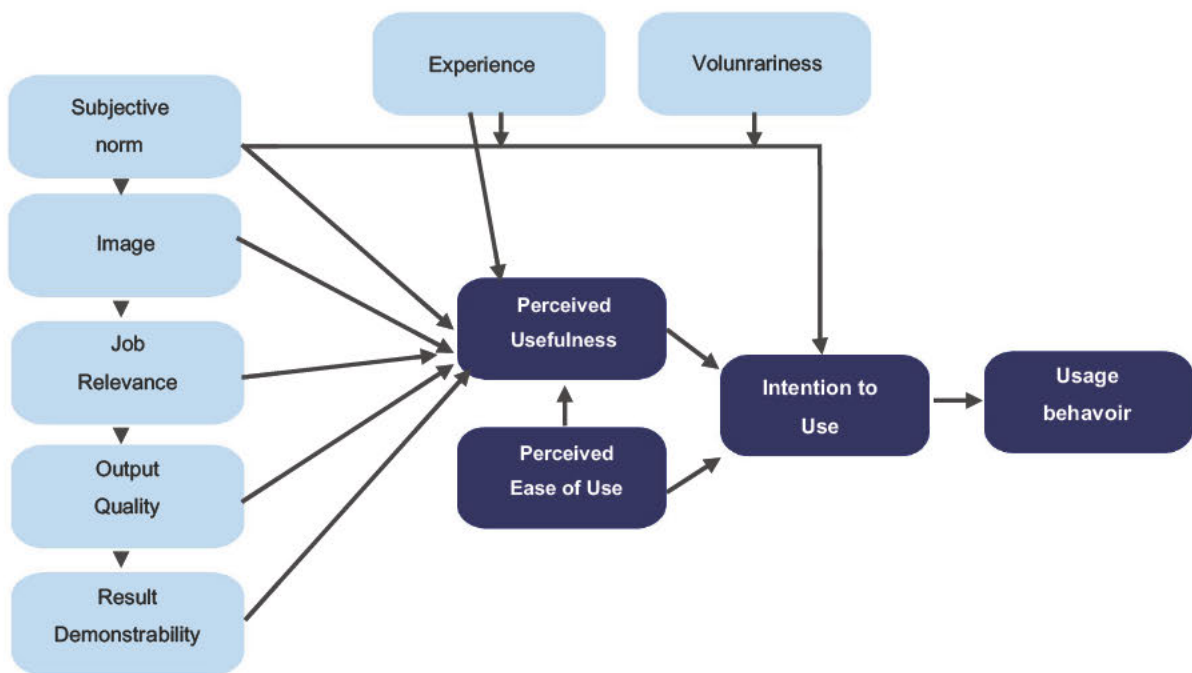
The Technology Acceptance Model is one of the most popular theories used widely to explain Information System usage. The technology acceptance model (TAM2), an extension developed by Venkatesh and Davis (2000), delineated the relationship between perceived usefulness and usage intentions to social influence and cognitive instrumental processes. Numerous empirical TAMs have established that perceived effectiveness is contingent upon usage intentions. Comprehending the factors that shape the construct of PU is of utmost importance, as it is the driving force behind usage intentions and how these factors bring about changes over time as system usage increases. While the original TAM was primarily centred around PEOU, the inclusion of PU has allowed organisations to devise interventions to augment user acceptance and utilisation of novel systems. In 2000, Venkatesh and Davis conducted a study to expand the TAM, examining the dynamics of PU and usage intention constructs in the context of continued information system (IS) usage.

Venkatesh and Davis (2000) reported that the perception of usefulness is based on the intentions to use as demonstrated in many empirical models of Technology Acceptance. It is essential to understand the determinants of perceived usefulness as they influence intentions to use and how these determinants manifest changes over

time due to escalating system usage. Although the original TAM was founded upon PEOU, the determinants of PU have empowered organisations to devise interventions that would bolster user acceptance and utilisation of novel systems. Therefore, to further augment the TAM, Venkatesh and Davis undertook a study in 2000 that scrutinised the dynamics of the constructs of PU and usage intentions concerning sustained information system (IS) usage.

Figure 3.2 graphic shows Venkatesh and Davis's TAM2. The TAM2 model incorporates theoretical concepts related to social influence processes, such as subjective norms, voluntariness and image as well as cognitive instrumental processes, including job relevance, output quality, result demonstrability and PEOU.

Figure 3.2: Extended Technology Acceptance Model



Source: Venkatesh and Davis's (2000)

TAM2 incorporates the subjective norms, voluntariness and image, meaning three interconnected social constructs. These forms are critical in determining an individual's inclination towards embracing or rejecting a new system.

In conjunction with these three constructs, Venkatesh and Davis pointed out that the cognitive factors influencing the PU of TAM2 may comprise PEOU, output, output quality and job relevance. These instrumental factors are explicitly defined in Table 3.10, provided below.

Table 3.8: Extended Technology Acceptance Model instrumental determinants

Process	Variable	Source	Definition of Variable
Social influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjective norm 	Fishbein and Ajez (1975)	A person's perception that most people who are important to him/her think he/she should not perform the behaviour in question.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntariness 	Venkatesh and Davis's (2000)	Extent to which potential adopters perceive the adoption decision to be non-mandatory.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image 	Moore and Benbasat (1991)	The degree to which the use of an innovation is perceived to enhance one's status in one's social system.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience 	Venkatesh and Davis's (2000)	The influence of an individual's conviction on their intentions may diminish as they acquire more familiarity with the system over some time.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job relevance 	Venkatesh and Davis's (2000)	An individual's perception concerning the extent to which the target system applies to their job is called job relevance. The degree of job relevance is determined by the significance of one's job and the tasks the system can assist with.
	Output quality	Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw, (1992)	In the perception of output quality, users will take into consideration how well the system performs the tasks that match their job relevance.
	Result demonstrability	Moore and Benbasat (1991)	Tangibility of the innovation results will directly influence perceived usefulness.

Source: Various scholars

According to the theory of reasoned action (TRA), the objective norm pertains to the perceptions of other individuals vital to the subject's decision-making process regarding whether the subject should engage in a specific behaviour. In the context of computer usage, TAM2 suggests that the influence of subjective norms on intention is primarily driven by compliance and is more pronounced in mandatory system usage settings rather than voluntary ones (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000). Moreover, TAM2 also acknowledges the role of voluntariness as a moderating variable.

According to the TRA, the subjective norm positively impacts an individual's image within a work group by influencing the group's perception of the importance of performing a task, such as using a system. Furthermore, Venkatesh and Davis (2000) state that according to TAM2, the direct effect of subjective norm on intentions is initially strong in mandatory usage contexts but gradually weakens over time as users gain more direct experience with the system and develop intentions towards ongoing use. Additionally, job relevance, output quality, result demonstrability and PEOU are identified as determinants of PU in the TAM2 model (Venkatesh & Davis, 2000).

Job relevance is determined by the system's capacity to facilitate an individual's job function. According to Venkatesh and Davis (2000), output quality refers to an individual's subjective assessment of the system's performance in carrying out a specific task. The concept of result demonstrability suggests that if individuals can easily observe the disparities between system usage and positive outcomes, they will likely hold a more favourable attitude towards the system's utility. Furthermore, PEOU gauges the effortlessness associated with a system. Venkatesh and Davis (2000) argue that TAM2 posits that all cognitive instrumental processes positively impact PU and an individual's intention to use an information system.

Table 3.9.: Summary Technology Acceptance Model

Model	Authors	• Characteristics
Technology Acceptance Model	Davis (1989) Bagozzi, Davis and Warshaw (1992)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The theory that the principal determinants of the intention to use computer systems are perceived effectiveness and perceived ease of use. • Determinants of behavioural intention in accepting and using technology. • Model structures how users accept and use new types of technologies.
Extended Technology Acceptance Model (TAM2)	Venkatesh and Davis (2000) Reimenschneider, Harrison and Mykytyn (2003) Bagozzi (2007)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAM's extension required a detailed approach to the PU based on usage intentions in many empirical TAMs. • Due to this model's social approval, TAM will most likely be used for IT adoption in small businesses. • TAM has been the leader model of technology acceptance for more than two decades. • TAM2 has incorporated theoretical constructs involving social influence processes (subjective norm, voluntariness and image) and cognitive instrumental processes (job relevance, output quality, result demonstrability and PEOU).

Source: Reimenschneider, Harrison and Mykytyn (2003) Bagozzi (2007)

3.8 Contributions of the TAM and TAM2 in the inquiry

The researcher will employ the model to measure and determine whether it is possible to gauge an end user's perception regarding technology acceptance. Reimenschneider *et al.* (2003) further clarify that TAM is the model most inclined to be utilised for adopting IT in small enterprises owing to the societal endorsement bestowed upon this model. A few factors influence managers' acceptance and attitude towards using technology. The TAM is applied to the study by adding the following variables to PU and PEU, with TAM2 incorporating theoretical constructs involving social influence processes. As constituents of the inherited array of customs that guide user behaviour and decision-making, cultural patterns possess an inherent quality of preservation. Consequently, the team responsible for system implementation should duly recognise and leverage the value of these patterns (Abbasi *et al.*, 2016). A comprehensive comprehension of these cultural patterns can effectively facilitate the execution of information systems. The implementation team should acknowledge that accepting cultural aspects is of utmost importance in the quest for an exemplary information system implementation as Kashada *et al.* (2020) emphasised. The performance of information systems should be grounded in a fundamental understanding of the cultural values upheld by the user. As explained by Hofstede (2010), specific cultural dimensions demand attention, namely Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism/Collectivism and Masculine/Feminine. These dimensions have been found to exert significant influence on social Power Distance, which refers to inequality within a social environment, such as an institution or organisation, wherein power differentiation among individuals may be perceived as varying levels of potency.

On the other hand, uncertainty avoidance entails the aversion to ambiguity, prompting individuals to seek clarity and definiteness in relationships and events. Individualism pertains to societies characterised by loose interpersonal ties, while collectivism signifies institutions where individuals are integrated into cohesive in-groups from birth. A society is deemed Masculine (M) when distinct emotional gender roles are present. Educational technology entails the integration of technologies and media within instructional contexts and processes to augment the efficacy of teaching and learning. The ultimate effectiveness of educational technology is contingent upon the

development and implementation of culturally adaptable systems for its stakeholders (Panicker, 2020).

The assimilation of information system implementation into the cultural framework and values of the users is imperative as such comprehension of culture will yield favourable outcomes. Social structure encompasses the hierarchical ranking of employees within an organisation; notably, individuals with higher authority exhibit greater confidence in technology than those with lower authority (Panicker, 2020). Rauniar *et al.* (2014) posits that the psychological concept of social influence is established on the premise that the conduct and presence of others significantly impact an individual's behaviour. Most stakeholders operate within institutions where managerial support is critical in adapting to new technologies and organisational support is categorised as a social factor. Institutions that provide services to society assume that educational technology, as a field, possesses a social construct that does not inflict harm upon social systems or individuals (Panicker, 2020).

In this study, TAM uncovers that PU enhances a person's objective in mandatory and voluntary situations. Moreover, TAM2 reflects the impacts of three interrelated social forces impinging on an individual facing the opportunity to adopt or reject a new system: subjective norm, voluntariness and image. PU is "the extent to which a person believes that using a particular system will enhance his or her job performance" (Lai, 2017). Furthermore, PEOU is the extent to which a person believes using a particular system will be free of effort. The theories emphasised the importance of human behaviour in adopting and using technology. Crucial to the study is a person's usage behaviour of a new technology system which is vital. For this study, PU is connected to ICT. It represents how an individual uses ICT to meet users' goal of integrating it into the innovation process. The study acknowledges the importance of behaviour in ensuring the utilisation and adoption of new technologies incorporating indigenous languages. The theories are essential for demonstrating the value and significance of using ICT for SMEs in Limpopo using their indigenous languages for their development.

3.8.1 Critical analysis of the TAM and TAM 2 in the inquiry

According to Venkatesh and Davis (2000), the TAM suggests that when a new technology is presented to users, the users decide when and how to use the technology based on PU and PEOU. Moreover, the use or acceptance of the technology needs another element: information quality, top management support and computer self-efficacy. In this study, we explore the impact of all stakeholders in ensuring technology usage and adoption in promoting their businesses. Lim, Osman, Salahuddin, Romle and Abdullah (2016) maintained that to obtain a proper understanding of the factors which encourage the increased use of IT, it is necessary to have a comprehensive theoretical and practical knowledge of the frameworks and models utilising the use of IT which is being investigated. TAM concerns the variable that pertains to users' behaviour, which is inevitably evaluated through subjective means such as BI and interpersonal influence.

Political and economic factors profoundly impact the implementation of educational technology programs in any nation. The effect of government media on the adoption and performance of ICT is crucial and the correlation between different media and their endorsement by governments is exceedingly essential. This is because the level of technological and political freedom in receiving nations is determined by their increasing reliance on technology provided by developed countries (Panicker, 2020). The utilisation rate of learning technology is influenced by factors such as the urban population, age distribution, internet costs, ICT infrastructure and market type. These factors create an environment that fosters the growth and diffusion of technological implementation (Gunawardana, 2005). Government policies aimed at supporting economic development, such as providing subsidies and incentives for ICT and learning technologies in secondary education, as well as initiatives like ICT4D and ICT education for girls and the direct control of learning programs by the government may not necessarily lead to a significant increase in the number of students transitioning from secondary to tertiary education. This, in turn, enables them to acquire more extraordinary skills and adaptability in ICT-based learning (Panicker, 2020).

The economic development of a country heavily depends on producing a high-quality labour force by colleges and universities. In this context, high-tech fields of study serve as crucial indicators of the quality of the labour force and the effectiveness of

government programs offered by a specific country (Qureshi *et al.*, 2012). According to Panicker (2020), the influence of political and economic factors on technological programs includes government-media type, techno-political liberty, technology diffusion, tertiary education, governmental programmes, physical infrastructure and population distribution. The current research findings have indicated that the TAM constructs of PU and PEOU are significant factors for anticipating future usage of different technologies across various settings (Davis & Venkatesh, 1996). The TAM is a dependent variable rather than a determining behaviour factor. The study substantially impacts the model as it ensures the adoption of technology by users, aiming to support the sustainability of SMEs while incorporating indigenous languages into their business operations. The study explores the role of users in technology adoption and usage and the significance of this role is thoroughly examined in investigating the impact of indigenous languages.

3.9 Synthesis of the theories incorporated in the study

SMEs underutilise ICT resources adequately within their operations; accordingly, they do not develop and contribute to monetary advancement and poverty alleviation. The study aims to create an ICT model to enhance SME development using indigenous languages in Limpopo province, South Africa. Entrepreneurship is essential for starting any form of business. Spinelli (2016) defines “entrepreneurship as a way of thinking, reasoning, and acting that is opportunity obsessed, holistic in approach, and leadership balanced”. Moreover, in the study, entrepreneurship and effectuation theories highlight how entrepreneurs create new ventures. The process plays a vital role in the study, outlining how expert entrepreneurs think about and solve problems. However, for SMEs to be sustainable and grow, external factors influence them.

Di Domenico, Haugh and Tracey (2010) argue that the composition of innovation requires resources and entrepreneurs use various approaches to obtain the resources for their ventures. According to Rae (2007), the entrepreneurial learning model comprises three principal themes sub-divided into multiple sub-themes. The three primary themes expounded upon are personal and social emergence (the process of becoming an entrepreneur), contextual learning (how individuals employ their experiences to identify and pursue opportunities) and the negotiated enterprise (how entrepreneurs engage with others to establish ventures). This theoretical framework

allows investigating the construction of meanings as an integral component of an entrepreneur's overall life rather than solely about their business-related intentions (Hjorth *et al.*, 2008). Rae (2007) contends that social learning theory elucidates how entrepreneurs perceive themselves and how their perception is altered through social learning, thereby fostering the development of an entrepreneurial identity within their communities. Wenger (1998) accentuates that "learning as becoming" an identity can shape individuals' actions, their sense of self and their interpretation of their actions within their communities of practice.

Resources and opportunities are critical to SMEs' sustainability; however, Shane and Venkataraman (2000) argue that "research has focused on the discovery, exploitation, and consequences without much attention to the nature and sources of opportunity itself". While scholars Ács and Naudé (2013) believe that opportunities, irrespective of the nature of the chance, make it "impossible to separate it from the individual, others contend that option is an objective construct visible only to the knowledgeable and attuned individuals". SMEs need to source opportunities and discover, evaluate and exploit opportunities. The study explored the importance of institutions in developing SMEs within a society to ensure that they develop and grow within human interaction to manage opportunities and resources. Despite various institutions, SMEs need to understand the emergence, functioning and institutional changes entailed in dealing with particular social stakeholders' ability to provide that given arrangements that serve their interests. However, there is a research gap in the need for more research on SME development and sustainability in less developed countries. Researchers need to shift from doing more research studies on SMEs in the developed nations and focusing on the less developed nations that are lagging in SME performance research.

There is a need for more African languages within SMEs in South Africa; moreover, content in African languages on the internet opens up several opportunities. Although ICT is at the top of most developing countries for economic development and human development, a policy covering SMEs and entrepreneurship development appears to be avoided regarding women's entrepreneurship development. The government is integral to ensuring growth in rural communities and economic development. A conceptual framework was developed in response to the need for more research on the performance of SMEs. This framework aimed to analyse the obstacles encountered by SMEs by integrating the RBV theory, the entrepreneurship

development theory and the institutional theory. According to the RBV theory, it is easier to exploit new opportunities using resources and competencies that are already available rather than acquiring new skills, traits or functions for each different option. Moreover, RBV supporters are of the view that these should be prioritised within organisational strategy development. According to Reddy (2012), institutions are critical in developing entrepreneurial activity. Furthermore, the rules, regulations, property rights and enforcement contributes to the development. Researchers have extensively used the RBV theory to emphasise the intense nature of a firm's resources as the differentiating factor contributing to the organisation's performance. The RBV theory posits that establishments must establish and safeguard their resources as these serve as the bedrock of an organisation's competitive advantage (Crook, 2008). Moreover, the study suggests that SMEs in Limpopo province would benefit from the availability of resources, which are a crucial drivers for the success of SMEs.

The RBV framework provides the lens through which resources associated with firms will be comprehensively examined. Significant prospects exist in fostering the growth and operation of SMEs through government contributions; however, disparities persist within the industry. Ndebele (2014) advocates using technological tools to teach and learn African languages. Even though numerous researchers have adopted the RBV theory to explicate organisational performance, there remains a literature gap necessitating further exploration of the model. It is worth noting that the theory is prescriptive as it primarily focuses on assets. The progress of SMEs could be credited to a few factors that are interlinked and cooperate for the outcome of the association other than the sole remarkable assets; subsequently, the RBV has restricted prescriptive ramifications. Assets are not a proper substance but unique info constantly encountering changes and presently, innovation is viewed as a significant asset for improvement.

Ritsumeikan (2005) argue that SMEs capacity to devise strategies, utilise the acquired expertise and engage with other stakeholders constitute the principal assets for the triumph of the organisation. The theory must investigate these characteristics. The examination will encompass the dynamic elements such as technology, entrepreneurial tactics and marketing proficiencies that extend beyond the RBV model, aiming to address this prescriptive void. This study will address this theoretical gap by blending the RBV, institutional and entrepreneurship development theories.

This would lead to the establishment of new knowledge in the study of SMEs. Also, regardless of the positive commitment to ICT, SMEs in South Africa are proactive about keeping up to date with technology. Be that as it may, the prevalence of obsolete inheritance procedures and frameworks suggests they have some way to go. Furthermore, Goldstuck (2018) emphasises that poor internet connection, which is a challenge in many areas of South Africa, unquestionably does not make adoption any easier. The advantages of technology can only be maximized when they have reliable and affordable connections. Nonetheless, those businesses with a clear plan for technological adoption will have significantly better prospects than those without.

Cant, Wiid and Hung (2016) and Goldstuck (2018) emphasise the importance of reliable, fast internet access as a concern for South African small businesses. There are numerous advantages to be picked up from utilizing modern technologies. Unfortunately, these advantages are more sophisticated when time is lost due to an unstable internet connection. The theory of entrepreneurship development encompasses a perspective rooted in economics, enabling the potential for a transformative effect on the state of the nation's economy. Scholars suggests that entrepreneurship, as an economic process, holds great significance as a catalyst for economic growth. Entrepreneurs are perceived as critical economic agents and serve as determinants of economic development. Consequently, the entrepreneur now assumes a prominent role in advancing economic progress. According to the Institution Theory, the government's impact on SMEs performance can be approached through three essential pillars: regulative, institutional and cognitive.

These pillars serve as a framework for analysing the extent of governmental involvement and its effects on SMEs as outlined below:

1. *Regulative pillar*: An act of survival under the harsh economic conditions of South Africa, uncertainty and dealing with pressure to replicate competitors' best practices.
2. *Institutional pillar*: An act of survival under the harsh economic conditions of South Africa, uncertainty and dealing with pressure to replicate competitors' best practices.

3. *Cognitive pillar*: An act of survival under the harsh economic conditions of South Africa, uncertainty and dealing with pressure to replicate competitors' best practices.

According to Mariotti *et al.* (2014), "the institutional adaptation of accepted social norms and a value system by organisations depicts firms as passive participants that respond to external pressures and expectations". However, other scholars argue against this perspective, asserting that firms are dynamic entities that actively respond to and carry out tasks based on their resources and capabilities (Barney, 1991; Martínez-Costa *et al.*, 2008). The criticisms of this theory reveals a gap that warrants further exploration as the theory primarily relies on external motivation. This study aims to contribute new knowledge by addressing the theory's shortcomings by including internal motivation as a crucial component in the high performance of SMEs. The researcher envisaged that SMEs would play a significant role in demonstrating the value and significance of using ICT in Limpopo using their indigenous languages to develop. The study aims to examine the internal performance of SMEs, a research gap that needs to be addressed in institutional and RBV theories. The study will develop a strategic framework that recognises the importance of internal motivation for achieving high performance. The study's theoretical framework is based on the RBV theory, entrepreneurship development theory, TAM and institutional theory.

Theories on entrepreneurship development, institutional, RBV and TAM have been used to describe how businesses can grow and sustain various venture business evolution phases. However, these factors' relative importance in entrepreneurship development and sustainability remains unknown, which this study seeks to address. The model envisaged would play a significant role in demonstrating the value and significance of using ICT for SMEs in Limpopo using their indigenous languages to develop. According to Ndebele (2014), integrating African languages with ICT is critical for promoting and intellectualising African languages in business development. Entrepreneurship is the source of strength that allows individuals to continually put themselves into favourable circumstances, regardless of how unfavourable the surroundings .

3.10 Chapter Summary

Different theories have been utilised to explain the sustainability of SMEs' development in Limpopo Province by using indigenous languages to enhance the ICT within their operations. Theories on entrepreneurship development, institutional, RBV, and TAM have been used to describe how businesses can grow and sustain various venture business evolution phases. However, these factors' relative importance in entrepreneurship development and sustainability remains unknown, which this study seeks to address. The conceptual framework is built to show the variables at play and the hypotheses to be tested to achieve that. When successfully analysed, the results show the relative importance of each sustainability factor in each venture business phase. This will be further substantiated through the contextualisation of these theories, culminating in a bespoke synthesis, facilitating the coherent assimilation of this inquiry to push the scholastic boundary. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology applied for this mixed-methods study and its purpose and design before introducing the qualitative research questions and quantitative research propositions guiding this research. Moreover, an overview of the data collection methods and analysis was used to determine the outcomes of this research.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the research methodology used to conduct the research. This research aimed to study and explore the appropriation of ICT by SMEs with the significant utilisation of indigenous languages, the development market and improvement of their business and the challenges experienced. It will encourage the SMEs to see the benefits of utilising innovation in business, improving their daily operations market and increasing their demand. A convergent parallel mixed methodology was employed for this study. The study addresses the research questions and a mixed-methods approach was utilised, allowing for the development of more effective and refined conclusions. This was accomplished by utilising the results from one method to inform or shape the use of the other method. The ontologies of these methodologies guide the areas of research to be investigated. The epistemologies provide insights into the nature of knowledge and where knowledge should be sought.

In comparison, procedures show researchers the methods employed, directing them where to focus their inquiry and how to identify and extract knowledge. These assumptions constitute the foundation of the concept of paradigm in the literature on research methodology. A mixed-method research design was chosen to accomplish this objective. The literature on qualitative and quantitative methodology will be examined, followed by an analysis of the research design and instruments employed in this investigation. Two sample populations were selected for the data collection in order to provide the necessary information to achieve the research aims. The sampling procedure, data collection and analysis methods were used to answer the research questions. The chapter also contains a discussion on the validity and reliability of this research.

4.2 Research philosophies

According to Lincoln and Guba (1995), “philosophies are general orientations regarding the world and the nature of truth which the researcher holds and, as such, constitute a basic set of beliefs which guide actions”. Moreover, Creswell (2013) opines that a research philosophy is concerned with how data should be gathered, analysed and used. Furthermore, Owoseni (2018) and Kumalo (2018) acknowledge, that “philosophy is a mindset that attempts to discover common ground between what is known to be accurate and believed. Furthermore, it influences research practice by leading the researcher to embrace various methods, for example, a qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approach to their research”.

Moreover, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) propound that the research onion comprises of 10 major research philosophies in the Western tradition of science: positivism, realism, interpretivism, objectivism, subjectivism, pragmatism, functionalism, interpretivism, radical humanist and radical structuralist. They argue that philosophies within research contexts require an in-depth understanding of scholars' common beliefs and agreements regarding how problems should be understood and addressed. The preceding philosophies serve as a guide to how research is conducted within the context of this study. To produce the highest quality scientific research, it is imperative to understand the identified research philosophies in order to better understand the study's perspective regarding other philosophies. The study adopted the following research philosophies:

4.2.1 Positivism

A positivist perspective aims to discover the laws that govern outcomes (Lincoln & Guba, 1995). This perspective believes that abstract theories cannot be found and that the process leading to development must be both known and experimentally verifiable through quantitative methods. Raseala (2020) argues that positivism entails believing that reality is objective and understandable. Moreover, from an epistemological standpoint, positivists assert that objective findings are deemed accurate. Additionally, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) recognise that positivists contend that surveys or experiments are designed and primarily focused on testing theories and validating hypotheses.

According to Edirisingha (2012), positivist ontologists believe that the world is external and a single objective reality for any research phenomenon or situation despite its perspective or belief. Raseala (2020) argues that positivist researchers remain detached from the research respondents by creating distance, which is pivotal in staying emotionally neutral to distinguish between reason and feelings. The researcher observed the demographic dispensation and objectively sought to present the limitations of Limpopo Province's demarcation. Furthermore, according to this philosophy, the researcher refrained from altering the study's content or impacting the respondents' perspectives.

4.2.2 Interpretivism

According to Raseala (2020), interpretivism is a position of anti-positivism and post-positivism because it includes a crucial distinction between the topic of natural and social sciences. This philosophy provides that individuals and groups make sense of a situation based on their experiences, memories and expectations in the social world. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) believe that interpretivism is a research philosophy in which the researcher must understand the difference between humans in their role as social actors. Moreover, it is crucial to distinguish between research involving human beings and physical objects like trucks and computers (Saunders *et al.*, 2019).

Furthermore, Raseala (2020) articulates that interpretivism seeks to understand the social experience through humanistic, qualitative interactions. Moreover, they like to understand by answering why with direct access to the real world. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) describe the researcher's role within the interpretive paradigm. They maintain the authenticity and purity of the phenomena under investigation. The imposition of external form and structure is resisted since this reflects the viewpoint of the observer instead of the actor directly involved.

Interpretivism is a qualitative research methodology that comprehensively comprehends social phenomena to interpret how individuals assign significance to their experiences (Addae & Quan-Baffour, 2015). According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), interpretivism contends that researchers derive meaning from their data by employing their cognitive processing and thinking, which is informed by their interactions with participants. Furthermore, the researcher and the subjects engage in interactive processes characterised by intermingling, dialogue, questioning, listening, reading, writing and recording research data.

4.2.3 Realism

Realism holds that things are not generally what they seem, by all accounts, to be and that substances may have to target fundamental factors that could change with the human impression of what they are. Furthermore, Lincoln and Guba (1995) argue that realists claim that everything has an objective purpose or function. Moreover, the meaning may differ from the subjective interpretation of role-player interaction. This highlights the need to test individual understandings toward the allowance of objective implications. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) describe realism as a philosophical position related to scientific enquiry with a sense of reality: objects have an existence independent of the human mind. Moreover, realism acknowledges a reality entirely separate from the mind in this sense, where it is opposed to idealism, the theory that only reason and its contents exist (Crotty, 1998). There are two types of realism; namely, direct and critical. Direct realism focuses on what you see is what you get: what we experience through our senses portrays the world accurately.

In contrast, critical realism argues that we experience sensations, the images of the things in the real world, not the items directly. Critical realists point out how often our senses deceive us (Saunders *et al.*, 2019). Owoseni (2018) and Kumalo (2018) maintains the importance of realism in addressing the pursuit of business and management research. Critical realism narrates the capacity of research to change the world that it studies. The direct realist perspective would suggest the world is relatively unchanging: it operates, in the business context, at one level (the individual, the group or the organisation). Linking it with the study under investigation, ICT ventures in the SMEs terrain coupling it with the indigenous languages for the purposes of transforming the business, something very crucial.

4.2.4 Pragmatism

The concept of pragmatism presents a factual and practical methodology for resolving issues. The study embraced a pragmatic philosophy to guide the research procedure as the governing stimulus necessitates comprehension of how SMEs practically employ ICT in their business. The philosophy was introduced by Charles Saunders Peirce (1839-1914), with scholars such as William James (1842-1910), John Dewey (1859-1952), Herbert Mead (1863-1931) and a few others (Barton, 1994) further developing the philosophy. Moreover, Rylander (2012) outlines pragmatism as a concept with potential practical effects as it asserts that concepts are only relevant where they support action. This means that your position's most crucial determinant on each continuum is the research question – one situation may be more appropriate than another for answering a particular question (Owoseni, 2018). Suppose the research question does not recommend adopting a specific way of thinking. This affirms the pragmatist's view that working with various philosophical positions is entirely conceivable and that multiple methods are often possible and possibly highly appropriate within one study.

4.2.5 Adopted Research Philosophies

For this study, the researcher adopted this Interpretivism approach to ensure consistency. Business owners have feelings and emotions that could negatively or positively impact daily business operations.

4.3 Research Paradigms

Galliers (1991) outlines that research philosophy pertains to a belief system regarding the appropriate methods for gathering, analysing and utilising data. This philosophy serves as a research strategy and employs a research instrument. Additionally, a hypothetical system or paradigm influences the analysis, knowledge and understanding of research. Ingleby (2012) argues that the interaction between meta-hypothetical foundations, philosophical presumptions, research problems and techniques is significant in characterising the researcher's paradigmatic perspectives.

However, Thanh, Thi and Thanh (2015) elaborate further on the concept of paradigm as a founded belief system that governs how matters function, which is also suggested by Bunniss and Kelly (2010). Paradigm is also called beliefs and values that guide and manage the study in a specific direction by providing boundaries, procedures and focal points to complete the study. Thanh *et al.* (2015) also emphasises the importance of selecting a paradigm as the initial step in literature research, research design and strategy. The following sub-section will examine about the paradigm used for the present

4.3.1 Ontology

According to Mack (2010), ontology investigates the "essence of truth and its relationship to inquiries regarding the definition and qualities of truth". Ontological theories are linked to the notion of what constitutes truth and existence. The researcher's perspective on truth serves as the bedrock for all other convictions. In other words, the expectations in this context establish the researcher's varied assumptions. Furthermore, Vilakati, Schurink and Viljoen (2013) maintain the viewpoint of social reality; epistemology is how we know and interpret the world. Furthermore, ontology is concerned with the nature of reality and assumptions about how the world is constituted and the idea of things. The part of ontology we apply to this examination is interpretivist.

The position of interpretivism concerning ontology and epistemology is that interpretivists believe that reality is multiple and relative. Neuman (2013) outlined that clarifying numerous facts acknowledges the dependence on another system for implications, making it harder to decipher fixed fundamental factors. Moreover, Thanh, Thi and Thanh (2015) contend on the knowledge acquired in this discipline, stating it to be socially constructed rather than objectively determined and perceived. According to Vilakati, Schurink and Viljoen (2013), interpretivism avoids rigid structural frameworks such as positivist research. It adopts more personal and flexible research structures, which are receptive to capturing human interaction meanings and making sense of what is perceived as reality. Interpretivism believes the researcher and his informants are interdependent and mutually interactive (Neuman, 2013). The interpretivist researcher enters the field with prior insights into the research context but

assumes that more is needed in developing a fixed research design due to the complex, multiple and unpredictable nature of what is perceived as reality.

Mack (2010) states that “the researcher remains open to new knowledge throughout the study and lets it develop with informants' help. Such an emergent and collaborative approach are consistent with the interpretivist belief that humans can adapt. No one can gain prior knowledge of time and context-bound social realities”. Consequently, interpretivism research aims to understand and interpret human behaviour's meanings; for an interpretivist researcher, it is essential to understand motives, intentions, reasons and other subjective experiences that are time and context-bound, precisely the purpose of this research project (Neuman, 2013).

4.3.2 Epistemology

According to Hirschheim, Klein and Lyytinen (1995), epistemology is the “philosophy of knowledge; its focus is on the origin and nature of knowledge. Hence, it addresses the researcher and knowledge”. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) define epistemology as what constitutes adequate knowledge in a field of study as well as the researcher's view regarding what constitutes sufficient knowledge. Creswell (2013) outlines how one might discover knowledge by incorporating beliefs about the world and the science of knowing. The epistemological position to explore the appropriation of ICT by SMEs with the significant utilisation of indigenous languages, the development market and improvement of their business and the challenges experienced will take the form of a positivistic approach.

According to Mack (2010), epistemology is related to the nature of knowledge and its various forms and basis. Additionally, Creswell (2013) suggests that it encompasses the processes of acquiring, attaining and disseminating knowledge and the implications associated with knowing. The establishment of the scientific method is predicated upon the principles of objectivity and quantification, empirical observation and experimentation.

Table 4.1: Interpretation of research paradigms and philosophies

Research philosophy	Definitions
Positivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are observed through our external senses, utilizing scientific experiments. • All observers reach the same conclusion. • Fact-finding research hypothesis and proofs. • Theories can be tested and expanded using scientific methods. • It is fixed, stable, observable, and measurable.
Pragmatism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on problems and practical solutions, true theories and knowledge must enable successful actions
Realism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is called facts are based on what the individual knows. • Knowledge is rooted in historical and experienced information and skills acquired.
Interpretivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community ideas and views are the sources of knowledge. Concepts and knowledge are historical and built by society over time. • Beliefs and cultures shape current views about the world. • Knowledge is gained through an empathic understanding of participants' lived social lives; science describes people's experiences and insights. • Achieved through understanding the meaning of the process or experience

Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) and Creswell (2013)

4.3.3 Axiology

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), axiology is a philosophy that studies value judgments. Furthermore, it is a part of the reasoning that reviews decisions about esteem. Carnaghan (2013) argues that axiology incorporates qualities we have and morals; it is the interaction of social inquiry with which we are worried. Moreover, our values play a considerable role in all stages of the research process if you wish your research results to be credible. Lee and Lings (2008) are of the view that axiology endorses the research's intentions to clarify if you are trying to explain or predict the world or only seeking to understand it.

Furthermore, Carnaghan (2013) argues on the write-up of personal values statement concerning studying the topic as an axiology entity, evidently more applicable to some research topics than others while acknowledging the researcher's view on the role of values in research. However, Lee and Lings (2008) suggests that topics concerned with personal career development may be apparent candidates for this process: it would be an issue of unique value that it is the individual's responsibility to take charge of their career development. The table below illustrates the axiology of major research philosophies.

Table 4.2: Axiology of major research philosophies

Research philosophy	Axiology
Positivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research is undertaken in a value-free way; the researcher is independent of the data and maintains an objective stance.
Pragmatism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Values play a significant role in interpreting results; the researcher adopts both objective and subjective points of view.
Realism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research is value-laden; world views, cultural experiences and upbringings bias the researcher. These affect research findings.
Interpretivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research is value bound; the researcher is part of what is being researched, cannot be separated and so will be subjective.

Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019)

4.3.4 Phenomenology

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), phenomenology refers to the research philosophy that considers social phenomena as socially constructed and is most concerned with generating meanings and gaining insights into those phenomena. Phenomenology mentions how we make sense of the world around us. Before World War I, phenomenology was developed in Germany and occupied an important modern philosophical position. The term “phenomenon” comes from the Greek word “phaenesthai”, meaning to show itself, to appear or to flare up (Moustakas, 1994).

However, to Dowling (2007), phenomenology refers to philosophy and a research method. It is a diverse approach, which means that “there are as many styles of phenomenology as there are phenomenologists”. Dos Santo (2018) describes our daily experiences as a fundamental phenomenology task highlighting events. The phenomenology task is “to describe the lived world of everyday experience, particularly those events and situations that are taken for granted, unquestioned or unnoticed” (Dos Santos, 2018). Phenomenology views all forms of knowledge as underpinned by lived experience, especially those occasions and circumstances that are underestimated, unchallenged or undetected. Phenomenology sees all types of information as being supported by lived insights.

Bhattacharjee (2012) outlines phenomenology as concerned with the systematic reflection and analysis of phenomena associated with conscious experiences, such as human judgment, perceptions and activities with the objective of (1) appreciating and describing social reality from the assorted abstract viewpoints of the members in question and (2) understanding the emblematic implications (“profound design”) hidden in these emotional encounters. Phenomenological inquiry requires researchers to eliminate prior assumptions and individual tendencies, empathize with the participant’s situation and tune into existential dimensions to fully understand the deep structures that drive the studied participants’ conscious thinking, feeling and behaviour.

4.4 Research Methodology

A particular way must be followed or adopted in any study or project. The specific structure adopted will be observed during the entire research for data collection. One typical procedure and its analysis will be adopted. The process may neither be qualitative, quantitative or mixed method. The nature of the study plays a significant role in the study. According to Mouton (2011), “methodology” is a term that is a relatively high-level indication of an exploration approach or position. The term “research method” dependably alludes to inquiring about undertakings within a particular decision, particularly in three spaces. The following three categories are distinguished; namely:

- Methods for selecting cases (probability sampling methods).
- Methods of data collection (individual).
- Methods of data analysis (statistical methods and mathematical methods).

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2016), “research is a systematic process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information (data) to increase our understanding of the phenomenon in which we are interested, or about which we are concerned”. The assessment of data and methodology are interdependent. When selecting a methodology, we always consider the data collected to resolve the research problem. Despite the verification of research projects, Leedy and Ormrod (2016) outline the eight distinct characteristics of research:

1. Research ordinarates within a question or problem.
2. Research requires a clear articulation of a goal.
3. Research usually divides the principal problem into more manageable subproblems.
4. The specific research problem, question or hypothesis guides the research.
5. Research requires a particular plan for proceeding.
6. The research rests on certain critical assumptions.
7. Research requires the collection and interpretation of data in an attempt to resolve the problem that initiated the research.
8. Research is, by its nature, cyclical or more precisely, helical.

The methodology uses scientific theory to address the ontological, epistemological and axiological aspects. The significance of the philosophical underpinnings of methods is elucidated by Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004) as they assert that methodology serves as the epistemological foundation of an inquiry and that the methodological qualities determine the success or failure of each study. Silverman (2013) affirms the necessity of theoretical foundations for methodology, stating that research becomes excessively limited without theory. The research process is determined by ontology and epistemology (Henning *et al.*, 2004; Mills, 2014; Wellington *et al.*, 2005). To justify the study, this chapter provides methodological reasoning by examining various aspects of research methodology. According to Bhattacharjee (2012), the term "methodology" encompasses a wide range of elements, including research design, methods, approaches and procedures employed in an investigation to determine something. Furthermore, it entails data collection, participants, the instruments utilised and data analysis within the expansive realm of methodology. Additionally, Kothari and Garg (2014) argue that the method pronounces the rationale and sequence of a systematic process in exploring various research projects to acquire knowledge about a specific research topic. It incorporates assumptions, encountered limitations and strategies to mitigate or minimise them. Its focus lies in how we comprehend the world and obtain knowledge about a specific aspect of it

The chapter includes the following elements: An explanation of the concept of 'methodology'; an outline of paradigms, with a specific emphasis on critical theory as the chosen paradigm for the study; a discussion on research approaches to support the selected study approach; Research designs encompassing population, sampling, data collection and analysis; a discussion on research integrity, elucidating its application in the study; Ethics are again discussed as a pivotal component of research, with a detailed account of how ethical issues were addressed in the study; and finally a chapter summary serves as a conclusion to the discussion.

4.5 Research Design

The concept of research design encompasses a pragmatic framework that delineates the research methods employed in a particular study (Salkind, 2012). Babbie (2015) concurs with Salkind's (2012) explanation, asserting that research design serves as a blueprint or scheme that outlines the researcher's intended course of action for conducting the study. Polit and Hungler (2013), while acknowledging research design as a plan, further posits that its purpose is to assist the researcher in addressing the research question(s). Cooper and Schindler (2014) argue that even though there are contrasting perspectives on what research design is, there are certain basics that are regular among the definitions and these are:

- The design is an activity – a time-based plan;
- The design is always based on a research question;
- The design guides the selection of sources and types of information;
- The design is a framework for specifying the relationship among the study variables; and
- The design outlines procedures for every research activity.

Furthermore, Cooper and Schindler (2014) define research design as the strategy for the study and the plan by which the process is to be carried out. This implies that research design specifies methods and procedures for collecting, measuring and analysing data. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2016), “research design is a blueprint for conducting a study that maximises control over the factors that could interfere with the findings' validity”. This study followed a mixed-method approach and it was used to answer questions about the relationship among measured variables to explain, predict and control phenomena. According to Padgett (2017), mixed methods combine quantitative data granularity with qualitative data's naturalistic holism. De Vos (2013) also refers to mixed methods research as a research design with philosophical assumptions and inquiry methods.

The mixed-mode approach embraces the usage of both quantitative and qualitative research design. The qualitative research approach is hardly a research methodology that involves the process of quantifying data during both the collection and analysis

stages. On the other hand, the qualitative research approach is characterised as a research strategy that emphasises using words rather than numerical quantification in data collection and analysis (Bryman, 2012). Each approach possesses unique strengths and weaknesses. However, when combined within a single study, they have the potential to complement one another. The data analysis phase of the research also incorporates both methods, with a particular focus on qualitative research, particularly when exploring new areas of study.

Qualitative research provides a clear understanding of underlying reasons, ideas and motivations. Quantitative research aims to quantify the problem under investigation by generating numerical data. The data were converted into usable statistics. The use of quantitative research is to quantify the following; attitudes, opinions and behaviours. All these are based on the identified sample population. Quantitative analysis is often regarded as purely scientific, justifiable, precise and based on facts often reflected in exact figures (Jonker & Pennik, 2010). However, Punch (2005) defines quantitative research as empirical research with numbers. Qualitative research is designed to reveal a targeted audience's behaviour or perception, guided by a specific question under investigation.

Qualitative research encompasses several approaches to research entirely from one another (Leedy & Ormond, 2016). According to Eze, Duan and Chen (2014), the qualitative approach serves as a helpful alternative and provides rich insights and results. Qualitative research design is always governed by a philosophical underpinning such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, ethnographic research, content analysis and case study. Qualitative research is described by its aims, which identify with seeing some part of social life and its techniques, which (as a rule) create words instead of numbers as data for analysis (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). According to Creswell (2013), a research approach is determined by the research problem and sub-problems. A key rationale for using mixed methods in this study was complementarity, which obtain complete conclusions through qualitative and quantitative approaches to achieve complementary results about different phenomena (Ivankova & Clark, 2016). According to Flick (2015), quantitative methods were used to examine the process' outcomes.

Furthermore, the qualitative and quantitative fields frequently employ mixed methods to investigate various facets of their interests. The utilisation of mixed methods research not only presents the researcher with numerous advantages and benefits but also allows for examining diverse viewpoints. The benefits mentioned above have been posited by Venkatesh, Viswanath, Brown, Sue, Bala, and Hillol (2013). Using qualitative and quantitative research methods in a single study enabled the researcher to extract rich information about the topic of investigation. Addae and Quan-Baffour (2015) outline the efficacy of this approach when they stated that a hybrid system provides the researcher with the ability to perceive the world through two distinct lenses; namely, positivism and interpretivism. Consequently, the researcher gains a more profound comprehension of the world and the phenomenon under scrutiny. The amalgamation of these two approaches in this study allows for selecting a broader and more diverse sample, thereby facilitating the collection of miscellaneous information regarding the topic under examination. This research study used a mixed approach, wherein both positivism and interpretivism were adopted and incorporated qualitative and quantitative techniques. The approaches of the two approaches were successfully executed in this study.

4.5 Research Design Types

Mouton (2011) defines a research design as “a plan or blueprint of how you intend to conduct the research”. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2019), research types may be regarded as a methodology for research, providing the overall framework to gather data and pick subjects, collect information techniques and study destinations to respond to analyse problems. Creswell (2013) argues it serves as an extension of research questions and implementation. Kothari (2004) identifies four research designs: exploratory, descriptive, diagnostic and hypothesis-testing. Hypothesis-testing research studies (generally known as experimental studies) are those where the researcher test the hypotheses and conclude variables. Such studies require data collection procedures and hypothesis testing to make deductive inferences about population characteristics (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

Usually, the fulfilment of this requirement is met by experiments; therefore, when discussing research design in such studies, the common intention is often to refer to

the design of experiments. Rensburg (2010) suggests that experimental research, as a representative example of quantitative analysis, entails distinctive ethical concerns due to researchers' manipulation of an experimental variable. This manipulation entails the administration of a particular treatment to participants. Precise experimental designs encompass research studies in which the researcher manipulates the treatment condition; this implies that the researcher determines who receives which treatment.

In empirical research, the emphasis is on control and various approaches exist for designing a study to ensure different levels of governance (Rensburg, 2010). In an experimental design, observations can be structured and regulated. However, this research design was not employed in the present study as no experiments were conducted and no group was subjected to special treatment conditions. According to Kothari and Garg (2014), the research design refers to the strategic plan and procedures for achieving an effective research outcome. This study adopted the research onion model, a framework conceptualised and developed by Saunders *et al.* (2019). The model outlines the various stages necessary for executing scientific research, likening it to the layers of an onion. One must systematically remove the outer layers to access the onion's inner layers.

4.5.1 Exploratory Research Design

According to McDaniel Jr and Roger (2015), exploratory research design configuration involves exploring the phenomenon and collecting secondary or primary data using unstructured formal or informal procedures to interpret them, incorporating the least scientific method and rigour of aims and structure. Burns and Groove (2001) outline that exploratory research is conducted to gain new insights, discover new ideas and increase knowledge of the phenomenon. Furthermore, Bhattacharjee (2012) argues that exploratory research is often conducted in new areas of inquiry, where the goals of the research are: (1) to scope out the magnitude or extent of a particular phenomenon, problem or behaviour, (2) to generate some initial ideas (or "hunches") about that phenomenon or (3) to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study regarding that phenomenon. Bhattacharjee (2012) argues that research may not lead to a very accurate understanding of the target problem but may be worthwhile

in scoping out the nature and extent of the problem and serve as a valuable precursor to more in-depth research.

4.5.2 Descriptive Research Design

McDaniel Jr and Roger (2015) argue that descriptive research involves direct exploration, analysis and description of the phenomena as accessible as possible from unexplained presuppositions, aiming at maximum intuitive presentation. Bhattacharjee (2012) discusses descriptive research to mention cautious observable facts and detailed documentation of a phenomenon of interest. These perceptions should be based on the scientific method. Other descriptive analyses may include chronicling ethnographic reports of gang activities among adolescent youth in urban populations, the persistence or evolution of religious, cultural or ethnic practices in select communities and the role of technologies such as Twitter and instant messaging in the spread of democracy movements in Middle Eastern countries. Botes (1995) describes contextual research as findings valid within the time-space and value context of the study.

4.5.3 Explanatory Research Design

Kothari and Garg (2014) maintains that explanatory research design is used to investigate and clarify the researcher's ideas and theories. This research design elaborates on the unexplored aspects of a specific topic and describes the missing pieces. Furthermore, Bhattacharjee (2012) explains that exploratory research seeks explanations of observed phenomena, problems or behaviours. At the same time, descriptive study examines a phenomenon's what, where and when, while explanatory research seeks answers to why and how questions. This form of research design attempts to "connect the dots" by identifying the target phenomenon's causal factors and outcomes. Most academic or doctoral research belongs to the explanation category, though some exploratory and descriptive research may also be needed during the initial phases of academic research (Bhattacharjee, 2012). This method includes data collection, analysis and presentation.

4.6. Approaches

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), the research approach acknowledges the importance of theory in a scientific inquiry. The study should commence with a general idea or conclude with a newly discovered statement. They further argue that this perspective views its validity by recognising three scientific research methods: the inductive, deductive and abduction research approaches, as well as the qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Lewis (2015) describes the research technique as critical for achieving the study objectives by addressing the research inquiries and predicament. Moreover, Kothari (2012) posits that research methodology involves acquiring, categorising and scrutinising data. The sub-section delineates the course of action that was employed for this investigation.

4.6.1 Inductive Approach

According to Saunders *et al.* (2019), the inductive research approach generally starts observing while adopting obedience, collecting and analysing data, identifying patterns and creating a theory. However, Bryman and Bell (2015) recognised that inductive research methods could fit into existing theories. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) explain that inductive research “involves searching for pattern from observation and the development of explanations – theories – for those patterns through series of hypotheses”. Furthermore, no theories or hypotheses would apply in inductive studies at the beginning of the research. The researcher is free to alter the direction of the investigation after the research process has commenced. The importance of the inductive approach is not to overlook theories when forming research questions and objectives. Furthermore, the methodology uses implications from the dataset collected to identify patterns and relationships to build an idea. However, “the inductive approach does not prevent the researcher from using existing theory to formulate the research question to be explored” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Neuman (2013) describes the process of following an inductive approach; beginning with a topic, a researcher develops empirical generalisations and identifies preliminary relationships as he progresses through the research thus “no hypotheses can be found at the initial stages of the research and the researcher is not sure about the type and nature of the research findings until the study is completed”.

4.6.2 Deductive approach

The deductive research methodology is characterised by its convergent nature, progressing from a general understanding of a phenomenon to a more specific knowledge within various contexts (Kothari, 2012). According to Wilson (2010), the deductive approach necessitates formulating a hypothesis and establishing a systematic process to test the said hypothesis based on the prevailing theory. This rational research methodology is particularly suitable for assessing whether a given context aligns with the expectations or requirements of the existing theory.

Furthermore, it concerns “developing a hypothesis (or hypotheses) based on existing theory and then designing a research strategy to test the hypothesis”. Gulati (2009) argues that “deductive means reasoning from the particular to the general. If a causal relationship or link seems implied by a particular theory or case example, it might be true in many cases. A deductive design might test whether this relationship or link was obtained in more general circumstances”. Babbie (2011) is of the view that “deductive approach can be explained by employing hypotheses, which can be derived from the theory's propositions”.

Furthermore, the approach is concerned with deducting conclusions from premises or recommendations. It further substantiates the deduction starting with an expected pattern “tested against observations. In contrast, induction begins with observations and seeks to find a pattern within them”.

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019), deductive offers the following advantages: the possibility to explain causal relationships between concepts and variables, the opportunity to measure concepts quantitatively and the potential to generalise research findings to a certain extent. This research study used both the inductive and deductive approaches. The inductive approach aided comprehension of the dynamic capabilities of SMEs in Limpopo Province, which were previously unfamiliar. The deductive approach examined 10 hypotheses based on a general understanding of the problem as outlined in the conceptual model.

4.6.3 Abduction approach

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) refer to the abductive approach, which addresses shortcomings related to deductive and inductive approaches. Specifically, deductive reasoning is criticised for needing more clarity regarding selecting a theory to be tested via formulating hypotheses. On the other hand, inductive reasoning is criticised because “no amount of empirical data will necessarily enable theory-building”. The abductive reason overcomes these weaknesses as a third alternative by adopting a pragmatist perspective. Bryman and Bell (2015) perceived abductive research as a possibility to capture and take advantage of the empirical world's systemic character and theoretical models' systemic character.

According to Dubois and Gadde (2002), this approach utilises both deductive and inductive techniques. It moves from the empirical to theoretical dimensions of the analysis and finds that abductive logic is more valuable than the pure inductive or deductive approach. Lukka and Modell (2010) argue that abductive reasoning is increasingly recognised as a crucial aspect of interpretive research. Alvesson and Kärreman (2007) explain that this approach involves combining deductive and inductive styles, which consists of three steps: (1) applying an established interpretive rule or theory, (2) observing a surprise that challenges the theory and (3) formulating a new theory that resolves the surprise. This process is suitable for early-stage research as it involves identifying and extrapolating existing conceptions through empirical evidence.

4.7 Different Typology of Research Methodology

A research methodology is a complex phenomenon that includes many things. Therefore, research methodology can be used in a variety of ways. The methodology concept is embedded in the research design, methods, sampling strategies, data collection instruments, data gathering procedure, techniques and modes of data analysis. Research methodology can then be viewed as a systematic solution to an identified research problem (Gray, 2013). Research methodology has many dimensions and research methods are but a constituent of the research method

4.7.1 Quantitative Research Methodology

According to Antwi and Hamza (2015), the quantitative research follows corroborative scientific methods, primarily focusing on speculation and hypothesis testing. Moreover, this is considered essential to state one's hypotheses and then test them with empirical data to see if they are supported. On the other hand, qualitative research primarily follows the experimental scientific method. Furthermore, Creswell (2013) states that a quantitative strategy involves using positivist cases and fixed instruments to gather information and generate knowledge. Maxwell (2013) defines quantitative research as the gathering and transforming of information into measurable computations using surveys, tests and predetermined instruments. The data is evaluated, outcomes are summarised and the sample is quantified.

A quantitative researcher attempts to fragment and delimit phenomena into measurable or common categories that can be applied universally or in more comprehensive and analogous situations (Winter, 2000). In quantitative research, our objective is to establish causal connections between entities. Consequently, our hypotheses embody references and causal explanations that ascertain a cause-and-effect correlation between phenomena (Golafshan, 2003). Rensburg (2010) recognises that in this methodology, scientists investigate the cause and effect of events by employing a substantial number of respondents in social sciences. Quantitative research is rooted in positivism and concentrates on quantifiable facets of human behaviour. Khotari (2004) asserts that quantitative analysis is founded on measuring quantity or amount and applies to phenomena that can be quantified. Creswell (2013) adds that this approach employs statistical data, pre-determined techniques and closed-ended questions; it may encompass quantification and is potentially systematised. The principal advantage of quantitative study is the ability to calculate and summarise data through numerical interpretations.

In a quantitative study, a researcher endeavours to work under the presumption of objectivity. At the same time, they expect reality to be noticed, while observers who look at the same phenomenon will concede its existence and attributes. Furthermore, Antwi and Hamza (2015) try to remain neutral or value-free, attempting to avoid human bias whenever possible. Quantitative researchers attempt to study the phenomena that interest them "from a distance". In contrast, standardized questionnaires and other

quantitative measuring tools are often used to measure carefully what is observed. Furthermore, these strategies that are utilised in quantitative research incorporate the random determination of research participants from the study population in an unbiased way. The standardised survey or intervention techniques are used to test foreordained speculations concerning the connection between explicit factors. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) argue that the researcher in quantitative research is considered external to the actual study and the results are expected to be replicable, no matter who conducts the investigation. Therefore, a quantitative approach was deemed appropriate because it intended to develop a research paradigm and philosophical index model that would automatically predict and assist the user in determining the peoples' paradigm and philosophical stance closest to their beliefs.

4.7.2 Qualitative Research Methodology

Creswell (2013) and Maxwell (2013) define qualitative research methodology as follows:

“an approach that uses a naturalistic approach seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as real-world settings, where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomena of interest. It is any research that produces findings not arrived at employing statistical procedures or other means of quantification, but instead, the kind of research that makes conclusions derived from real-world settings where the phenomena of interest unfold naturally”.

Qualitative methodology is described by Gray (2013) as underpinned by interpretivist epistemology and constructionist ontology. Moreover, the researcher's perceptions are mediated by the participant's experiences and significance. Antwi and Hamza (2015) argue that the importance of the methodology within the critical philosophical assumptions is based on the conviction that individual's connections with their social world construct reality. Moreover, it adopts an inductive reasoning process and the researchers act as the primary instrument for data collection. Qualitative research describes what is seen locally and sometimes comes up with or generates new hypotheses and theories. Moreover, Creswell (2013) outlines the importance of

studying when little is known about a topic or phenomenon and when one wants to discover or learn more about it.

Furthermore, it is critical to comprehend individuals' encounters and communicate their viewpoints allowing the researchers to advocate mixed research and argue that it is essential to use both the exploratory and confirmatory methods in one's research (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). However, qualitative research has frequently been criticised due to the need for a systematic conceptualisation and analytical discipline. Qualitative research focuses on the discovery and understanding of the experiences, perspectives and thoughts of participants. Additionally, qualitative research delves into the realm of meaning, purpose and reality as expounded by Hiatt (1986).

Qualitative research revolves around the qualitative phenomenon, closely linked to the subjective evaluation of attitudes, opinions and behaviour. Mouton and Marais (1989) asserts that qualitative research entails a structured approach, albeit with a certain degree of flexibility and is characterised by a less-defined scope and a more philosophical stance adopted by the researcher. In this context, qualitative researchers undertake their investigations in natural settings, endeavouring to derive meaning from and interpret phenomena considering the significance ascribed to them by individuals (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Qualitative research seeks to establish meaning, discovery and understanding of phenomena.

The most popular qualitative data collection and analysis methods in business studies are interviews, observation, case studies, games and role-playing (Rensburg, 2010). Creswell (2013) also discusses the sample for the research and the comprehensive data collection and recording procedures. Furthermore, the data analysis steps and the methods used for presenting the data, interpreting it, validating it and indicating the potential outcomes of the study.

Moreover, qualitative research aims to enhance self-understanding and increase insights and understanding of the human condition. Qualitative methodologies include direct observation, analysis and examination of documents, participant observation and open-ended, unstructured interviews. These methodologies aid researchers in comprehending the significance individuals attribute to social phenomena and reveal their behaviours' underlying cognitive processes. In this research, a combination of

qualitative and quantitative approaches was utilised. The triangulation methodology was employed in this study as it used both techniques. De Vos *et al.* (2005) state that methodological triangulation is the employment of diverse methods to explore a singular topic and quantitative (survey) and qualitative (interviews) methods were used in this study. The advantages of triangulation as Polit and Beck outlined (2008), lie in utilising various strategies or perspectives to gather and interpret data on a specific phenomenon, resulting in a more practical approach that converges on an accurate representation of reality. The triangulation method provided the most suitable framework for data collection in this research and was crucial in mitigating potential bias.

4.7.3 Mixed research Methodology

Sale, Lohfeld and Brazil (2002) have a few perspectives concerning qualitative and quantitative research methods and their views are expounded as follows:

“Both approaches can be combined because they aim to understand our world. They share a unified logic, and the same inference rules apply to both. A combination of both approaches provides a variety of perspectives from which a particular phenomenon can be studied. They share a joint commitment to understanding and improving the human condition, a common goal of disseminating knowledge for practical use”.

Creswell (2013) highlights the importance of mixed research methodology, mixing quantitative and qualitative research methods, approaches or other paradigm characteristics. Moreover, the procedure of the methods depends on the research question aligning the researcher's situational and practical issues. Furthermore, Antwi and Hamza (2015) comprehend the fundamentals of mixed research as being subjective (individual), inter-subjective (language-based, discursive, cultural) and objective (material and causal) realities in our world. Even though it is significant not to impact or bias what you observe, it is essential to understand the insiders' meanings and perspectives.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) argue that “mixed methods research is more than simply collecting both qualitative and quantitative data; it implies that data were integrated, related or mixed at some stage of the research process.” Moreover, the methodologies provide cross-validation or triangulation by combining two or more theories or sources of data with studying the same phenomena to completely understand the interdependence of research methods. They also provide for the achievement of complementary results by using the strengths of one approach to enhance the other (independence of research methods)”.

Table 4.3.: Summary of benefits of mixed methods

Complementarity	We are obtaining mutual viewpoints about similar experiences or associations. Using different quantitative and qualitative methods enables the researcher to get various views that augment information elicited from either side.
Developmental	Building questions from one method that materialises from the implications of a primary procedure or one method presents hypotheses to be tested in a subsequent method.
Completeness	Ensuring total representation of experiences or associations is attained.
Expansion	To clarify or elaborate on the knowledge gained from a prior method.
Corroboration/ Confirmation	to evaluate the trustworthiness of inferences gained from one method. This means that the quantitative data analysis findings can help validate the qualitative findings.
Compensation	to counter the weaknesses of one method by employing the other. The inherent weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative research methods are adequately taken care of by either method.
Diversity	To obtain opposing viewpoints of the same experiences or associations. The researcher received information from the various data collection tools employed through mixed methods research. This enabled the researcher to gain rich insight into the problem under investigation

Sources: Venkatesh, Viswanath, Brown, Sue, Bala and Hillol (2013)

Neuman (2013) supported that the benefits of the two methodologies yield advantageous outcomes, as he contends:

The knowledgeable social researcher understands and acknowledges each modality within its framework while also recognising the merits and drawbacks of each. The objective of enhancing understanding and explanation of the social world arises from a genuine appreciation of the unique contributions each has to offer.

Creswell (2013) further indicates the researcher's important use of "a mixture or combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, approaches, or concepts in a single research study or a set of related studies." Within mixed-method research, the study might be conducted concurrently (conducting both parts at roughly the same time) or sequentially (conducting one part first and the other second) to address a research question or a set of related questions. A key rationale for using mixed methods in this study was complementarity, which obtains more complete conclusions through qualitative and quantitative approaches to achieve complementary results about different phenomena. Mixed method research has positive value as it explores both the quantitative and the qualitative views of human behaviour, while quantitative only or qualitative only research can be limiting and incomplete for many research projects.

4.8 Research Procedure

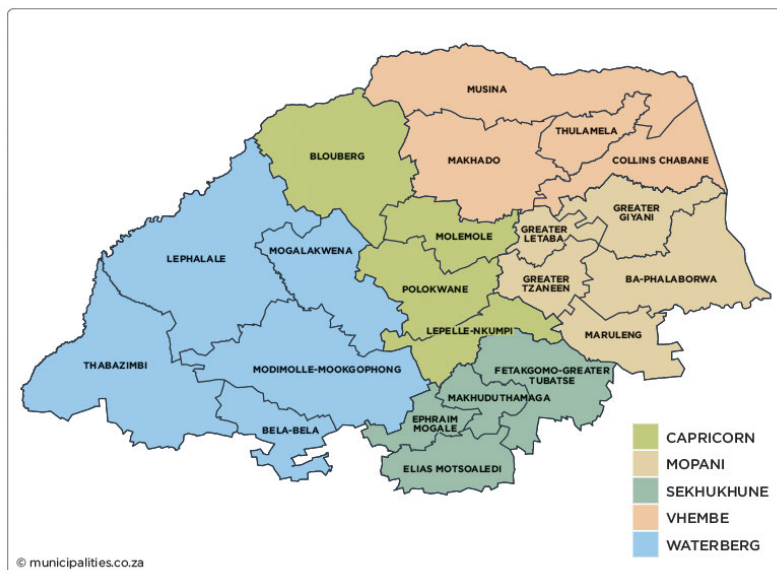
This section will examine the research methodologies employed in executing this study. The research procedures include population gathering, the sampling techniques implemented, the procedures used in collecting and manipulating data, and the data analysis. In a qualitative investigation, utilising the complete sample frame is highly improbable. As a result, sampling decisions were made as to who will participate in this study.

4.8.1 Location of the study

The study's main limitation will be concentrated on the Limpopo Province of the Republic of South Africa. 90% of Limpopo Province is rural, with a population of over five million, a high proportion younger than 15. The unemployment rate in the province is 46%. The area suffers an acute shortage of classrooms and educational facilities. This integrates with the purpose of the study. Neuman (2011) defines a population as the abstract idea of a large group of cases from which a researcher draws a sample and to which results from a sample are generalised as indicated in the background information. Limpopo Province is a South African province bordering Botswana, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

It comprises five municipal districts: Mopani, Vhembe, Capricorn, Waterberg and Sekhukhune. Limpopo province has five indigenous languages: Sepedi, Xitsonga, Tshivenda, IsiNdebele and Siswati.

Figure 4.1: Study Area Map: Limpopo Province



Source: Municipalities of South Africa. (2020).

4.8.2 Sampling

Sampling is selecting a small number of people from a more significant population to be included in the study. Sampling is a method of studying from a few selected items instead of a considerable number of units. Palys (2008) outlines “purposive sampling

as a series of strategic choices about whom, where and how one does research”. Purposive sampling is when a researcher chooses specific people within the population to use for a particular study or research project. According to Babbie and Mouton (2011), a quantitative sample should strive to be representative of a broader population, encompass sufficient observations, ensure precision and leverage in the analysis and employ cases that align with the primary interface at the same level of analysis. Nevertheless, Neuman (2013) argues that in qualitative studies, researchers should shift their focus away from the sample's representativeness and instead concentrate on how the selection or small collection of cases, units or activities sheds light on social life. In qualitative research, a non-probability model often aligns with the study's purpose (Neuman, 2011).

4.8.3 Sample Size Determination

According to Creswell (2013), “a sampling method refers to how the sample elements are to be selected”. A mixed methodology used probability and non-probability sampling techniques to select the respondents in this study. A mixed-mode research design was used for this study. Limpopo Province comprises five municipal districts with diverse indigenous languages: Xitsonga, Sepedi, Tshivenda, IsiSwati and isiNdebele. The population drawn for the research has been defined as all SMEs registered with the Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (DEDET).

For qualitative research design a purposive sampling was used and interviews were conducted on 2 SMEs per district with 10 SMEs in the Limpopo Province, which have been operational for over five years. The owner or the manager of that particular SME will be interviewed. The researcher used random sampling for a quantitative research design to acquire similar information about the study. One advantage of the random sample is that the researcher will be guaranteed equal representation of each identified stratum dealing with the problem under study. For the study, 120 questionnaires were distributed to SMEs registered with the DEDET.

A mixed-mode research design was chosen for this project. It is a frequently happening and official count of a population. This data collection method is also known as the complete enumeration technique or 100% enumeration technique. Under this

method, everything or unit constituting the universe is chosen for information gathering. Moreover, utilising probability sampling techniques facilitated the computation of population attributes based on the sample. The non-probability sampling technique enabled the study to make some statistical inferences about the features of the population (Saunders *et al.*, 2016).

4.8.4 Sampling procedures in research design

Sarantakos (2013) posits that qualitative researchers adopt sampling methodologies that align with their research philosophy. The sampling procedures in qualitative research are less structured and strict than quantitative researchers' techniques. Neuman (2019) further highlights that qualitative researchers use non-probability sampling procedures, refraining from applying probability rules and reducing concerns regarding representativeness.

4.8.4.1 Probability sampling

According to Bryman and Bell (2015), this approach includes diverse sampling techniques, like stratified sampling, systematic sampling, cluster sampling, simple random sampling and non-probability sampling methods, which include convenience, quota, snowball and purposive sampling. Creswell (2013) contends that representativeness is a central objective in sampling for quantitative studies. In contrast, qualitative research employs a non-probability sample as in this qualitative study. The salient concern in qualitative sampling lies in the pertinence of the characteristics of the phenomena. Moreover, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019) debate that the sample was randomly chosen from the population. Selection is based on each member of the population having an equal chance of being selected. Thus, when the researcher opts for a random sample, it can assume that the characteristics of the model approximate the features of the total population.

There are four probability sampling techniques: simple random, systematic, stratified random sampling, cluster sampling and multi-stage sampling. Moreover, the researcher presents each segment of the population within a sample. Probability samples lend themselves to rigorous analysis to determine the likelihood and possibility of bias and error. According to Bryman and Bell (2015), sample

characteristics are assumed to be similar to the features of the total population it is drawn from. Therefore, the initial step in choosing a sample is to define the sample frame. Probability sampling is a sampling technique in which the researcher decides on samples from a larger population using a method based on probability theory. For a participant to be considered a probability sample, they must be selected randomly.

4.8.4.2 Non-probability

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2016), the researcher cannot anticipate or ensure that every population element will be included in the sample. Non-probability sampling may result in certain population members having little chance of being selected. Etikan and Bala (2017) contend that the sampling procedure cannot provide a foundation for assessing the probability of elements in the population being included in the study sample. Non-probability sampling does not guarantee the representation of all components of the general population in the sample as Leedy and Ormrod (2019) stated. Moreover, this methodology is commonly associated with qualitative and case-study research designs. Etikan and Bala (2017) argue that selecting participants or cases for the sample does not need to be representative or random. However, a clear rationale must be provided for including specific issues or individuals over others. There are five different types of non-random samplings, including quota sampling, accidental sampling, judgemental sampling or purposive sampling, expert sampling, snowball sampling and modal instant sampling.

4.8.4.3 Justification of the sampling technique

These sections address the sampling techniques used in the study. For qualitative research design, purposive sampling was used, and interviews were conducted with 2 SMEs per district with 10 SMEs in the Limpopo Province, which have been operational for over five years. The owner or the manager of that particular SME will be interviewed. The researcher used random sampling for a quantitative research design to acquire similar information about the study. One advantage of the random sample is that the researcher will be guaranteed equal representation of each identified stratum dealing with the problem under study. For the study, 120 questionnaires were distributed to SMEs registered with the DEDET. For this research, a purposive sample was selected due to the nature of the respondents. In purposive

sampling, people or other units are chosen for a particular purpose, as the name implies. Purposive sampling may be very appropriate for specific research problems. However, researchers should always explain why they selected their particular sample of participants. Purposive sampling is low-cost, convenient, not time-consuming and ideal for exploratory research design.

4.9 Data Collection Strategies

According to Burns and Groove (2005) "data collection is a systematic way of gathering information relevant to the research purpose, questions, specific objectives or hypotheses of a study". Baha (2016) emphasises that the process of data collection involves the gathering or collection of information. Given the increasing concern regarding the reliability and validity of research results, Larsen (2015) suggests that careless planning is irrelevant to ensuring the unreliability and invalidity of such results. This study confirmed the implementation of adequate planning to effectively gather data, which was achieved through carefully selecting appropriate data collection instruments. Youngs and Piggot (2013) contend that every research instrument has advantages and disadvantages. Researchers should employ qualitative and quantitative data collection methods through triangulation to obtain reliable data. In this study, data were gathered through unstructured interviews and structured questionnaires.

Before the selection of data collection instruments, the advice of Saruchera (2014) was taken into consideration, which states that "the research method or methods should be suitable for the research objective; capable of generating data that is appropriate for testing the hypothesis/hypotheses or addressing the research question(s); feasible considering time, resource constraints, and the practicality of its implementation within a chosen or given context; and ethically "sound". Considering all of these factors, the study employed unstructured interviews and structured questionnaires as the means of data collection, which will be further explained below.

Table 4.4: Methods of Data Collection for this study

Method	Purpose	Advantage	Challenges
Questionnaire	To effectively get information in a non-undermining way	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are anonymous • Cost-effective • Comparative analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impersonal • We may need a sampling expert • Wording can be a bias

Method	Purpose	Advantage	Challenges
Interviews	Gathering an individual's impressions or experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gather a full scope of the depth of information • Develop a relationship with the client 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible • Time-consuming • Requires detailed analysis • Can be costly

Source: Coldwell and Herbst

4.9.1 Administration of the Research Instrument

The primary focus of the research instrument is to provide sufficient quality and representative data to enable the hypotheses testing. Since no secondary data on entrepreneurs in both cities is publicly available, creating a primary dataset was necessary to address the research questions.

4.9.1.1 Interviews

Ibrahim (2014) and Creswell (2013) emphasise the significance of interviews as a subjective and narrative approach encompassing verbal communication, facilitating comprehension of human emotions and social contexts. In addition, interviews are selected in research studies due to their adaptability and capability to produce extensive and all-inclusive data. The researcher optimised an interview guide with semi-structured questions to guide the interview process. The researcher prepared

the interview guide with questions and distributed them among the respondents (SMEs) before the interview. Before the research guide was distributed, the researcher sought permission from the respondents. Qualitative data were collected through individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews. However, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the participants and the researcher agreed to employ telephonic interviews. The researcher undertakes the measured actions during structured interviews (Creswell, 2005).

- Identify the individuals being interviewed;
- Make brief notes during the interview;
- Determine a suitable location to carry out the interview;
- Secure consent from the interviewee to partake in the research;
- Formulate an interview plan; and
- Utilise probes to acquire supplementary information.

The interviews were conducted with the owners of the businesses. This is two-way communication between the researcher (interviewer) and the oral informant/participant (interviewee). This conversation is commonly characterised by questions that aim to collect data. This provides the interviewer knowledge of a subject's origin and structured answers that provide sufficient input. An audio recorder was used to collect data for the study in the Limpopo Province. The equipment benefited the study, enabling the researcher to concentrate, listen and respond better. It also allowed a better discussion flow with no distractions and participants felt less observed. The SME owner-managers were contacted face-to-face and via phone calls. Most participants were approached two to three times before the interviews were conducted.

4.9.1.2 Questionnaire

Cohen (2011) states that employing a questionnaire allows the researcher to obtain responses from many individuals. The data collection process for this study involved the employment of self-administered questionnaires, which were handed out to the owners and managers of SMEs. To ensure comprehensive responses, trained research assistants were responsible for disseminating the questionnaires and encouraging participants to answer all the provided questions. To enhance the reliability of the obtained data, the participants' identities were kept confidential (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). For quantitative data, the researcher used structured questionnaires for the primary population to enhance the researcher's control over the response rate. According to Dawson (2002), quantitative research generates statistics through large-scale survey research using questionnaires.

According to de Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2013), a questionnaire's primary objective is to obtain facts and opinions about a phenomenon from people informed on the issue under study. The researcher designed a semi-structured questionnaire that primarily includes closed questions (for ease of analysis) and has a few open-ended questions to follow up on some closed questions where that may be necessary. In addition, different types of scales will be used to formulate questions to maximise the instrument's depth and effectiveness. This study was conducted strictly with social research ethics such as voluntary consent, anonymity and confidentiality. Before the study, a consent form was obtained from the University Ethics Committee. A covering letter was given to prospective respondents and the information obtained was treated with the utmost confidentiality. The cover letter and research instruments used are presented in Appen

4.9.3 Data Collection Protocol

According to Huang, Liu, Teng, Chen, Zhao, Wang and Wu (2020), COVID-19 can be defined as an ailment brought about by a newly discovered coronavirus, currently identified as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2; previously referred to as 2019-nCoV) and initially detected during an outbreak of respiratory illness cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. On the 23rd of March 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa introduced measures to counter the spread of the

COVID-19 coronavirus within the borders of South Africa. This measure entailed the implementation of a nationwide lockdown of three weeks, encompassing stringent restrictions on travel and movement. The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) was mobilised to enforce this lockdown, commencing at midnight on Thursday, 26th of March and concluding at midnight on Thursday, 16th of April. The President emphasised the necessity for further action to prevent a catastrophic outcome within the population. Consequently, individuals could only leave their residences for essential purposes, such as procuring sustenance, seeking medical assistance or under other extraordinary circumstances.

Before the national lockdown, the researcher embarked on data collection; however, it was halted due to the lockdown. It was challenging to collect data during the advanced stages of the lockdown. The researcher adhered to lockdown rules; however, cracks appeared at the weakest points. The study was based in Limpopo Province, a developing area with remote rural areas that made data collection during the pandemic challenging. However, we adhered to safety protocols and every participant was screened as per the COVID-19 protocols. Social distance was observed among participants and the wearing of a cloth mask affected the study. Furthermore, a hand sanitiser must have at least 70% alcohol content as per the recommendations of the Department of Health (DoH). The researcher responded to any queries that arose during data collection and there was control over the data collection procedure, which enabled the researcher to receive a 93.7% response rate.

4.10 Data validation and pre-testing

The trustworthiness and authenticity of qualitative studies can be evaluated to determine their quality. According to Bryman (2012), establishing and assessing the quality of quantitative research often rely on reliability and validity. However, these measures differ from the focus of qualitative studies such as the current one. A pilot study serves as a rehearsal for the primary survey. A structured questionnaire using open and closed-ended questions was employed to gather information from the participants. Two interviews were conducted as part of the pilot study, with the participation of 5 SMEs. According to the feedback received from the pilot study, the questionnaire and interview schedule were subsequently revised. To ensure clarity

and minimise ambiguity, the respondents were provided with a detailed explanation and clarification on completing the questionnaire before the primary survey.

4.10.1 Quantitative data validation

According to Bryman (2012), trustworthiness is made up of four criteria, each having an equivalent in quantitative research:

- *Credibility*: parallel internal validity, which is about ensuring that the research is carried out correctly and the population confirms the results to show that the researcher understood their social world. After collecting data from all the regions and analysing it, the investigator returned to some respondents and checked with them if the correct information was captured.
- *Transferability*: parallels external validity and produces detailed accounts of the social world rather than focusing on coverage.
- *Dependability*: parallels reliability and is about keeping a record of all phases of the research to establish how well proper procedures are being followed.
- *Confirmability*: parallels objectivity, which is about ensuring that the researcher is objective enough and has not allowed personal feelings, values or perceptions to sway the conduct of the research and the findings thereof. The responses were recorded to check that the researcher listened to the tapes, confirming that what was said was presented in this research.

To ensure the reliability of the study, the researcher sourced data from business owners or administrators who had been operating for a duration exceeding five years. Furthermore, a voice recorder was employed to document the interviews and all tape recordings were maintained and stored along with the field notes. To ensure the reliability of the data, the recordings were employed to supplement any information gaps that may have arisen during the note-taking process. Research assistants were utilised for data collection and after the data collection, engaged in discussions with the principal investigator to ensure the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the findings.

4.10.2 Qualitative data validation

The researcher used the triangulation method to validate the gathered data through interviews by collecting additional data through observations. As stated by Bryman (2012), the authenticity within qualitative research encompasses several critical aspects:

- *Fairness*: the study should fairly and adequately represent various perspectives within the population.
- *Ontological authenticity*: the research should serve the purpose of aiding the population in comprehending their social environment more profoundly.
- *Educative authenticity*: the research should educate other members of the community to appreciate the viewpoints of their fellow members in the social world.
- *Catalytic authenticity*: the research should possess the potential to inspire and influence members to change their circumstances.
- *Tactical authenticity*: the research should empower individuals to take proactive measures within their social world.

To ensure authenticity, the researcher returned to some of the owners and shared with them what was captured, allowing them to make further comments. This permitted the investigator, through continuous discussions that the researcher had with some of the participants, giving the investigator some leverage to interpret what the SME owners have contributed with authority. Authenticity is closely linked to credibility, which was discussed under trustworthiness in the preceding sub-section and is concerned with the correct interpretations of the lived experiences of business owners or managers.

4.11 Data Administration

Data administration refers to managing an organisation's data assets to ensure they are accurate, secure, accessible and aligned with its strategic goals and objectives. It involves various activities related to data governance, management and stewardship.

4.11.1 Administration of the questionnaire

The researcher visited the five districts in the Limpopo Province after making prior arrangements with the contact persons in each region. Most SME operators are in semi-rural and urban areas with challenging accessibility due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Before the national lockdown, the researcher embarked on data collection; however, it was halted due to the lockdown. Communicating and administering questionnaires during the advanced stages of lockdown was challenging. Moreover, specific questionnaires were distributed virtually; on the other hand, the respondents committed six weeks to administer the questionnaires. Using a private vehicle ensured no time was lost and the questionnaires were safe and protected. The questionnaires were distributed, monitored and collected by the researcher and three other hired research assistants who physically handed the questionnaires to the respondents.

4.11.2 Administration of interviews

The researcher visited the five districts in the Limpopo Province after making prior arrangements with the contact persons in each region. The interviews were conducted with the owners of the businesses. This is a two-way communication between the researcher (interviewer) and the oral informant/participant (interviewee). This conversation is commonly characterised by questions that aim to collect data. This provides the interviewer knowledge of a subject's origin and structured answers that provides sufficient input. The transcription was processed after the interview was conducted to document information. The “recording of interviews offers data to achieve a full transcription of the interview” according to Braun *et al.* (2014); and Pickard (2013). The “methods of recording interviews for documentation and analysis included audio recording and note-taking” according to Brinkmann and Kvale (2015). The researcher recognised the emerging themes during the process of conducting research. An audio recorder was used to collect data within the study in the Limpopo Province. The equipment benefited the study, enabling the researcher to concentrate, listen and respond better.

4.12 Data Analysis

Classification and interpretation are necessary for deriving meaning from collected data. The meaning-making process involves analysing the data on various levels and constructing linguistic and visual representations (Flick, 2018). Yin (2017) emphasises the significance of having a general analytical strategy when conducting case studies as the scarcity of available strategies poses a challenge. However, other scholars argue that qualitative researchers can access multiple data analysis approaches that should align with the research project's purpose (Neuman, 2019; Ngulube, 2015). Recognising the range of data analysis methods, Rapley (2011) highlights some fundamental similarities most approaches share. It is noted that qualitative data analysis typically progresses from the specific to the abstract. Neuman (2013) stresses the importance of explicitly stating how data were analysed and asserts that researchers often neglect to do so, resulting in criticism of qualitative research.

According to Tustin (2005), data, once captured and stored as a dataset, become amenable to analysis. Various data analysis methods exist, but this study employed quantitative and qualitative methods. Thematic analysis was utilised to analyse the qualitative research data. Neuman (2019) characterises data analysis as a recursive process encompassing first-, second-, and third-order interpretations. The first-order analysis centres on the perspectives of the study participants, while the second-order interpretation focuses on the researcher's performance. Conversely, the third-order interpretation is highly abstract and draws upon theories, concepts and insights (Neuman, 2014). It is through this third-order synthesis that a comprehensive and coherent depiction is achieved.

Table 4.5: Units of measure, corresponding sources of data and purpose of data

Units of Measure	Source of data	Data collection instruments	Purpose of data
SMEs	SME owners and/or managers	Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine dependent variables like gender, age, academic qualifications and background of business owners or managers. • Determine how SMEs use ICT.
		Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine dependent variables like gender, age, academic qualifications and background of business owners or managers. • Determine the business sector.
Usage of indigenous languages and ICT	SME owners and/or managers	Literature Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine absorptive, adaptive and innovative capabilities construct of SME business. • The government's role in promoting ICT in SMEs development. • Incorporating indigenous languages for SMEs' development.
		Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine how SMEs use ICT and indigenous languages in absorptive, adaptive and innovative capabilities.
Sensing, shaping and seizing capabilities	SME owners and/or managers	Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine how SMEs use ICT and indigenous language in sensing, shaping and seizing capabilities.

Source: Neuman (2019)

4.12.1 Quantitative analysis

Data requires more interpretation by the researcher to identify both implicit and explicit ideas within data (Greg, Kathleen & Emily, 2012) and MAXQDA was used for the data analysis. According to Miglani (2018), there are three major types of descriptive statistics: measures of frequency (frequency), measures of central tendency (mean, median and mode) and measures of dispersion or variation (variance, standard deviation, standard error, quartile, interquartile range, percentile, range and coefficient of variation [CV]) provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Descriptive statistics can describe a single variable (univariate analysis) or more than one variable (bivariate/multivariate analysis). For quantitative research, data were analysed using a software called the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), which has become increasingly user-friendly over the last few years (Dawson, 2002).

Various researchers use SPSS for complex statistical data analysis. In this study, statistical techniques were used to analyse the collected data. Therefore, the collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics such as tables and graphs for demographical information and a summary of all items. Secondly, inferential statistics, such as the cooperation co-efficient linear regression were used to develop a statistical ICT model to enhance the development of SMEs using indigenous languages. However, quantitative data were collected and captured on Excel software and exported to SPSS for analysis. The researcher ensured that the questionnaire was constructed and worded correctly. There are no variations in how the forms are administered to avoid missing or ambiguous information.

4.12.2 Qualitative analysis

Qualitative research aims to gather data that describes intricate specifics about individuals, activities and life occurrences (Neuman, 2017). Data collected for this study was text from the document analysis, transcripts of interviews, audio recordings procured during interviews and notes taken during observation. Neuman (2011) emphasises that data analysis entails systematically organising, integrating and scrutinising while seeking patterns or themes within particular details. As Ngulube, Mathipa and Gumbo (2015) indicated, thematic analysis is an approach for identifying themes and meaning across a dataset concerning a research question. Procedures for thematic data analysis are related to qualitative methods and are generally suitable for hermeneutic (interpretive) phenomenology (Ngulube & Ngulube, 2017). The subsequent steps in thematic data analysis as outlined by Ngulube and Ngulube (2017), can be implemented in a phenomenological study:

- Transcribing the interviews;
- Taking note of items of interest;
- Coding across the entire data;
- Searching for themes;
- Reviewing themes by provisionally mapping them;
- Checking for relationships among themes; and
- Defining and naming the articles.

This study entailed conducting interviews in Xitsonga, Venda and Pedi languages, whereby subsequent translation into English occurred. The researcher diligently listened to the recorded recordings from the interviews and transcribed the contents from video to paper while translating them into English. A comparison was made between the notes the research assistant took during the interviews and the data derived from the tapes, resulting in the implementation of necessary adjustments. The acquired data were then systematically categorised based on the themes from the study's objectives. When assessing the unit of analysis, the researcher must procure data about the company under investigation. The data sources utilised in this study encompassed the following:

1. Literature about the dynamic capability theory and SMEs.
2. Interviews were conducted with SME owners and managers.

4.13 Reliability and Validity

Reliability is “the investigators’ ability to collect and record information accurately” using consistent methods and procedures to analyse the collected data (Brink, 1993; Smith & Noble, 2015). Babbie (2016) states that “reliability is an assessment of the quality of the measurement procedure used to collect data in a study. Reliability is whether a particular technique applied to the same object yields the same result each time”. Brink (1993) believes that a lack of research skills and the social context under which the research is conducted may affect its reliability. Leedy and Ormrod (2019), are of the view that “reliability is the consistency with which a measuring instrument yields certain results when the measured entity has not changed”.

Furthermore, according to Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson (2014), the extent to which a set of variables is consistent in its intended measure is essential for the results' reliability. Equally, reliability will be affected if the participants provide inaccurate information or the researcher uses improper data collection and analysis methods. This means that for the research to be reliable, the researcher needs to be consistent when using analytic procedures and ensure that the human subjects involved in the study are accounted for and managed properly.

The researcher employs purposive sampling to acknowledge biases in selecting participants as it involves judgment. To ensure that this study is trustworthy and dependable, the researcher implemented measures to ensure that the participants who took part in the research were well-informed about the topic and the University of KwaZulu-Natal language policy. This was done to prevent the responses from being speculative and make them trustworthy as the research topic is already known.

In qualitative research, triangulation is commonly used to enhance validity. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) define triangulation as applying and combining multiple approaches to study the same phenomenon. This is done to mitigate any weaknesses or biases from relying solely on one method. The current research drew upon the theoretical and conceptual frameworks established by Frantz Fanon and Ngugi wa' Thiong'o, known

as theoretical triangulation in qualitative research. Yeasmin and Rahman (2012) argue that academic triangulation aids in explaining and analysing the phenomenon under investigation while eliminating alternative interpretations. Based on Babbie (2011), correctness alludes to the extent to which the empirical measurement precisely mirrors the true meaning of the concept under consideration. It also encompasses the ability of the collected data to effectively address the research problem, including its precision and accuracy. For data to be valid, it must be relevant to the explored concepts. Furthermore, it argues that an instrument's validity can be concluded from three perspectives: face and content, concurrent, predictive validity; and construct validity. Face validity refers to the instrument's judgment regarding the logical linkage between the questions asked and the research objectives. Concurrent validity refers to how one agency compares with another when concurrently administered. In contrast, predictive validity refers to how a tool can easily predict or forecast the outcome of a study. Criteria-related validity, which depends on external factors that will be investigated in this study; construct validity which depends on the relationship between the variables identified and content validity depends on the extent to which the meaning is covered by the data relating to the use of ICT for SMEs using indigenous languages in Limpopo.

4.13.1 Reliability testing

It should be remembered that many mathematical measures can be used to assess internal accuracy. Examples include Average Inter-Item Correlation, Average Item Overall Correlation, Split-Half Precision and Cronbach's alpha (Wells & Wollack, 2003). This analysis used Cronbach's alpha as the measurement's intrinsic accuracy test. Cronbach's alpha is also called a test of the homogeneity of the element, i.e., high alpha values mean that the objects are tapping a similar domain. The size of the Cronbach reliability measure varies from 0 to 1. Scores close to 1 indicate that the instrument has good reliability. However, scores close to 0 suggests that the instrument's reliability is inferior (Wells & Wollack, 2000). Most researchers require a reliability of at least 0.7 before using the instrument. In this study, the SPSS Version 28.0 was used to test the reliability of the measuring instrument. Once again, Cronbach's alpha test proved appropriate as it provided a summary of inter-correlations that use ICT for SMEs using indigenous languages in Limpopo.

Table 4.6: Reliability testing

	'ronbach's Alpha	Average Inter-Item Correlation	N of items
Strategic management	0.8	0.279	10
Use of indigenous languages and ICT	0.831	0.331	10
Overall	0.861	0.241	20

Source: Own Table Devised by the Researcher (2023)

4.14 Hallmarks of Qualitative Credibility

According to Polit and Hungler (2013), credibility in qualitative research implies confidence in the data. A study's validity and reliability are justified even though qualitative researchers use various procedures to establish validity and reliability. Moreover, Polit and Hungler (2013) argue that “the credibility of the study, or the confidence in the truth of the research and, therefore, the findings, is the most important criterion”. Leedy and Ormrod (2019) outline credibility as establishing believable research results. Furthermore, it depends on establishing confidence that the results (from the participant's perspective) are trustworthy, credible and believable.

The study used techniques to develop credibility, including extended participant engagement, peer debriefing, member-checking and reflective journaling. The findings should be presented through the iterative questioning of the data, returning to examine it several times. Interviewers spent an average of 6-8 weeks per district engaging with participants. The participants/readers possess the exclusive ability to evaluate the findings' authenticity reasonably.

4.14.1 Confirmability

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2019), confirmability “refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others. There are several strategies for enhancing confirmability”. Confirmability questions how the research findings are supported by the collected data. This process ensures that the researcher has been one-sided during the study because qualitative research permits a unique perspective. Moreover, an external researcher can decide whether this is the situation by studying the data collected during the original inquiry. Nickasch, Marnocha, Grebe, Scheelk and Kuehl (2016) argue that enhancing confirmability is essential while incorporating an audit trail that can be completed throughout the study to demonstrate how each decision was made. Through the analysis, the researchers documented procedures for verifying the collected data.

Another researcher can take a “devil’s advocate” role concerning the results and this process can be established. The researcher can search for and describe negative instances that contradict prior observations. Polit and Hungler (2013) debate various methodologies for verifying data’s value and legitimacy per a set of standards for judging qualitative research. Moreover, many quantitative researchers see the alternative criteria as relabeling the successful quantitative measures to accrue greater legitimacy for qualitative research.

4.14.2 Transferability

Polit and Hungler (2013) describe transferability as the “degree to which findings benefit individuals within divergent contexts”. It is distinct from other facets of research in that the readers determine the ‘results’ applicability to their specific circumstances. Furthermore, another disparity from other aspects of research lies in the fact that the readers themselves ascertain the pertinence of the outcomes to their conditions. Furthermore, transferability refers to how the study can be transferred to different contexts. The reader notes the specific details of the research situation and methods and compares them to a similar situation that they are more familiar with.

Amankwaa (2016) argues that qualitative researchers focus on the informants and their narratives, refraining from asserting that these accounts represent the entire population. The study's transferability is detailed upon a comprehensive depiction of the contextual background, geographical location and individuals under examination as well as a commitment to transparency regarding the analysis process and the reliability of the findings. Furthermore, the credibility of the original research would be enhanced if the particulars were amenable to comparison. The primary investigator furnishes an intricately detailed portrayal of their circumstances and methodologies.

4.14.3 Dependability

According to Polit and Hungler (2013), dependability can be defined as the consistency and constancy of the data and the conditions under which the study is conducted. It is comparable to reliability in quantitative research, although assessing the requirements' stability relies on the study's specific nature. Nickas, Marnocha, Grebe, Scheelk and Kuehl (2016) elucidate that the procedures for ensuring dependability encompass the maintenance of an audit trail consisting of process logs and engaging in peer debriefings with a colleague. Process logs are researcher notes of all activities during the study and decisions about aspects of the study, such as whom to interview and what to observe. Other researchers need to replicate the results to show that those results are a product of independent research methods and not conscious or unconscious bias. The study focused on the individual interview to address the dependability issue more directly; the processes within the study should be reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results.

4.15 Ethical considerations

McGivern (2006) argues that it is of utmost importance for researchers to recognise their moral duty towards the individuals and organisations involved in the project. In instances of conflict, the participants' rights should be prioritised. Van der Wal (2006) argues that researchers must safeguard the physical, social and emotional well-being of the individuals being investigated while upholding their dignity and privacy. Both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies present ethical challenges that

emerge during the collection of data in the field and the subsequent analysis and dissemination of research findings (Creswell, 2007).

Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) presents four ethical considerations to which a researcher should pay attention: informed consent, right to privacy, protection from harm and involvement of the researcher. Bryman (2012) also highlights four primary areas of ethical principles, which include:

- whether there is harm to participants;
- whether there is a lack of informed consent;
- whether there is invasion of privacy; and
- whether deception is involved.

Participation in the study was considered and dependent on the specialist's capacity to provide informed consent. All the data and information accumulated were dealt with vigilantly and not accessed by anyone without prior permission. Also, the participants were allowed to withdraw whenever they could not complete the questionnaire. There are ethical guidelines for surveys that a researcher should consider. The following guidelines focus on how ethics were addressed in the study:

- **Permission to conduct the research:**

The researcher acknowledged the consent of the participants. Ethical clearance was obtained in writing from the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal. (see Appendix A). Permission was obtained in writing from the research department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET) (see Appendix B).

- **Informed consent:**

According to McGivern (2006), "informed consent relates to the principle of voluntary participation in research". Furthermore, Leedy and Omrod (2019) describe informed consent by outlining the nature of the research project and the nature of one's participation. The study's objectives were discussed with participants through a cover letter attached to the questionnaire (see Appendices C and E). The researcher

informed the participants that participation was voluntary and they could withdraw from the study any time.

- **Confidentiality and anonymity:**

Gray, Williamson, Karp and Dalphin (2007) highlight the importance of ensuring participants' anonymity and confidentiality and data provided where respondents' well-being and interests must be protected. The participants were informed about the research and the study's objectives. The questionnaire's cover letter (see Appendix C and E) clearly outlines the research aim and the willingness to participate in the study.

- **Availability of results:**

The results of the study will be made accessible to interested stakeholders. The participants were assured of their privacy in taking care of their responses and their opportunity to withdraw their support should they decide to do so. No reference was made to any individual presenting the results, data analysis and discussion of the findings. The respondents were well-informed that the survey data would be classified and destroyed after five years.

- **Justice and beneficence:**

According to Creswell (2013), justice requires treating all participants fairly. The research will ultimately benefit SME owners/managers and the Limpopo province. The study was advantageous rather than harmful, empowering rural-based SMEs. Moreover, to avoid the potential harm to participants or discomfort their names or identities would not be disclosed.

4.16 Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 discussed the research methodology as the guideline for conducting the study. The researcher used a qualitative and quantitative approach using individual face-to-face interviews and semi-structured questionnaires. The research sample was derived from 10 face-to-face interviews with the owners/managers of the businesses. SMEs are registered with the DEDET in the Limpopo province. The population drawn for the study has been defined as all SMEs registered with the DEDET. The chapter also indicated how the validity and reliability of the research instruments were determined. Finally, the chapter explained the data analysis techniques used in the study. In the next chapter we will discuss and analyse the data accumulated from the interviews.

CHAPTER 5

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses data accumulated from the questionnaires that were examined and analysed. However, data were analysed and coordinated into classifications in research to introduce research practitioners. Furthermore, the chapter presented the study's findings from the data collected through in-depth interviews, observation and document analysis. All data accumulated from the interviews will be examined and analysed. Communicating the results concisely and clearly by providing the maximum required information and reinforcing critical points is essential. Thus, the research aimed to empirically investigate the appropriation of ICT by SMEs with the significant utilisation of indigenous languages, the development market, the improvement of their business and the challenges experienced. The study focused on SMEs' development, encouraging them to discern the benefits of utilising innovation in business, improving their daily operations market and increasing their demand. The first part of the chapter presents the findings of the bank questionnaire, while the results of the SME questionnaire are presented in the second part.

In this section, the analysis and discussion of qualitative data are presented. The study used two data collection techniques: interviews (qualitative) and questionnaires (quantitative). The software program, known as MAXQDA was used for the data analysis. The questionnaire was the primary tool used to collect quantitative data. It was distributed to SMEs with over five years of operation registered with the DEDET. The accompanying tests were used to examine the quantitative information. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations were used where applicable. Data collection was drawn from Limpopo Province's DEDET, with SMEs that have been operational for more than five years and have been registered.

Data were collected from five municipal districts with diverse indigenous languages; namely, Xitsonga, Sepedi, Tshivenda, SiSwati and isiNdebele. The population for the research has been defined as all SMEs registered with the DEDET. Thus, the study focus and population for the research are all SMEs registered with the DEDET with more than five years of operation. The researcher used random sampling for a quantitative research design to acquire similar information about the study. The data collected from the responses were analysed using MAXQDA.

The results in this chapter consists of descriptive statistics (graphs, cross-tabulations and figures). The interview schedule was divided into two sections. Section A includes the respondent's biographical details and preliminary questions and Section B is based on the study's research objectives. For the qualitative approach, 10 respondents were interviewed in this study. The interviews were conducted on 2 SMEs per district with 10 SMEs in Limpopo Province, which have been operational for over five years.

The owner or the manager of the SME will be interviewed. Qualitative data were supposed to be collected through individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews; however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the respondents and researcher agreed on the telephonic interviews. The researcher used random sampling for a quantitative research design to acquire similar information about the study. The data collected for this study was text from document analysis, interview transcripts and audio recordings obtained during interviews and notes made during observations.

5.2 Data Validity and Reliability

According to Sürücü & Maslakçı (2020), the validity and reliability of the scales used in research are important factors that enable the research to yield healthy results. For this reason, it is useful to understand how the reliability and validity of the scales are measured correctly by the researchers. The main purpose of this study is to provide information on how the researchers test the validity and reliability of the scales used in their empirical studies and to provide resources for future research.

5.2.1 Analysis testing

The data were introduced in recurrence tables and charts and further dissected utilising various tests, according to Kaliyadan and Kulkarni (2019). Descriptive statistics summarise the studied sample without drawing any inferences based on probability theory and help summarise data in simple quantitative measures such as percentages or means or visual summaries such as histograms and box plots. Using tools such as scatter plots, descriptive statistics can help summarise relationships between variables for more than one variable (Kaliyadan & Kulkarni, 2019). Frequencies were represented in tabular or graphical form. Additional tests employed for data analysis encompassed the Chi-square goodness-of-fit test, Regression analysis, Binomial test, Pearson's and Spearman's correlation and ne-sample test: a practical analysis test was chosen to collect data properly.

The Chi-square goodness-of-fit test was utilised to detect selected response options with a significantly higher frequency than others. This approach was applied across all sections where the responses were categorized and ordered. Where a 5-point Likert agreement was used, a one-sample T-test was used to test for significant agreement or disagreement. Specifically, the average agreement score was evaluated against the central three scores. Spearman's correlation explored the monotonic relationship between a comprehensive awareness measurement and performance. Regression analysis was utilised to investigate the impact of all composite measures constructed on the performance observed in 2019. The binomial test was employed to assess whether a substantial proportion of individuals indicated that they had received different forms of support or not.

5.2.2 Descriptive analysis of variables

This section provides a descriptive quantitative data analysis collected using structured questionnaires for the primary population to enhance the researcher's control over the response rate. The data collection started on the 10th of February 2020 till 25th June 2021. The concept of response rate pertains to the number of individuals who provided answers to the survey or engaged in the interview process. Curtis and Cutis (2016) also argue that the number of participants in a case study deliberately selected rather than randomly chosen is comparatively more minor.

O'Leary (2017) further recommends that quantitative data supplement a smaller sample in qualitative research. Accordingly, 130 respondents responded to the study; however, many missing data and non-responses were found in the 10 respondents' (14/130) response rate. The 116 respondents, representing a response rate of 89% (116/130) were fully completed. The 116 useful reports were considered an appropriate sample size as the study aimed not to generalise the conclusions reached to the entire South African population. The following section provides the study's quantitative statistical analysis and interpretations based on the 98.8% valid response rate.

5.2.3 Reliability Statistics

Reliability and validity are the two most important aspects of precision in quantitative data. Reliability is computed by taking several measurements on the same subjects. Table 5.1 below reflects Cronbach's Alpha score (reliability testing) for all the items that constituted the questionnaire.

Table 5.1 Cronbach's Alpha score

	Cronbach's Alpha	Average Inter-Item Correlation	N of items
Strategic management	0.8	0.279	10
Use of indigenous languages and ICT	0.831	0.331	10
Overall	0.861	0.241	20

Source: Devised by the Researcher (2022)

A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered acceptable. The reliability scores for all sections exceed the recommended Cronbach's alpha value. This indicates a substantial degree of acceptability and reliability for these research sections.

5.2.4 Trustworthiness

This study has assured the trustworthiness through the consistent application of the qualitative methods in the mixed method research design. According to Baxter and Jack (2008), the basic approach to achieve trustworthiness in a mixed method study is ensuring that the research questions are clearly written, purposeful sampling strategies are appropriately applied, data were collected, managed systematically and analysed correctly. Accordingly, the MAXQDA (2022) technique has been used to enhance the trustworthiness and reliability of the analysis and findings thereof in the study.

Table 5.2 Metadata and Data profile

Document name	Coded Segments	Paragraphs	Sentences	Words	Characters
Respondent A	38	33	68	788	5092
Respondent B	29	34	62	602	3905
Respondent C	28	34	77	724	4374
Respondent D	31	33	63	649	4069
Respondent E	32	33	63	669	4327
Respondent F	27	33	58	528	3498
Respondent G	22	34	79	882	5060
Respondent H	23	36	60	546	3378

Source: Field data (2022)

The Table 5.2 above shows the metadata and data profile of the qualitative data that has been analysed. The table illustrates the number of participants, the coding and the content of the coded segments.

5.3 Demographics and socio-economic profile

The demographics and socio-economic profile of the respondents consists of information in relation to business location, age of owner/manager, gender of owner/manager and highest qualifications, which play a vital role in understanding the conditions and context of the SME being managed by the participants of the study. The study analysed demographic data of SMEs, exploring the appropriation of ICT with the significant utilisation of indigenous languages, the development market and improvement of their business and the challenges experienced. This section summarises the biographical characteristics of the respondents. According to Gebre and Gebremedhin (2019), urbanization entails broader transformations that benefit the wider population, including the rural population. It has seen a need to create employment to eradicate poverty. However, participants indicate that most of their businesses benefit from the influx of people within the district.

5.3.1 Business location

As outlined in Table 5.3 the respondents' profile relates to the selected responses' business location within the Limpopo province.

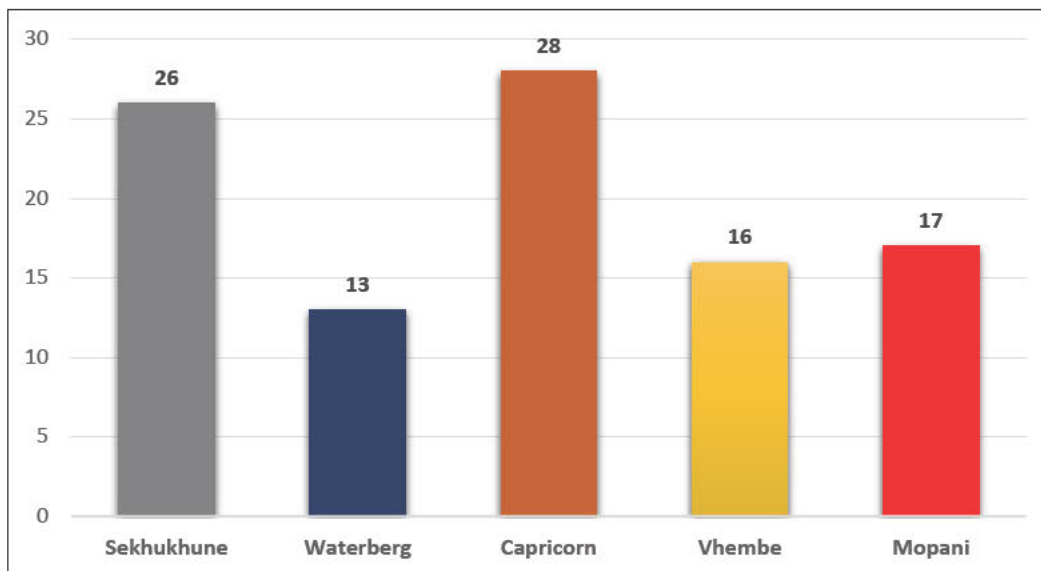
Table 5.3 Business location

Variable	Categories	(n)	(%)
Business location: District Municipality	Sekhukhune	29,9	26
	Waterberg	15,4	13
	Capricorn	32,7	28
	Vhembe	18,5	16
	Mopani	19,5	17
	Total	116	100

Source: Devised by the Researcher (2022)

As outlined in Figure 5.1 the respondents' profile relates to the selected responses' business location within the Limpopo province. Within the five district municipalities, Capricorn has the highest number of businesses (28%) and the capital city of Limpopo Province, Polokwane. According to Gebre and Gebremedhin (2019), this illustrates that urbanisation entails broader transformations that benefit the wider population, including the rural population. It has seen a need to create employment to eradicate poverty compared to Sekhukhune as the second at 26% and third Mopani at 17%. Furthermore, the Vhembe district municipality is at 16% and Waterberg is the lowest at 13%.

Figure 5.1: Business location



Source: Field data (2022)

In the study, the business location drawn for the research has been defined as all SMEs registered with the DEDET and having been in operation for more than five years. Thus, most businesses are in the cities with better employment and education opportunities, better health, greater access to social services and opportunities for social and cultural activities.

5.3.2 Age of participants

As outlined in Table 5.4 the respondents' profile below relates to age.

Table 5.4 Age of participants'

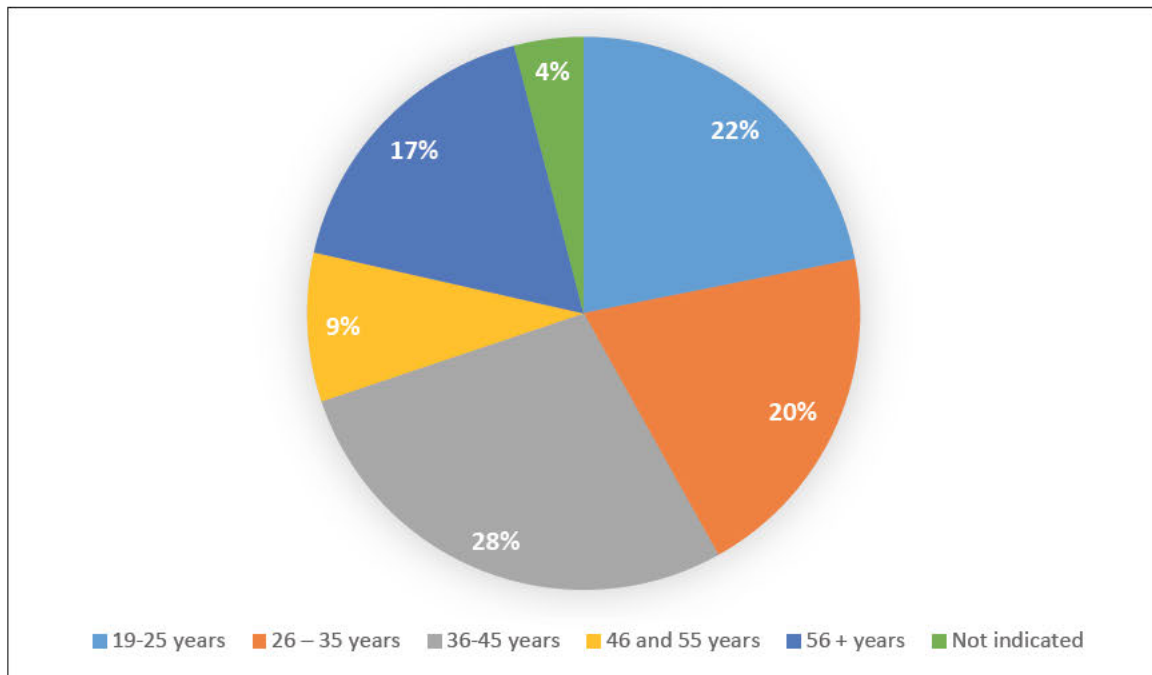
Variable	Categories	(n)	(%)
Age of participants	19-25 years	25	21,6
	26 – 35 years	23	19,8
	36-45 years,	32	27,6
	46 and 55 years	10	8,6
	56 + years	20	17,2
	Not indicated	6	4
	Total	116	100

Source: Devised by the Researcher (2022)

The study Figure 5.2 below depicts the respondents' age and shows the age range of business owners/managers. About 21,6% of the participants was in the range of 19-25 with the range of 26-35 at 19,8%. Smith (2021) states that “South Africa boasts exceptional women entrepreneurs who are already playing a critical role in jump-starting the economy and getting the country’s food security, job creation and financial stability back on track after a tumultuous year”.

These respondents were youth, while 27,6% of the respondents were in the age range of 36-45 years and business owners/managers or about 8,6% were between 46-55 years of age. Furthermore, the age of respondents 56 plus is 17,2% and 4% is not indicated. Smith (2021) argues that the lack of jobs among young people has consequences on their health, wellbeing and future.

Figure 5.2: Age of participants



Source: Field data (2022)

Hence one of the ways to get young people into the labour market is through youth entrepreneurship. Not only does it provide employment prospects to inexperienced youth, but it also impacts economic growth through new jobs, increased competition and innovation.

5.3.3 Gender of Participants

As outlined in Table 5.5 the respondents' profile relates to the selected respondents' age within the Limpopo province.

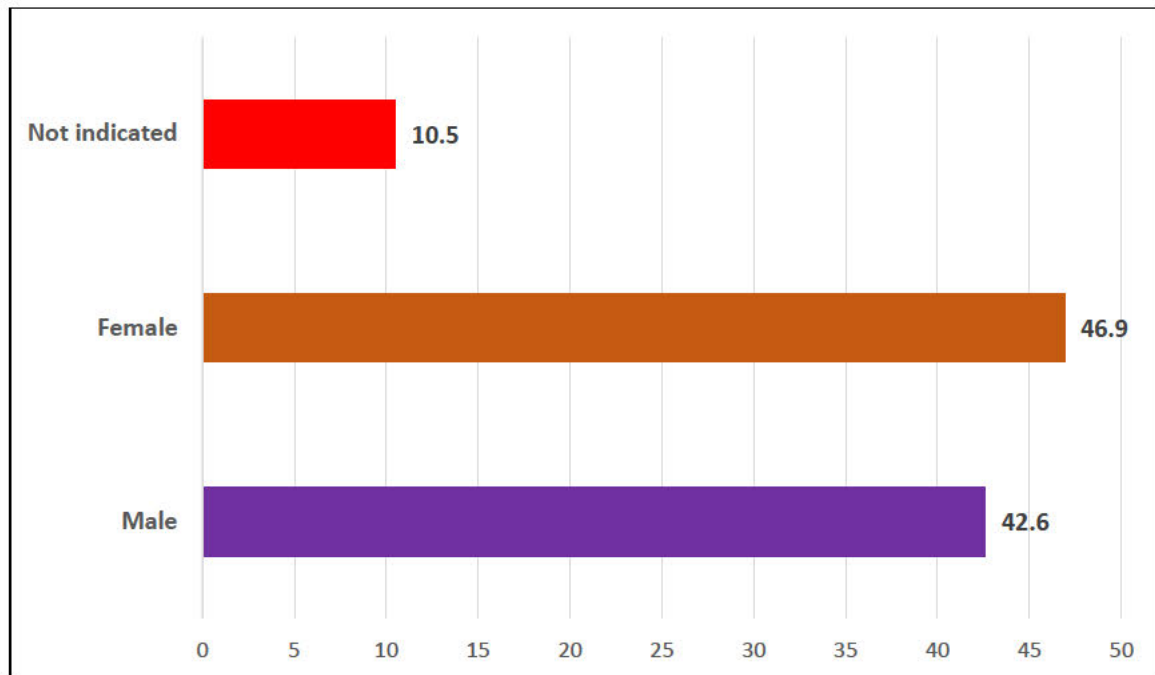
Table 5.5 Gender of participants'

Variable	Categories	(n)	(%)
Gender of participants'	Male	49,4	42,6
	Female	54,4	46,9
	Not indicated	12,2	10,5
	Total	116	100

Source: DeVised by the Researcher (2022)

The study Figure 5.3 below depicts the respondents' age and shows the age range of business owners/managers. The bar chart below shows that male business owners/managers constitute 42,6% of the respondents while their female counterparts constitute 46,9% while 10,5% are not indicated. The above findings show that most of the respondents in Limpopo province engaged in SME activities are females.

Figure 5.3: Gender of participants



Source: Field data (2022)

This supported Smith (2021) statement that “women entrepreneurs are making strides to overcome gender-related biases and advance their businesses in South Africa, but they still face several structural and social obstacles, many of which have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic”.

5.3.4 Highest Qualifications

It was essential to establish the importance of education, particularly in managing or operating businesses. The study was based on the respondents' level of qualification and was crucial in determining whether they understood the importance of education in running a business.

As outlined in Table 5.6 the respondents' profile relates to their qualifications.

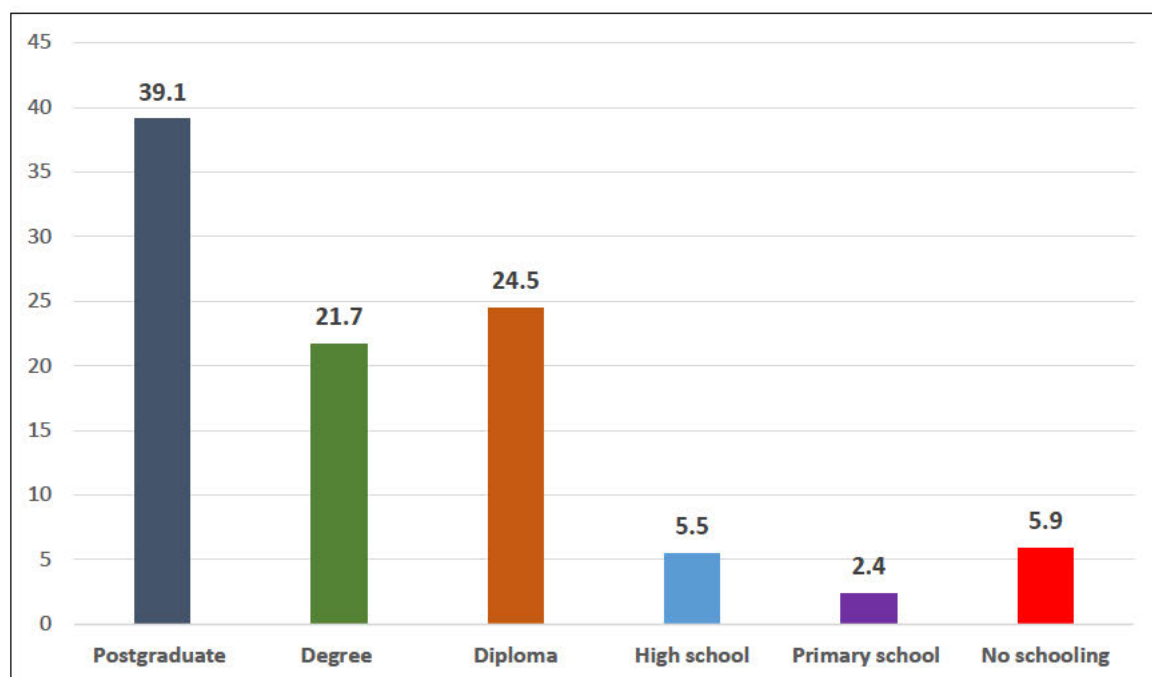
Table 5.6 Qualifications of participants'

Variable	Categories	(n)	(%)
Qualifications of participants'	Postgraduate	45,3	39,1
	Degree	25,2	21,7
	Diploma	29,5	25,4
	High school	6,4	5,5
	Primary school	2,8	2,4
	No schooling	6,8	5,9
	Total		116

Source: Devised by the Researcher (2022)

Figure 5.4 illustrates variations in the participants' educational levels, encompassing those with no formal qualifications and individuals holding degrees. The study aims to illustrate the relationship between the qualifications of the SME operator and the proficiencies and expertise required for the tasks performed in the SME enterprise.

Figure 5.4: Highest Qualifications



Source: Field data (2022)

The 5,9% not indicated implies that the number did not reveal their academic level. Only 2,4% of the total business owners have a formal primary school, while 5,5% have a high school level. Smith (2021) further argues that “gaining business knowledge, developing lifelong analytical and evaluative skills and understanding processes that rule the contemporary world”. Furthermore, 25,4% of owners/managers have a diploma qualification, while 21,7% of participants have a formal degree qualification. Some respondents were not comfortable disclosing their qualifications. As per the results, most of the respondents’ highest qualification is postgraduate at 39,1%. The study summarised demographic data of SMEs, revealing that 28% of businesses are located in the Capricorn district municipality. Thus, most city businesses have better employment and education opportunities; the study has established that females own most businesses at 46,9%. These respondents, at 27,6%, were in the age range of 36-45 years. Most of the respondents are literate, with the majority having attained a certificate in postgraduate studies (39.1%).

5.4 Business and Sector Profile

This section of the research presents the organisational information of the respondents; namely, a form of business enterprises, years in business, industry or sector of the business, the number of years in business and annual turnover. This section of the research presents the organisational information of the respondents; namely, a form of business enterprise, years in business, industry or sector of the business, the number of years in business and annual turnover. Companies that wish to transact with the government and the formal sector or access specific government support are generally required to be registered with the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC).

This industry can play a critical role in helping address the recent challenges on the South African economy. Still, it needs the willingness and, more importantly, the action of all stakeholders to succeed. According to Boshoff and Fourie (2020), agriculture is the backbone of South Africa's economy and it has grown by 22% in the last five years, contributing 2.2% to the country's GDP. However, only the well-developed commercial farming sector in South Africa is the backbone of the country’s agricultural economy.

5.4.1 Forms of business enterprises

As outlined in Table 5.7 the respondents' profile relates to the selected responses' forms of business enterprises in the Limpopo province.

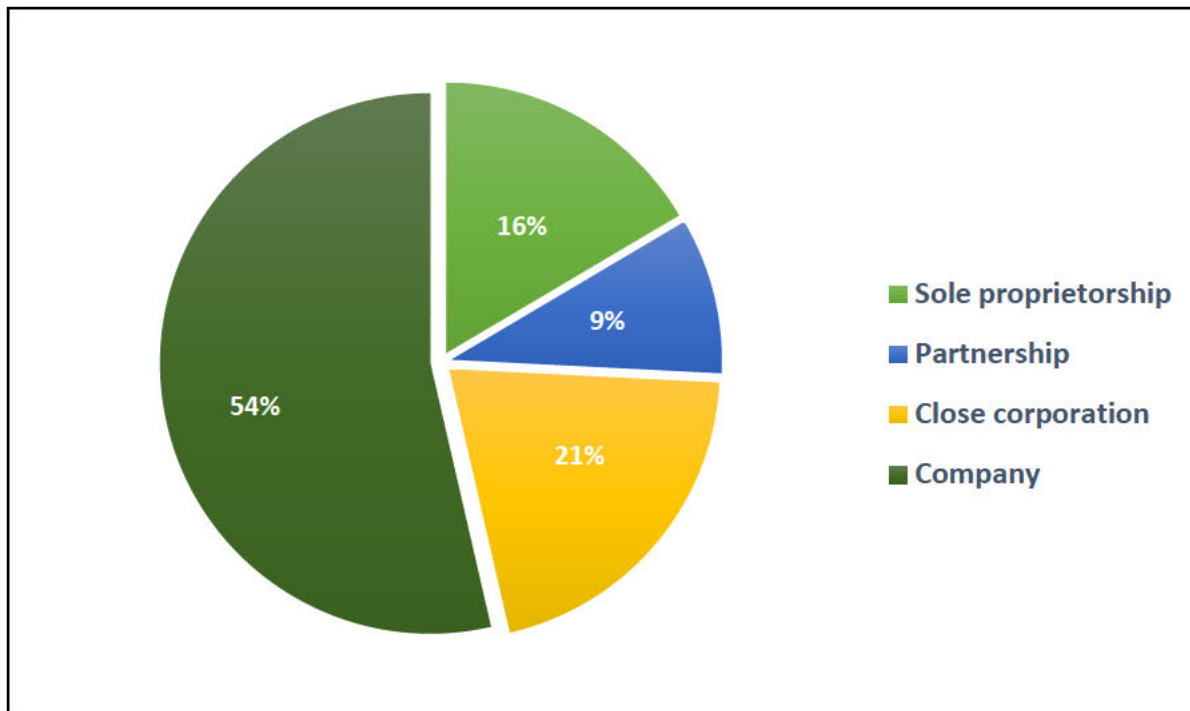
Table 5.7: Forms of business enterprises

Variable	Categories	(n)	(%)
Business Form	Sole proprietorship	16.0	19,1
	Partnerships	9.0	13,2
	Close corporations	21.0	18,4
	Company	54.0	49,3
	Total	116	100

Source: Devised by the Researcher (2022)

In the study, Figure 5.5 below depicts the respondents' business forms. Jade (2019) acknowledges the South African government's role in easing unemployment and stimulating economic growth. About 9% of businesses were partnerships, with sole proprietorship at 16%. However, 21% of the respondents were in close corporations, with companies at the 54%. Ayandibu and Houghton (2017) affirms the importance of SMEs as essential for a competitive and efficient market; they are critical for poverty reduction and play a significant role in developing countries.

Figure 5.5: Forms of business enterprises



Source: Field data (2022)

Most businesses are sole proprietors, where the owner maintains 100% control and ownership and is entitled to all the profits. Sole proprietorships are smaller, one-person businesses. This has shown an increase in business; they grow larger, partners come on board or the business is registered as a Pty Ltd. This means that a large portion of global businesses was, at one stage, sole proprietorships before business growth. This, furthermore, shows the potential development of the business.

5.4.2 Business sector and economic clusters

As outlined in Table 5.8 the respondents' profile relates to the selected responses' business and sector profile in the Limpopo province.

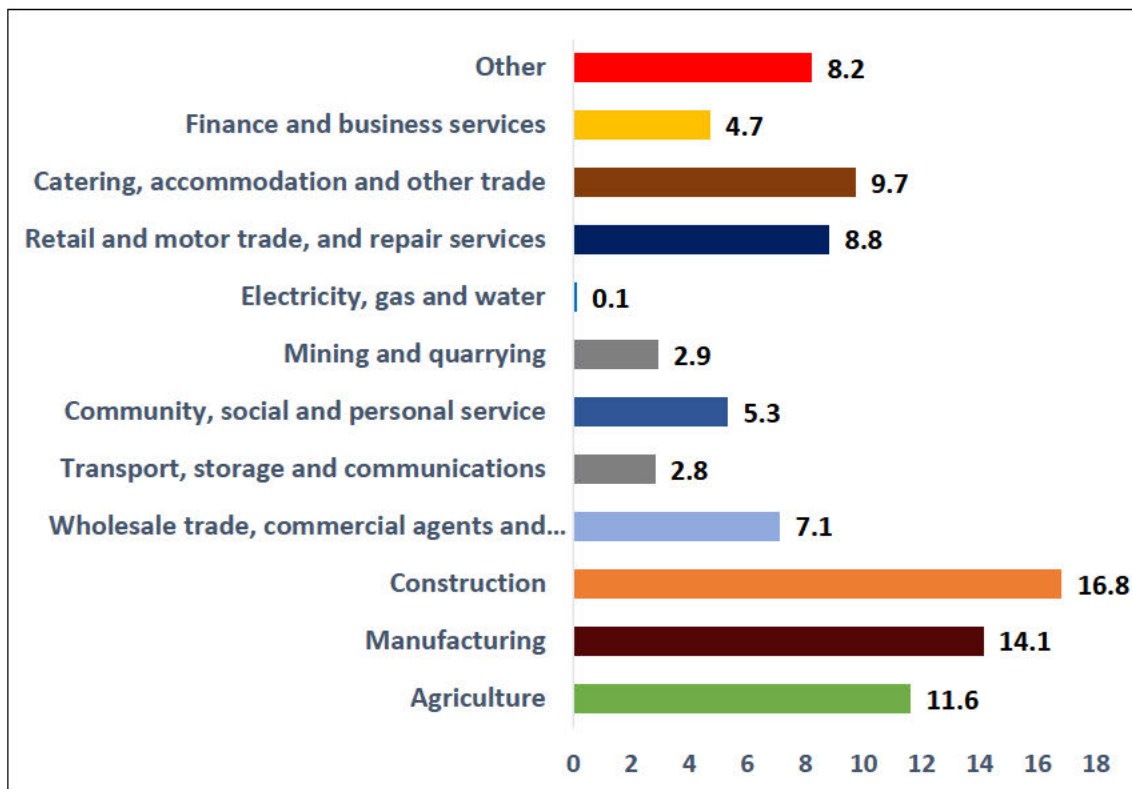
Table 5.8: Business and sector profile

Variable	Categories	(n)	(%)
Economic clusters	Agriculture	13,4	11,6
	Manufacturing	16,4	14,1
	Construction	19,5	16,8
	Wholesale trade, commercial agents and allied services	8,2	7,1
	Transport, storage and communications	3,3	2,8
	Community, social and personal service	6,2	5,3
	Mining and quarrying	3,4	2,9
	Electricity, gas and water	9,2	0,1
	Retail and motor trade and repair services	10,2	8,8
	Catering, accommodation and other trade	11,3	9,7
	Finance and business services	5,4	4,7
	Other	9,5	8,2
	Total	116	100

Source: Devised by the Researcher (2022)

Figure 5.6 shows respondents' various business sectors or sub-sectors. The majority of the businesses (16.8%) are operating in the construction sector, while manufacturing (14.1%) and agriculture (11.6%) follows closely. Ayandibu and Houghton (2017), states that the “business sector play a massively important role with many innovative products, new delivery models and general innovations are often driven by the SME sector”.

Figure 5.6 Business sector and economic clusters



Source: Field data (2022)

They are followed by catering, accommodation and other trade (9,7%), retail and motor trade and repair services (8,8%) while other economic clusters are at (8,2%). While wholesale trade, commercial agents and allied services comprise 7,1%. Business sectors are essential in development, better placed to take advantage of the deregulating sector and are nimbler and hungrier than their larger corporate peers. Community, social and personal services at 5,3% is followed by mining and quarrying at 2,9%, while finance and business services are at 4,7% . The two sectors that are the lowest are mining and quarrying at 2,9% and electricity, gas and water at 0,1%.

According to Ayandibu and Houghton (2017), SMEs have a narrow range of products/services and a relatively simple and unsophisticated management structure with a limited risk tolerance range. Individual SMEs experience difficulties achieving economies of scale in the purchase of inputs and are often unable to take advantage of market opportunities that require large production quantities, homogenous standards and regular supply. However, Skudder (2021) argues that the construction sector is one of the most critical sectors worldwide, representing about 13% of global employment.

5.4.3 Number of employees in organisations

As outlined in Table 5.9 the respondents' profile relates to the selected responses' total number of employees in organisations in the Limpopo province.

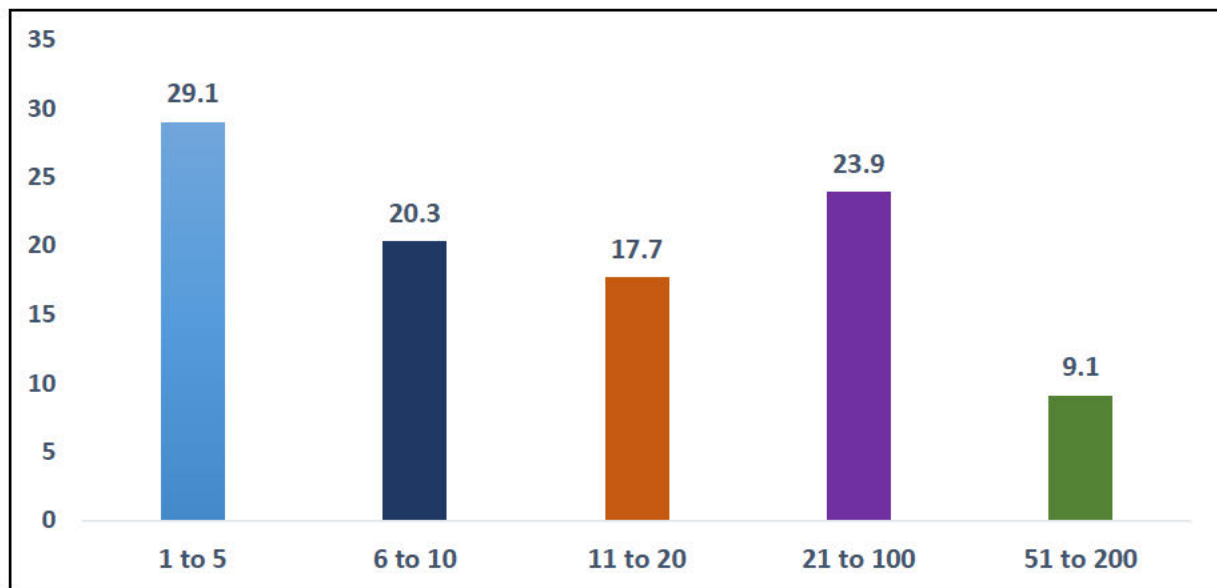
Table 5.9: Number of employees in organisations

Variable	Categories	(n)	(%)
Number of Employees in organisations	1 to 5	33,7	29,1
	6 to 10	23,6	20,3
	11 to 20	20,5	17,7
	21 to 100	27,7	23,9
	51 to 200	10,5	9,1
	Total		116

Source: Devised by the Researcher (2022)

Figure 5.7 below depicts the total number of respondents' employees. According to Ayandibu and Houghton (2017), SMEs are considered those enterprises which have fewer than 250 employees. In the current study, 29,1% was in the range of 1 to 5, with the range of 6 to 10 at 20,3%. In distinguishing between small and medium-sized enterprises, a small enterprise is defined as an enterprise with fewer than 50 employees. Furthermore, 11 to 20 is at 17,7% and the respondents were in the age range of 21 to 50 with (23,9%), and the lowest percentage of the total number of employees at 9,1% was between 51 to 200. These businesses are often called SMEs and are traditionally associated with owner-operators.

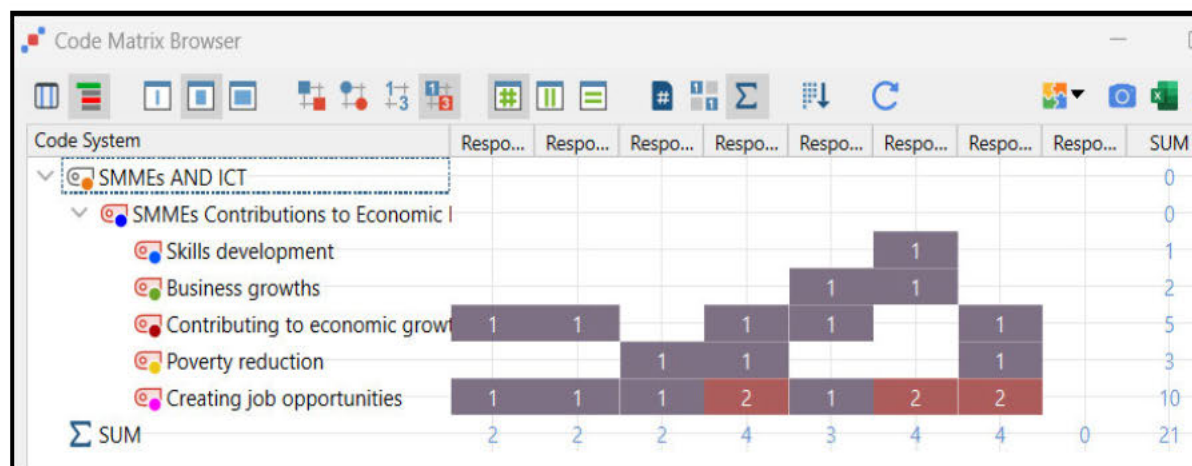
Figure 5.7: Number of employees



Source: Field data (2022)

Thulo (2019) predicts that rural and underdeveloped areas have the potential to create SME opportunities. Insufficient transportation, state-of-the-art cold storage, better irrigation and private power generation will make agriculture projects more productive and competitive in the export market. As illustrated in the figure below, SMEs play a significant role in local economic development (LED). Similarly, the qualitative data state the specific contributions that are made by SMEs in the context of the study. These contributions include skills development, business development, poverty reduction and the creation of job opportunities.

Figure 5.8: Contributions to Economic Development



Source: Field data (2022)

Remarkably, the creation of job opportunities has emerged as the most common response from the empirical data in relation to economic development in the Limpopo Province. The indigenous language of the locality is also important in the profiling of the businesses.

5.4.4 Types of indigenous languages

As outlined in Table 5.10 the respondents' profile relates to the selected responses' type of indigenous languages in the Limpopo province. In the context of the study, these categories of indigenous languages reflect the language demographics of the Limpopo Province.

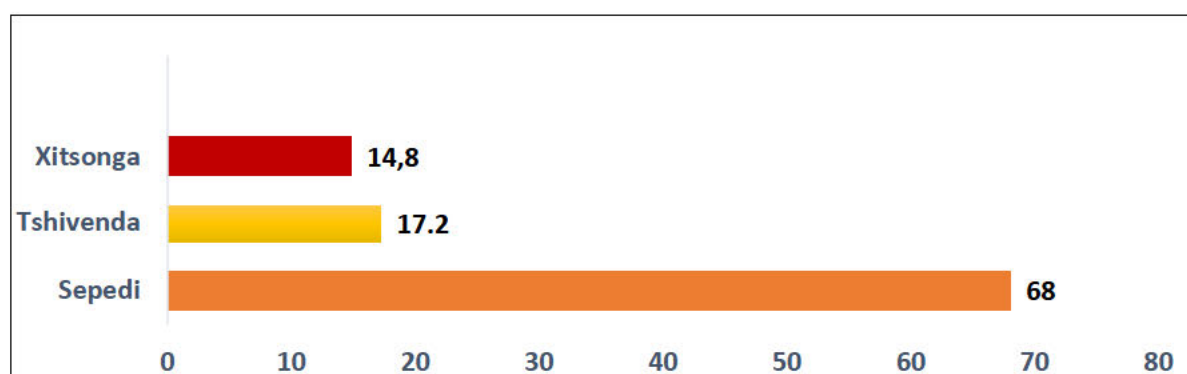
Table 5.10: Type of indigenous language

Variable	Categories	(n)	(%)
Indigenous language	Sepedi	78,9	68,0
	Tshivenda	19,9	17,2
	Xitsonga	17,2	14,8
	Total	116	100

Source: Devised by the Researcher (2022)

Based on the results below, three dominating indigenous languages are spoken in the setting of the study. Mawela, Ochara and Twinomurinzi (2017) argue that “any language has the right to live and, like any other language, also has the right to transform and die when circumstances so demand”. Most business owners or managers utilise Sepedi (68%) in the province and a further 17,2% utilise Tshivenda. Furthermore, embracing indigenous languages can provide opportunities for real inclusion, meaningful transformation and sustainable economic growth. The lowest percentage is 14,8% for Xitsonga-spoken business owners or managers. Moreover, Malgas and Zondi (2020) maintains that a language is a fundamental right that enables people to function fully as members of the linguistic group they are born in.

Figure 5.9: Types of spoken indigenous languages



Source: Field data (2022)

Moreover, Mawela, Ochara and Twinomurinzi (2017) argue that the government is trying to support all languages – particularly indigenous black languages. Language and culture analysts say this will be long and arduous. Rather than being an unnecessary cost, embracing our rich linguistic heritage can enable better futures for all South Africans. Furthermore, to achieve national development in all areas, indigenous languages become pertinent in communicating information related to national development goals. This is because leaders and stakeholders in these areas need to effectively communicate information about their goals to the grassroots people, most of whom use indigenous languages as their primary and, most times, sole language of interaction.

5.4.5 Business experience

As outlined in Table 5.11 the respondents' profile relates to the selected responses' business experience in the Limpopo Province.

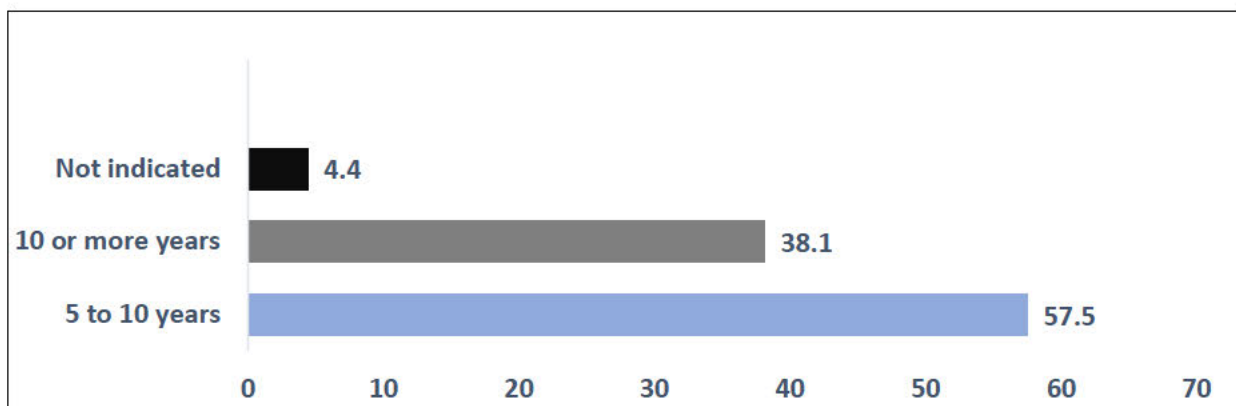
Table 5.11: Business experience

Variable	Categories	(n)	(%)
Business experience	Five to 10 years	66,7	57,5
	10 or more years	44,2	38,1
	Not indicated	5,1	4,4
	Total	116	100

Source: Devised by the Researcher (2022)

Figure 5.10 below depicts the number of years the business has been in operation for. In the current study 57,5 % of businesses have been operating for 5 to 10 years, while 38,1% of businesses have been operating for 10 years or more. Furthermore, 4,4% of respondents have not indicated their years in operation. Most small businesses take at least 2 to 3 years to be profitable and become genuinely successful once they have hit the 7 to 10-year mark. Thus, the study's focus and population drawn for the research have been defined as all SMEs registered with the DEDET with more than five years in operation.

Figure 5.10: Business experience



Source: Field data (2022)

5.4.6 Business income and profit

As outlined in Table 5.12 the respondents' profile relates to the selected responses' business income and profit of the sampled population of the study. The empirical data as illustrated in the table shows a wide range of income categories of SMEs that were studied for the purpose of this study.

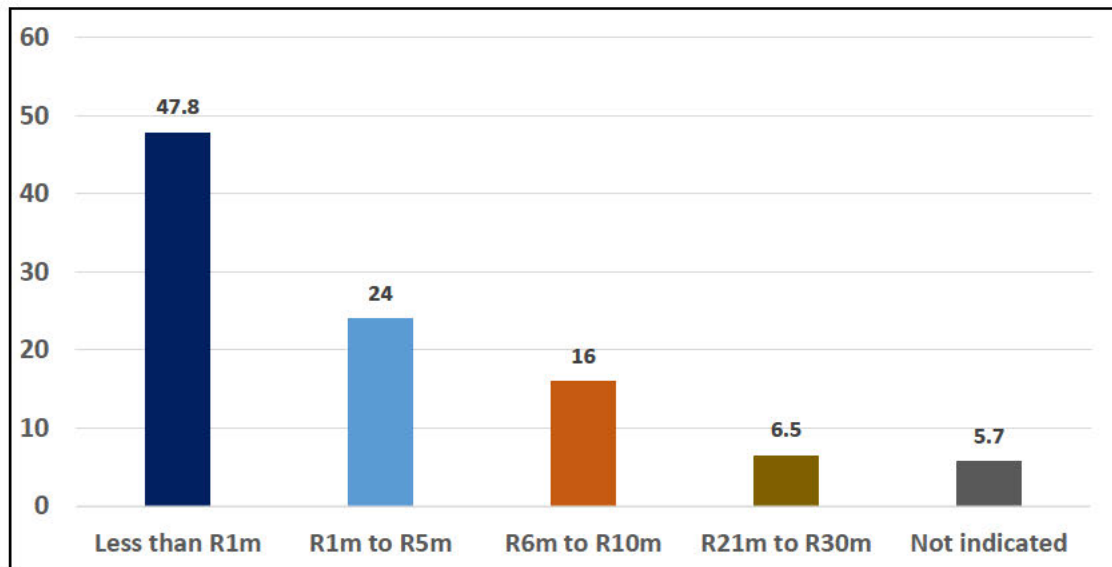
Table 5.12: Business income and profit

Variable	Categories	(n)	(%)
Business income and profit	Less than R1 million per annum	55,5	47,8
	R 1 – 5 million per annum	27,8	24,0
	R6 – 10 million per annum	18,6	16,0
	R21 to 30 million per annum	7,5	6,5
	Not indicated	6,6	5,7
	Total	116	100

Source: Devised by the Researcher (2022)

The study Figure 5.11 below describes the annual turnover of the businesses in the study. Small Business Corporation (SBC) has a turnover of less than R14m, over and above other qualifying criteria (The forum South Africa accessed Sept 2012). For Capital Gains Tax, an SME is described as a business with a total net assets under R5m. Therefore, SARS is implored to restrict itself to the definition used for SBC regime purposes, i.e. a small business is a business with a turnover of no more than R14 million. In the current study, 47,8% of businesses were in the range of less than R1 million per annum, while 24% were within the range of R1-5 million per annum. Some of the businesses had a turnover of R6-10 million and the percentage was 16,0%, and the lowest percentage of business at 6,5% was between R21 to 30 million. Furthermore, 5,7% did not indicate their turnover percentage.

Figure 5.11: Business income and profit



Source: Field data (2022)

The respondents' business and sector profile data can be summarised as the majority of the sample are private companies at 54%; the most significant group at 16.8% of respondents are operating in construction; while 29,1% of the sample was in the range of 1 to 5 in terms of employees. Out of the respondents, most business owners or managers speak Sepedi at 68%; the sample of 57,5 % of businesses have been operating within the range of 5 to 10 years; the majority of the study respondents at 47,8% of businesses was in the range of less than R1 million per annum.

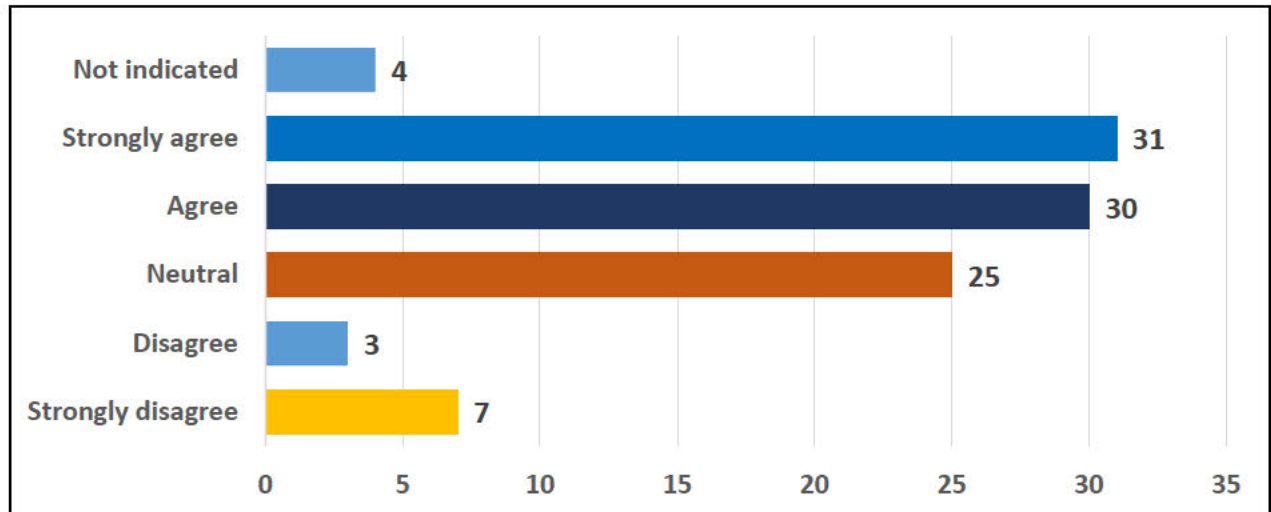
5.5 Incorporating Strategic Management for SME development

Incorporating a formal structure for SMEs development is essential for their growth and sustainability. A formal structure provides SMEs clarity, organisation and efficiency, enabling them to navigate challenges and to seize opportunities effectively. A formal structure for SME development is an ongoing process that requires diligence and adaptability. It helps SMEs build a strong foundation for sustainable growth and to navigate the complexities of the business environment more effectively. This section focuses on the process and structures of SME development.

5.5.1 Formalised Strategic Management Process

Figure 5.12 below describes the strategic management process of the respondents in the business in the study. In the study, 31% strongly agreed that they have formalised strategic processes in their businesses.

Figure 5.12: Strategic management



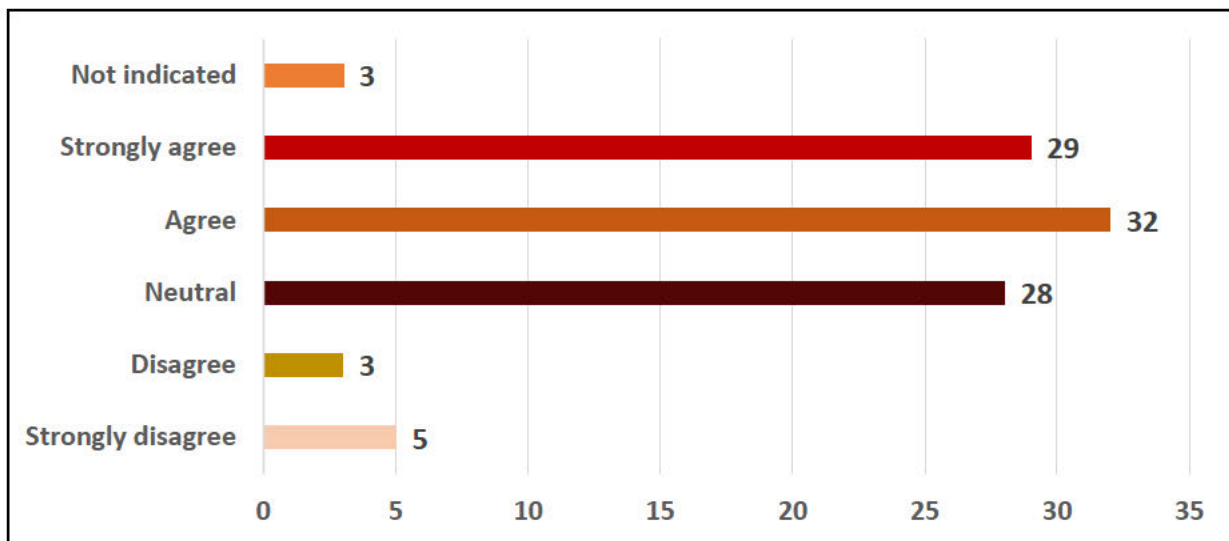
Source: Field data (2022)

However, 7% of the respondents disagree that they need a strategic process.

5.5.2 Organisational Strategic Planning

The strategic plan is essential in the business; however, only 29% strongly agree that they have a formal strategic plan, with the higher 32% of the respondents agreeing that they have a strategic plan.

Figure 5.13: Formal strategic plan



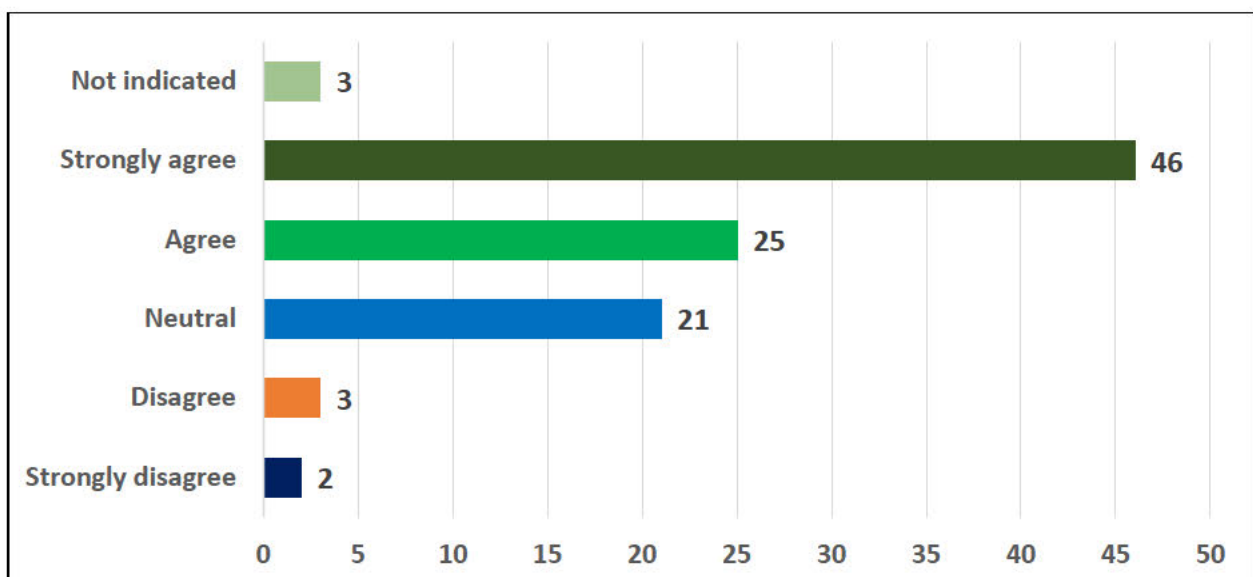
Source: Field data (2022)

Furthermore, 28% of the respondents are neutral on the strategic plan and 5% strongly disagree.

5.5.3 Information for Business Decision-making

Based on the results below, it conceptualises the critical information in decision-making, with 46% strongly agreeing that it is valuable. About 25% of business owners or managers agree and those who were neutral were 21%.

Figure 5.14: Information valuable for decision making.



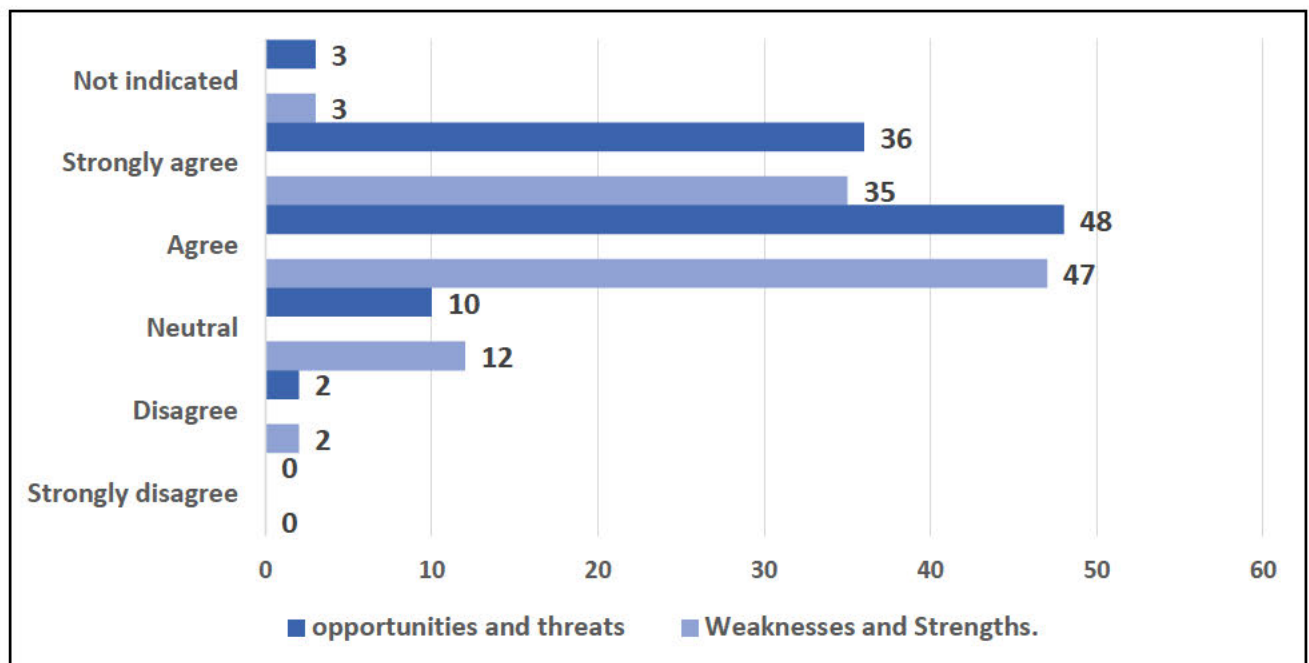
Source: Field data (2022)

The strategic decision-making found in small and micro enterprises had few phases and less complexity with regard to the decision-making procedures, which are different from the sequential rational approaches featured in much of the literature on the decision-making process.

5.5.4 Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) Analysis

Figure 5.15 below illustrates the importance of a SWOT analysis in organisations explored in the study. Nevertheless, only 36% and 35% strongly agree with the significance of a SWOT analysis in their business. The highest percentage agree that they perform SWOT analysis in their organisations at 48%.

Figure 5.15: SWOT analysis



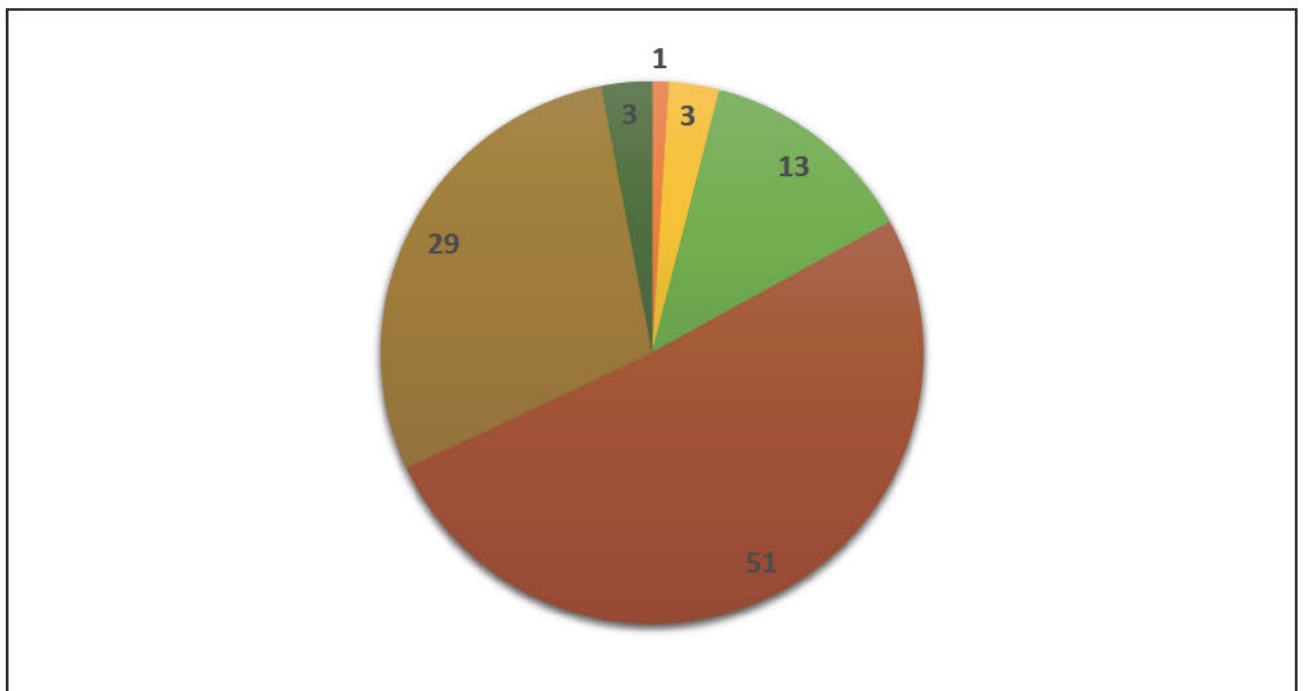
Source: Field data (2022)

A further 47% have incorporated analysing their weakness and strengths in their companies. Only 2% disagree that SWOT analysis in an organisation is not essential.

5.5.5 Analyzing the Business Competitors

Competitive analysis analyses the strengths and weaknesses of a company's market place competitors. Only 51% of the respondents agree that they explore their competitors and 29% of participants strongly agree with analysing their competitors. However, only 1% of the respondents strongly disagree.

Figure 5.16: Competitor's analysis



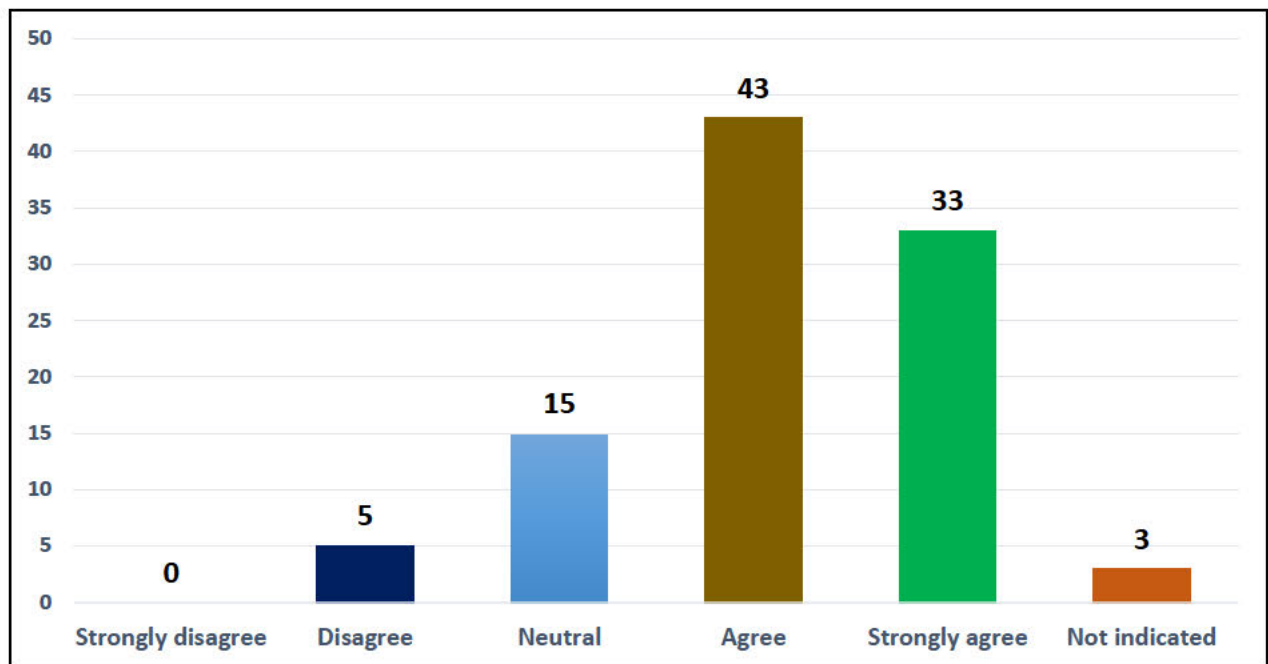
Source: Field data (2022)

A competitive analysis needs to go much further than examining your competitors, to the strengths and weaknesses of a company's marketplace competitors.

5.5.6 Performing the Planning, Organizing, Leading and Control exercises

In the study, Figure 5.17 below describes the performance management of the respondents in the business. In the study, 43% agrees that performance planning, organising, leading and controlling the industry, while 33% strongly agree. Of the respondents, only 3% is not indicated.

Figure 5.17: Performance management



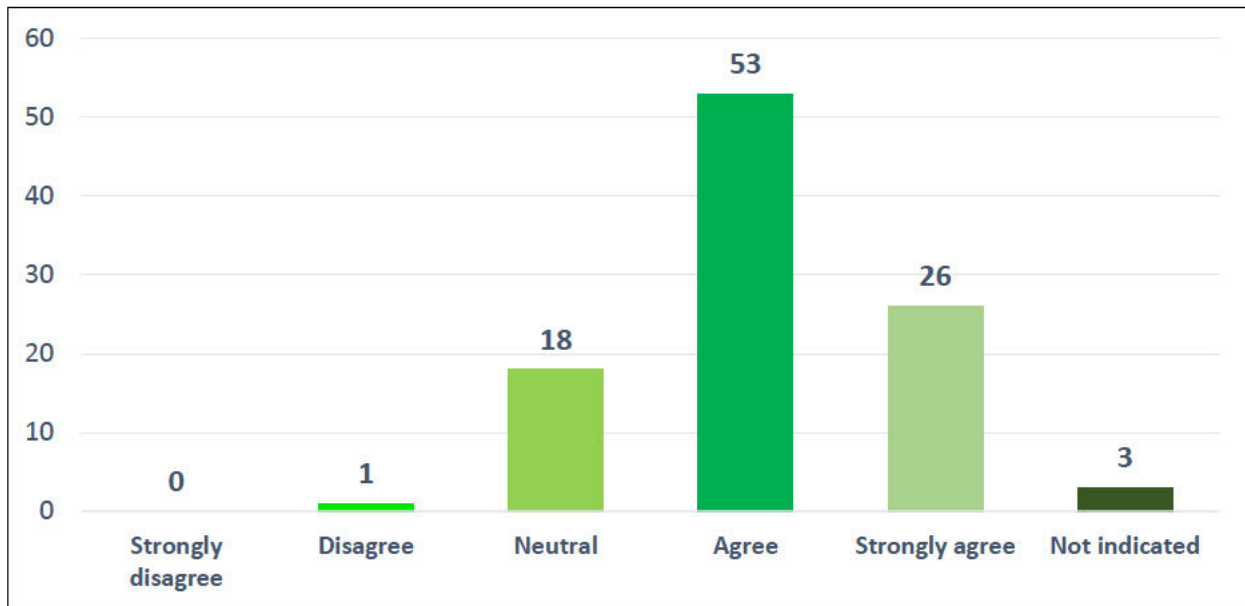
Source: Field data (2022)

Furthermore, 15% of the respondents are neutral on the strategic plan and 5% strongly disagree. Moreover, the study outlines the importance of formal and informal processes; it helps them align their employees, resources and systems to meet their strategic objectives. It works as a dashboard, too, providing an early warning of potential problems and allowing managers to know when they must make adjustments to keep a business on track.

5.5.7 Formalised Decision-Making Process

Figure 5.18 shows the respondents' decision-making process. Most businesses (53%) agree that they have a decision-making process, while 18% were neutral. A total of 26% strongly agreed on the importance of formalised decision-making processes.

Figure 5.18: Decision-making process



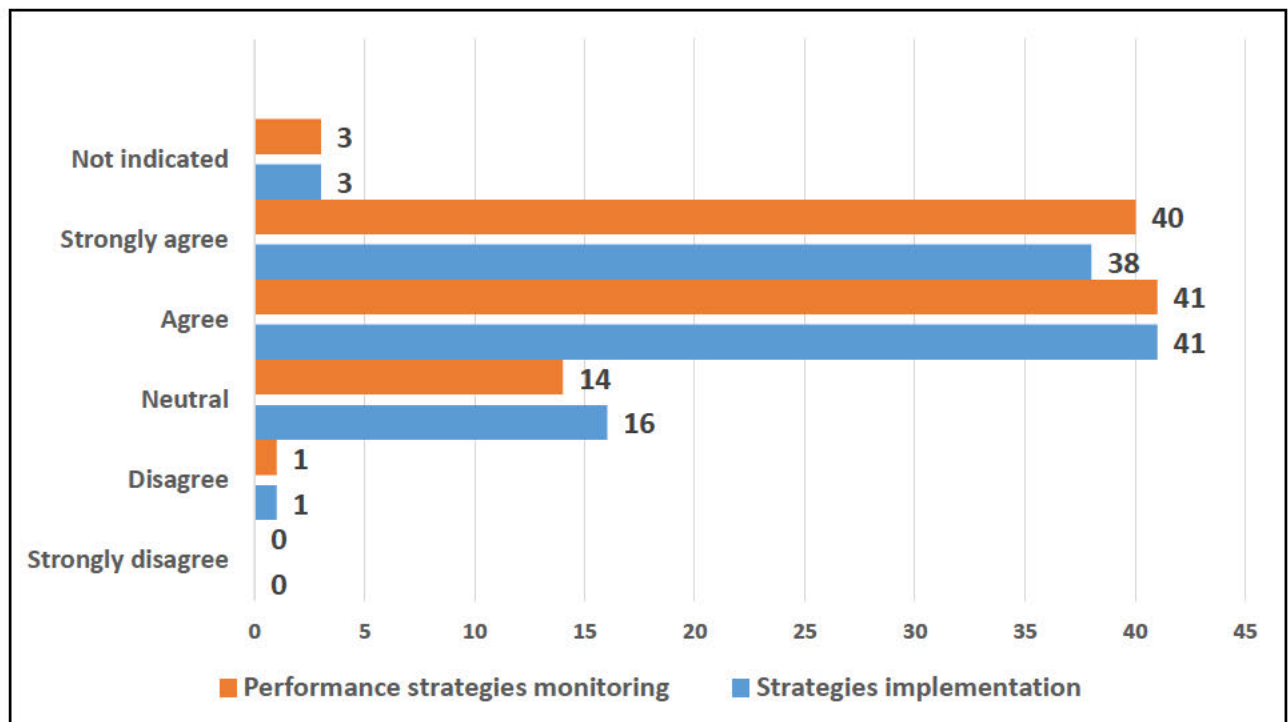
Source: Field data (2022)

This furthermore highlights the formal decision-making process as critical to organisational success having the correct information to make decisions and being familiar with corporate strategy.

5.5.8 Implementation and Performance of Business Strategies

Figure 5.19 below illustrates the importance of performance and implementation of strategies in organisations in the study. However, only 40% and 38% strongly agree with the significance of analysis in their businesses. The highest percentage at 41% agree that they perform strategies in their organisations.

Figure 5.19: Strategy implementation and performance



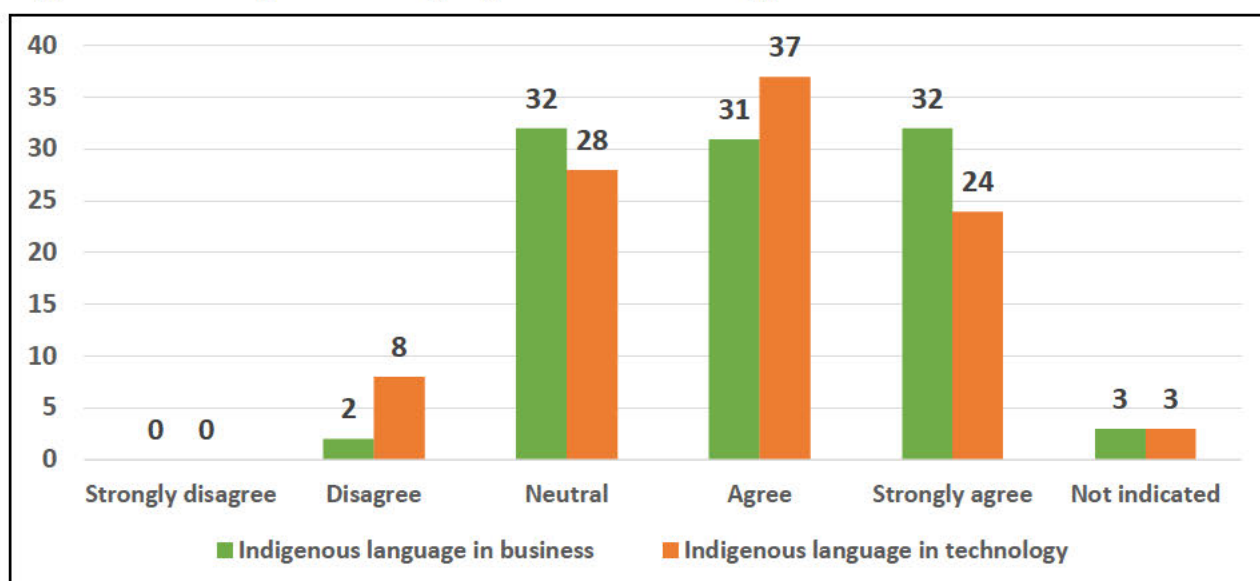
Source: Field data (2022)

Furthermore, this highlights the importance of performance management as it improves levels of employee engagement, retention, company product development and leveraging of these core leadership competencies.

5.6 Challenges in incorporating indigenous languages for SMEs

Figure 5.20 below illustrates the importance of indigenous language and technology within organisations in the study. However, the highest percentage agree (37%) on the significance of incorporating indigenous languages in business and technology. Furthermore, 28% of the respondents are neutral on the role of the indigenous languages within their companies. Moreover, 32% of the respondents are neutral.

Figure 5.20: Indigenous languages and technology



Source: Field data (2022)

A smaller percentage of the respondents disagree; only 3% did not indicate. There is a need to use the indigenous languages as a strategy for intellectualising the indigenous languages of South Africa. The significance of education (language) in transforming societies from engaging in primary economic activities to tertiary economic sector activities is well documented. The incorporation of indigenous languages as part of the business operations was attested by the interviewees in the qualitative data as shown in the following excerpts:

We incorporate all indigenous languages in the province as we visit various areas to help our clients. [Interviewee Response: D].

We live in a universal world where English is the universal language. Um, it is essential, yes, for one or two of the employees to be conversant with the, um, in indigenous languages [Interviewee Response: G].

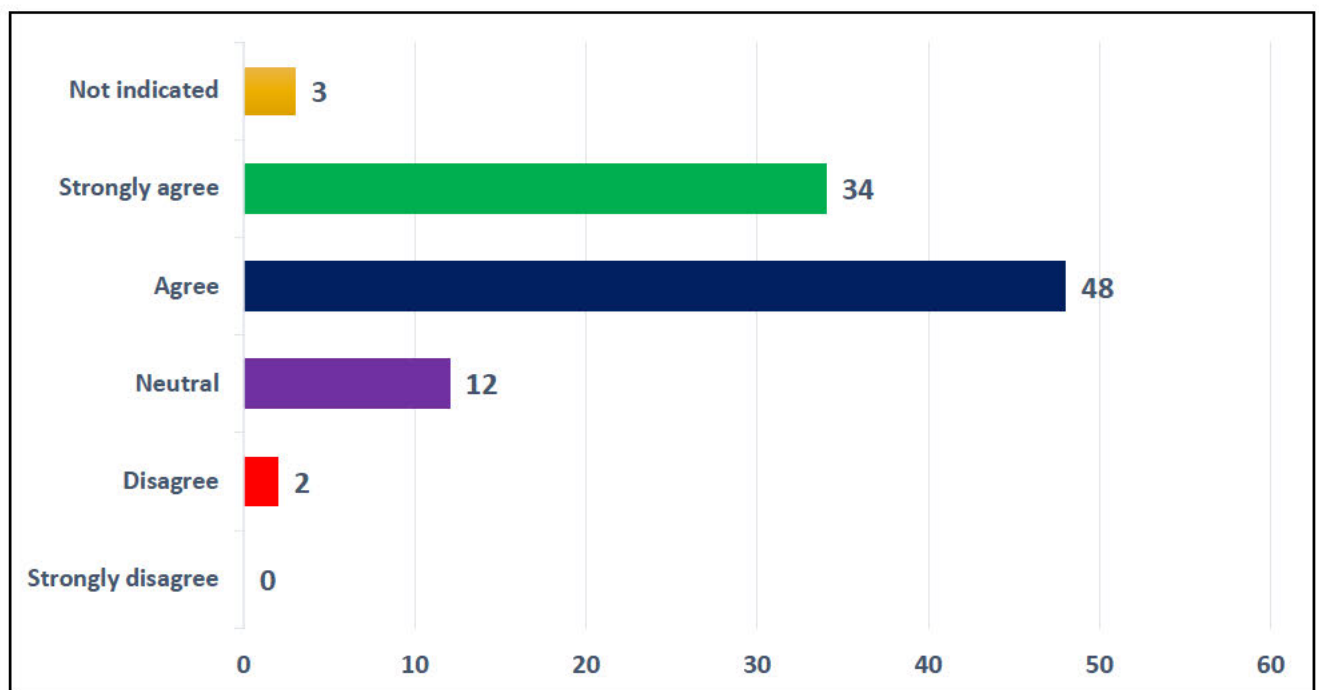
An indigenous language is essential for our daily operations; being located in Sekhukhune, most clients use Sepedi to communicate [Interviewee Response: C].

Deducing from the above evidence, the use of indigenous languages in small businesses is crucial in their daily operations.

5.6.1 Implementation of Technology Strategies

Based on the results below, implementing strategies in an organisation, however, only 34% of the data collection in the study strongly agree. About 48% of business owners or managers agree that they have implemented technological strategies.

Figure 5.21: Technology strategies



Source: Field data (2022)

A further 12% are neutral and only 2% disagree with implementing technological strategies. Despite South Africa having one of Africa's essential ICT markets, SMEs are implementing minimal specialised strategies. However, most business owners or managers (48%) agree that they have implemented a technological system and that there is a significant dependency on the government to provide infrastructure to implement technological strategies. From the empirical evidence of the qualitative data analysis, the interviewees have provided different examples on how they implement technological strategies in their respective business enterprises as shown in the table below:

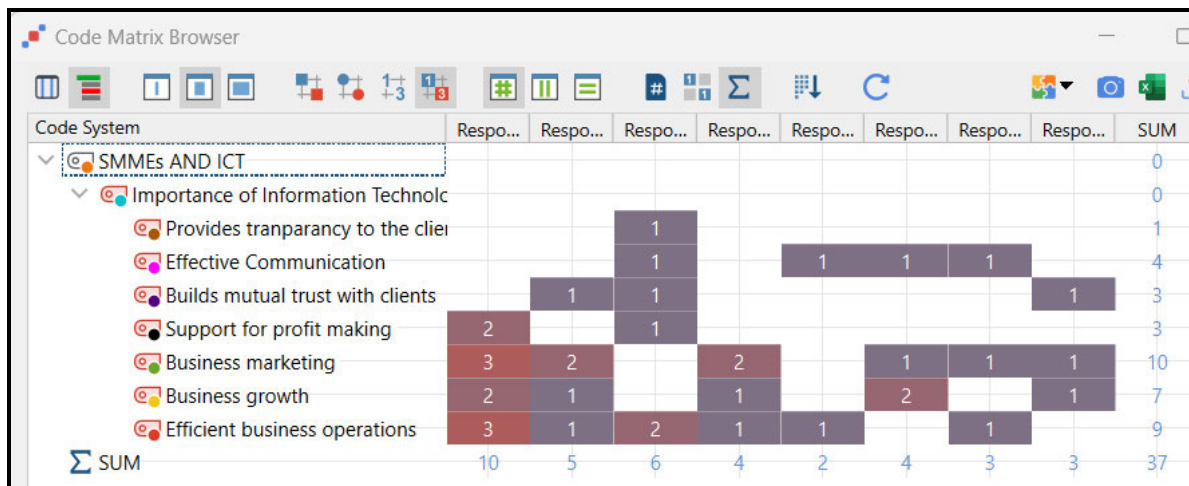
Table 5.13: The implementation of technological strategies in business enterprises

Code	Coded segments
SMMEs and ICT > Importance of Information Technology > Provides transparency to the clients	We also have systems we use for providing your location, issuing out invoices and also to our clients to see our cost and ensure we pay our overheads. Interviewees > Response: C
SMMEs and ICT > Importance of Information Technology > Effective Communication	We are making sure that communication is clear and understood. Interviewees > Response: C
	The use of technology in business makes communication easier and social media enables to have more customers. Interviewees > Response: E
	We agree that technology and ICT are crucial as they expand communication effectiveness throughout the business. Interviewees > Response: F
	Yeah. We have a website wherein we market our business. All the information that you need, it is on the website. We are also subscribed to booking.com, a very powerful marketing tool for entrepreneurs in the accommodation and tourism industries. Interviewees > Response: G

Source: Field data (2022)

When paying close attention to the empirical data presented in the above table, the business enterprises are primarily implementing technological strategies in terms of business marketing towards enhancing their respective business operations. In support of the quantitative data, the qualitative evidence from the coding analysis provides specific details on how the SMEs are implementing their technology strategies towards the achievement of business objectives. From the qualitative coding process, it emerged that technology strategies may include using ICT for effective communication, building mutual trust with clients, support for profit making and enhancing effective business operations.

Figure 5.22: Importance of ICT in SMEs



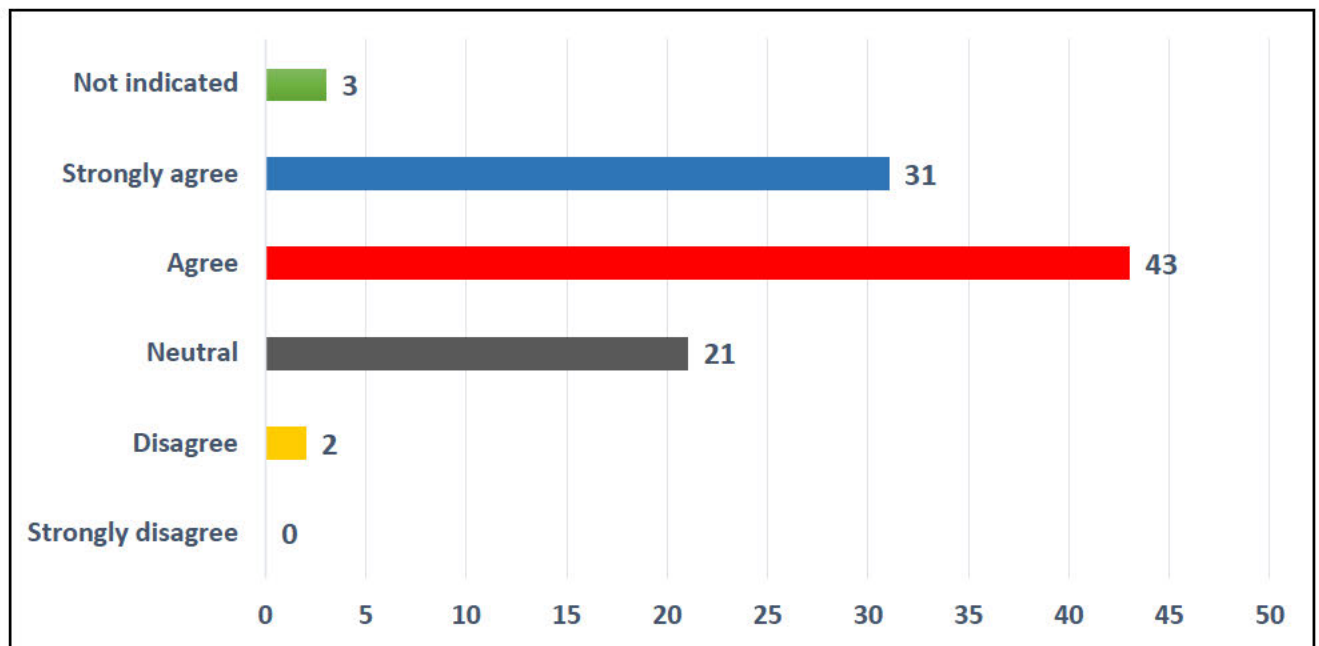
Source: DeVised by the Researcher (2022)

What stands out from this empirical data is that the common technology strategy in SMEs is in relation to and focusing on business marketing and growing of the business. This empirical data suggests that technology is the most ideal tool for business marketing and growth (Figure 5.22).

5.6.2 The implementation of indigenous languages in business

Figure 5.23 shows that 43% of the respondents agree that indigenous languages are essential in business. Furthermore, 31% of owners/managers strongly agree.

Figure 5.23: Indigenous languages in business



Source: Field data (2022)

There is a need to use indigenous languages as a strategy for intellectualising the indigenous languages of South Africa. The significance of education (language) in transforming societies from engaging in primary economic activities to tertiary financial sector activities is well documented. Despite that, a smaller percentage of the respondents disagree; only 2% did not indicate and 21% was neutral on the implementation of indigenous languages in business. There is a need to use spoken corpora of the indigenous languages as a strategy for intellectualising the indigenous languages of South Africa.

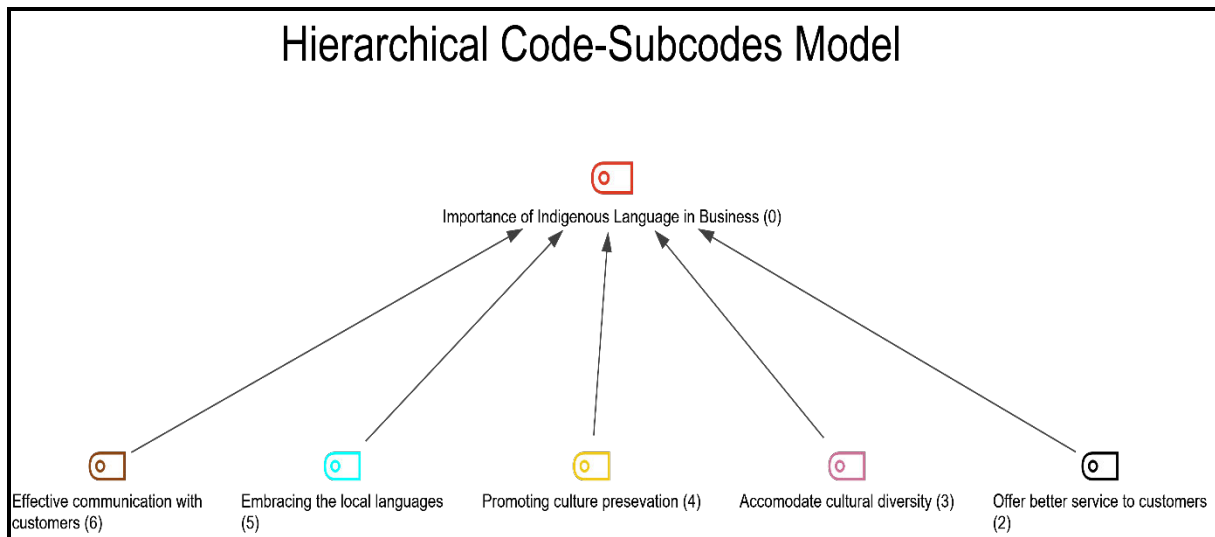
One of the participants alluded to the importance of indigenous languages in the South African context:

Embracing South Africa's indigenous languages can provide opportunities for inclusion, meaningful transformation and sustainable economic growth. [Interviewee - Response: E].

...embracing South Africa's indigenous languages can provide opportunities for inclusion [Interviewee - Response: A].

From the qualitative empirical analysis, it emerged that the importance of indigenous languages in businesses could have multiple mutual benefits. These benefits includes effective communication with customers, the embracing of local languages, accommodating cultural diversity and also assist in offering better service for the customers (Figure 5.24).

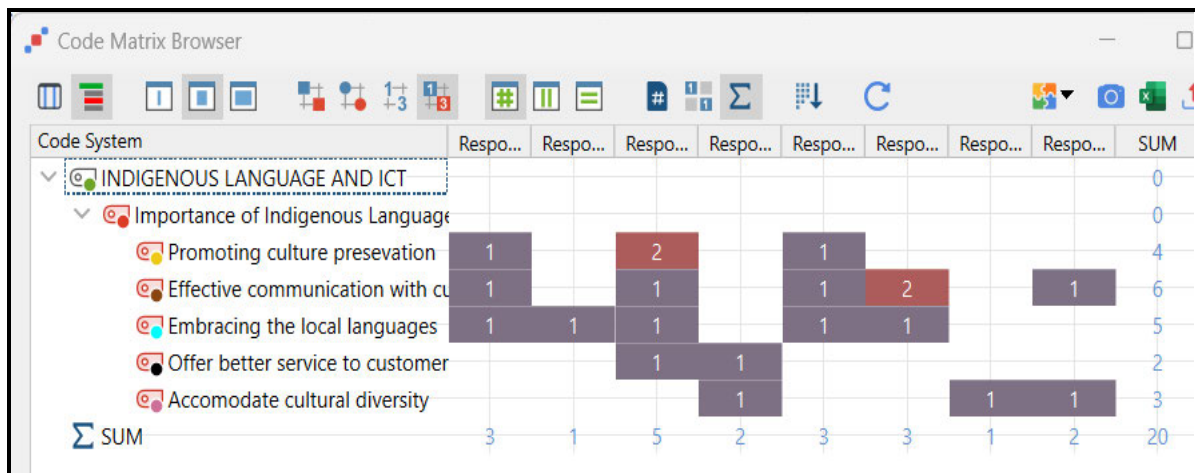
Figure 5.24: Deductive coding of the importance of indigenous languages



Source: Devised by the Researcher (2022)

As shown in Figure (5.25), the qualitative empirical data also confirms the importance of indigenous languages in small business enterprises. Remarkably, there was a general consensus among the respondents that incorporating indigenous languages in business is mainly assisting in facilitating effective communication with customers and embracing of the local culture have emerged.

Figure 5.25: The importance of indigenous languages in SMEs



Source: DeVised by the Researcher (2022)

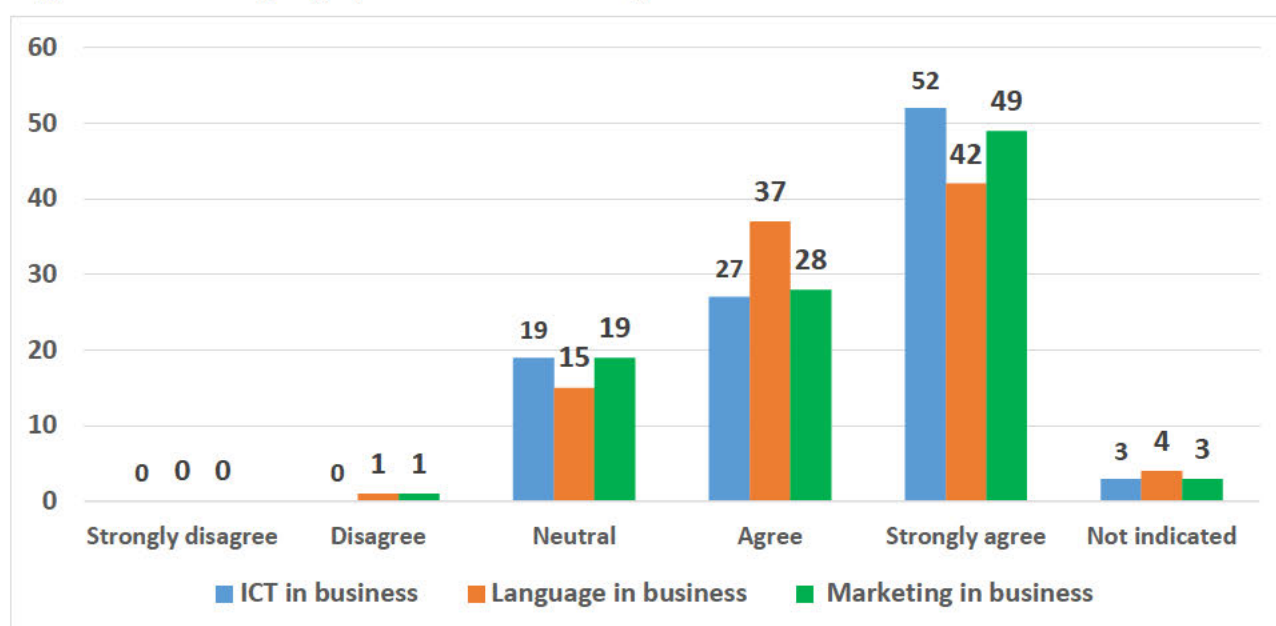
5.7 ICT and indigenous languages

Language is a principal essential method of communication and the study explored the role of indigenous languages in business. The study examined an indigenous language that is native to Limpopo province.

5.7.1 The importance of languages, ICT and marketing in business

Figure 5.26 shows the respondents' role in language, ICT and marketing in business. The majority of the companies, about 42% strongly agree that language marketing (49%) and ICT (52%) are essential in business operations.

Figure 5.26: Language, ICT and marketing in business



Source: Field data (2022)

Furthermore, the importance is further emphasised by the respondents agreeing that language (37%), marketing (28%) and ICT (26%) are significant in their businesses. The importance of ICT makes an organisation more efficient and effective and promptly responds to customers' needs. Moreover, language and translation have become a vital part of a business allowing them to maintain a competitive advantage over their competitors. In complementing the quantitative data, it has also emerged from the qualitative data that indigenous languages and ICT are very crucial in the marketing of the business as highlighted by the interviewees in the following table:

Table 5.14: Coded segments on ICT and business marketing

Code	Coded segments
Indigenous languages and ICT > Importance of Communication in	Our daily operations require communication within the business to ensure that we attract customers and reach a large market. Interviewees > Response: C:
	Communication in business is essential to convey clear, strong messages about strategy, customer service and branding. Interviewees > Response: E

Business > Business marketing	Communication is crucial as they expand communication effectiveness throughout the business. Interviewees > Response: F
	Communication in business with this new mode of communication enhances your business. Interviewees > Response: G

Source: Field data (2022)

From the empirical qualitative data, it has also emerged that the use of indigenous languages in ICT is also essential in facilitating team work among the employees in the businesses as stated by interviewee A and B, respectively:

With communication, the business will succeed, and more importantly, internal communication builds rapport among employees and managers and encourages teamwork and collaboration [Interviewees > Response: A].

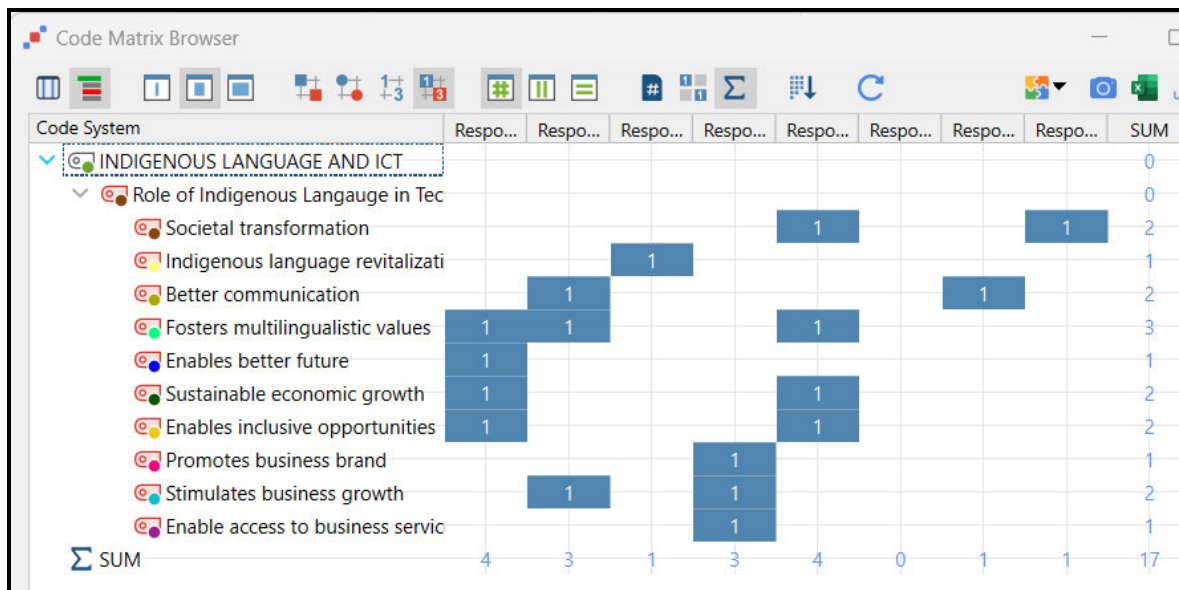
With communication, employees and managers encourage teamwork and collaboration [Interviewees > Response: B].

Evidently, the role of indigenous languages in ICT is fundamental in the daily operations of small business enterprises, particularly in the rural areas where indigenous languages are still prevalent.

5.7.2 The Role of indigenous languages in ICT

From the rigorous qualitative analysis procedure, it has emerged that indigenous languages play a significant role when introduced in or blended with ICT. The role of indigenous languages in ICT could lead to the realisation of multiple benefits and outcomes as illustrated in Figure 5.27 hereunder. Evidently, these challenges were attested and confirmed by all the interviewees who participated in the study.

Figure 5.27: The role of indigenous languages in ICT



Source: Devised by the Researcher (2022)

From the qualitative data in the above figure, it has been deduced that indigenous languages in ICT have a potential to enhance societal transformation; foster multilingualistic values, enables a better future and inclusive opportunities, promote business brands and sustain business growth. This evidence suggests that the integration of indigenous languages into ICT could result in more user-friendly ICT in SMEs.

From the qualitative empirical evidence, it has emerged that the use of indigenous languages in ICT facilities could play a crucial role in facilitating societal transformation, indigenous language revitalization and better communication as demonstrated in the excerpts in the table below:

Table 5.15: Coded segments on the role of indigenous languages in ICT

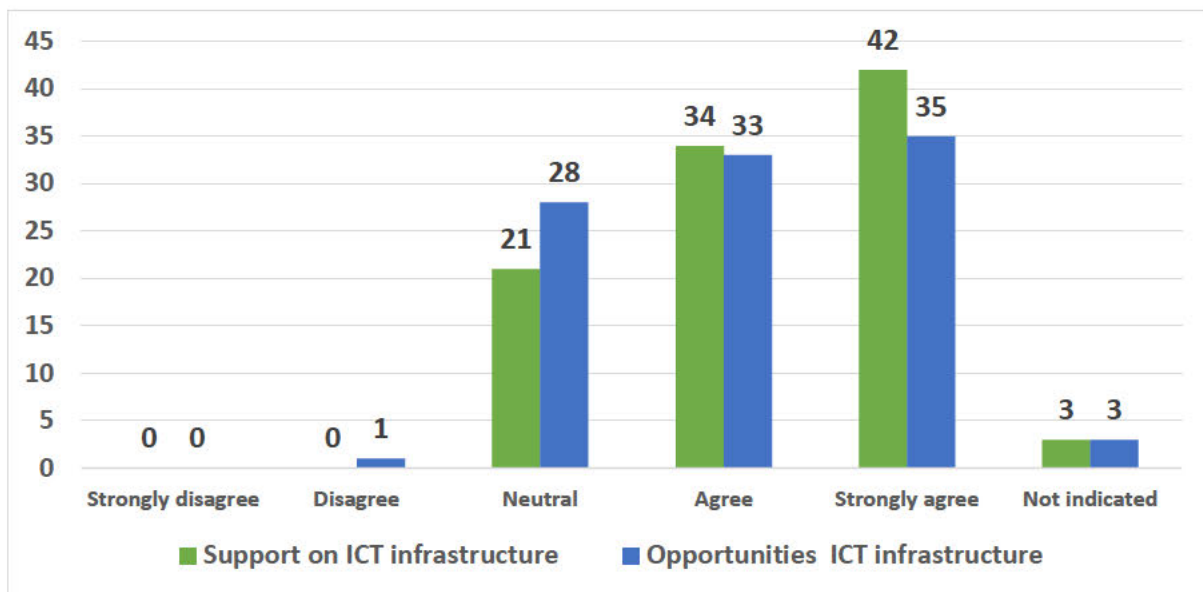
<p>INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE AND ICT</p> <p>> Role of indigenous language in technology > societal transformation</p>	<p>Embracing South Africa’s indigenous languages can provide opportunities for inclusion, meaningful transformation and sustainable economic growth.</p> <p>Interviewee - Response: E</p> <hr/> <p>From my understanding, technology is binary; I do not think it must be in English and unfortunately, it hinders some users when it is only in English.</p> <p>Interviewee - Response: H</p>
<p>INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE AND ICT</p> <p>> Role of indigenous language in technology > indigenous language revitalization</p>	<p>Indigenous languages and indigenous communities are naturally concerned with how technology can in any way contribute to language revitalization.</p> <p>Interviewee - Response: C</p>
<p>INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE AND ICT</p> <p>> Role of indigenous language in technology > Better communication</p>	<p>Technology is evolving daily, merging technology and indigenous language to enable people to understand better.</p> <p>Interviewee - Response: B</p> <hr/> <p>But you get those they prefer to be addressed in their languages when they come. And we do try. So for me, it is not that important because as far as I am concerned, we need a language where we can all understand each other.</p> <p>Interviewee - Response: G</p>

Source: Field data (2022)

5.7.3 Support and Opportunities within the ICT infrastructure

Figure 5.28 below illustrates the importance of opportunities and support of ICT infrastructure within the organisations in the study. However, only 42% and 35% strongly agree with the significance of infrastructure in their business.

Figure 5.28: ICT infrastructure



Source: Field data (2022)

The study agrees on the importance of ICT infrastructure in their organisation (34%), and a further 33% highlights ICT support and creating business opportunities. However, businesses indicate that despite the positive contribution of ICT, there is a considerable delay in ICT infrastructure, delaying innovation and globalisation positively contribute to economic growth. Moreover, countries have yet to promote economic growth from ICT infrastructure expansion, the enlargement of technology innovation and the spread of globalisation.

The qualitative analysis of the study also indicates that the availability of and proximity to telecommunication infrastructure is key to the successful implementation of ICT in small business enterprises. Businesses located in urban areas have better access to efficient telecommunication services:

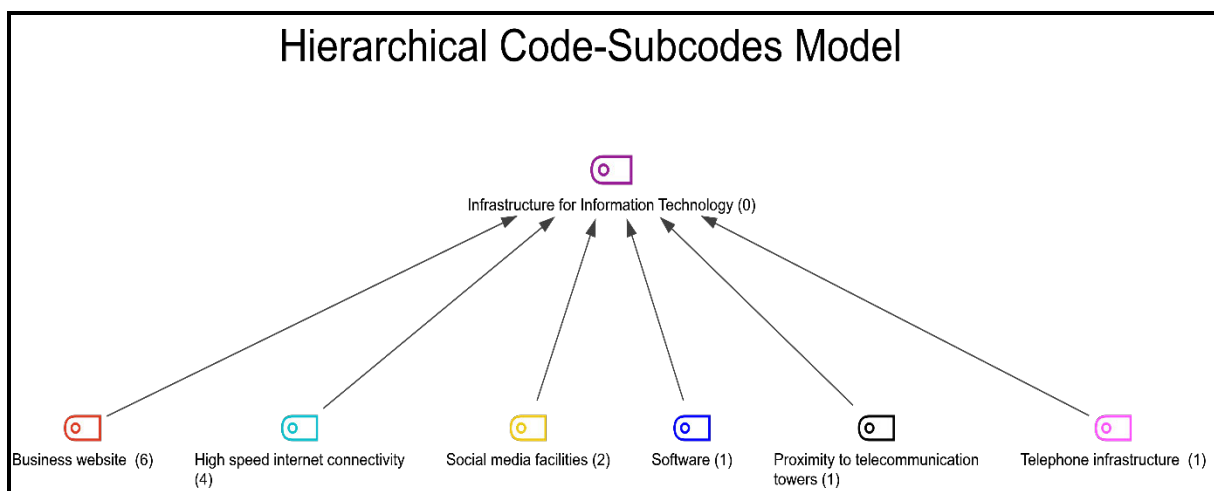
It does because we are located in the CBD of Polokwane. We have access to the internet with a high-speed connection. We have sufficient support as other businesses operate in the same area [Interviewees > Response A].

On the contrary, another interviewee situated in the remote rural areas indicated that as a result of the remote location of their business, their internet connection is not effective:

The current infrastructure doesn't support the use of ICT. We need access to the internet with a high-speed connection: online Advertising (like Google ads) and social media [Interviewees > Response: H].

In supplementing the quantitative data analysis, the qualitative coding procedure has revealed that respondents have different views in understanding ICT infrastructure in their respective business enterprises. That is, the qualitative analysis shows that ICT infrastructure may consist of equipment and facilities such as business websites, internet access, social media pages, availability and proximity to telecommunication towers and office telephones (Figure 5.29).

Figure 5.29: Understanding of Infrastructure of Information Technology

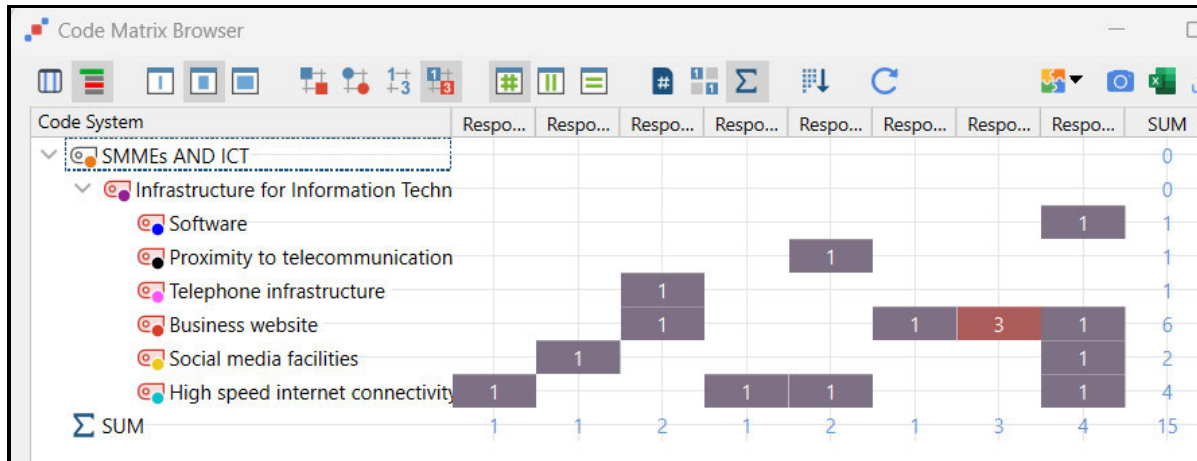


Source: Devised by the Researcher (2022)

When looking much closer to the qualitative data as shown in Figure (5.30), it is noticeable that the provision and use of business websites and access to internet

connection is key in defining ICT infrastructure from the small business enterprises perspective.

Figure 5.30: Deducing of Infrastructure for Information Technology

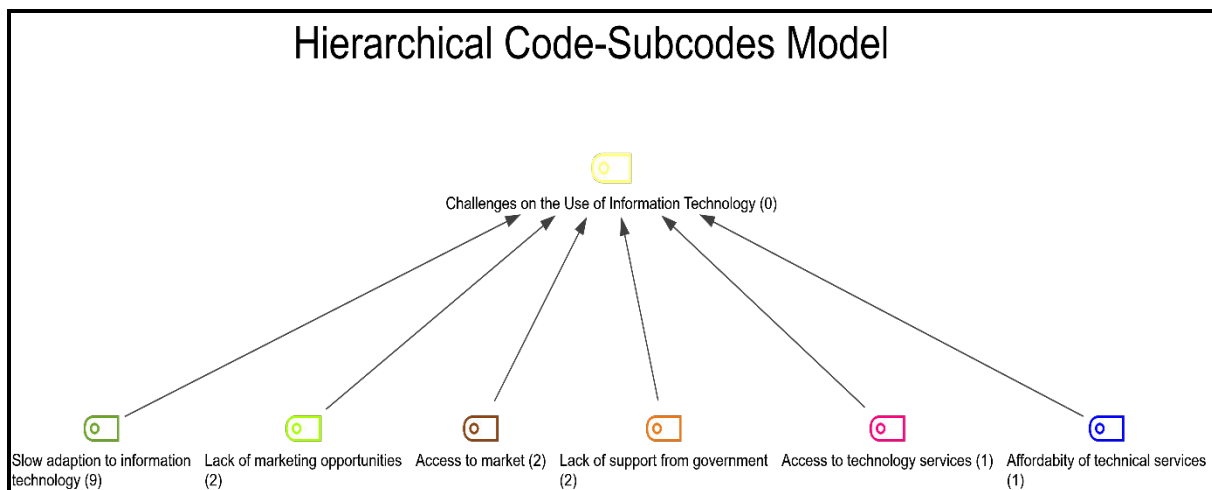


Source: DeVised by the Researcher (2022)

5.7.4 Challenges in the Use of ICT in Small Business Enterprises

Even with the efficiencies associated with embracing ICT in small business enterprises, the qualitative data analysis shows that SMEs are still facing some challenges concerning using information technology in their businesses. These challenges include the tendency of slow adaptation to information technology, lack of marketing opportunities on the internet, lack of government support, access to technology services and affordability of technical support services (Figure 5.31).

Figure 5.31: Challenges in using Information Technology



Source: DeVised by the Researcher (2022)

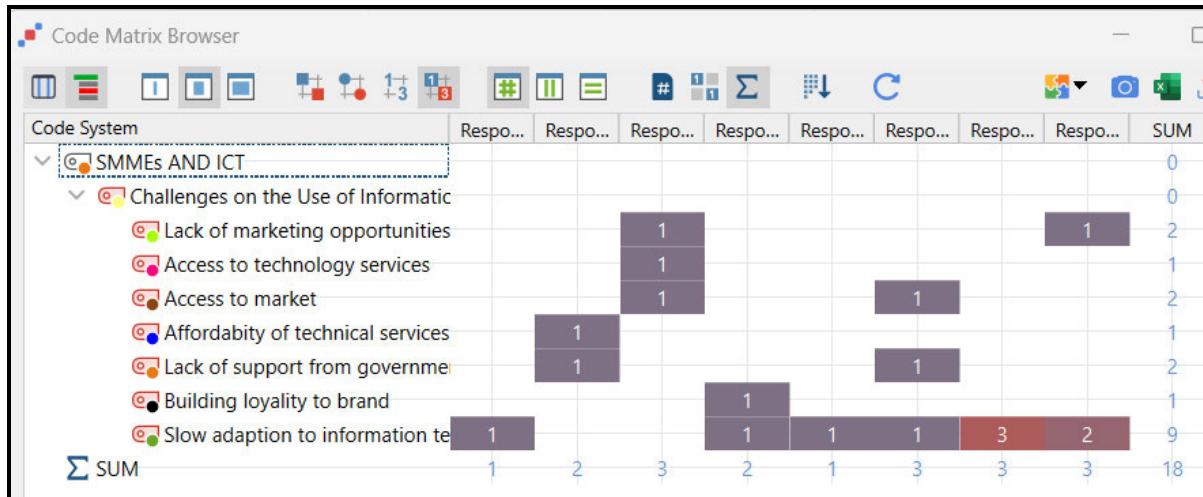
A closer interrogation of the qualitative responses from the respondents shows that the slow adaptation to using information technology is the prevalent challenge in most small business enterprises, particularly for businesses in rural areas. The lack of government support for ICT technical services has also emerged as an issue of concern among the respondents (Figure 5.31). Some of the challenges in the implementation of ICT in small business enterprises have been illustrated in the excerpts in the table hereunder:

Table 5.16: Challenges in the implementation of ICT in businesses

Code	Coded segments
SMMEs and ICT > Challenges on the Use of Information Technology > Affordability of technical services	We are also unable to afford to pay for professional services that we need in our operations. Interviewees > Response: B
SMMEs and ICT > Challenges on the Use of Information Technology > Lack of support from government	For us, the lack of support from government services, yes it is adequately set out on paper, but implementation needs to be improved. Interviewees > Response: B
	Well, the lack of industry support and a lack of marketing funds. Interviewees > Response: F
SMMEs and ICT > Challenges on the Use of Information Technology > Slow adaption to information technology	Well, some clients still need help to adapt to the life of visual technology as they still prefer personal interaction. Interviewees > Response: A
	Even if that is the case, some clients still need help to adapt to the life of visual technology as they still prefer personal interaction. Interviewees > Response: D
	Well, some clients still need help to adapt to the life of visual technology, as they still prefer personal interaction. Interviewees > Response: E

Using the code matrix browser procedure, the challenges of the use of ICT in small business enterprises were attested to by all the interviewees as sampled in the study (Figure 5.32).

Figure 5.32: Deducing the challenges in using ICT



Source: DeVised by the Researcher (2022)

5.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided a detailed quantitative and qualitative analysis of data using respondents' answers to the questionnaire (Appendix A) and the semi-structured questionnaires are also shown in the appendix. The interviews will be examined and analysed. The chapter explained the data analysis techniques used in the study, where participants will be presented first, after which the criticism from the request will be researched. Therefore, there is a need for term creation for the indigenous languages of South Africa. Such a process is called intellectualisation, accelerating the growth and development of languages. These terms can be used as the basis for an objective strategy in accelerating the growth and development of indigenous languages. The next chapter will present the researchers utilising the data accumulated in Chapter 4 and separate it from the literature and establish whether the essential building that hinders the conceptual framework recognised in Chapter 3 did indeed emerge from the data gathered.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the discussions to interpret and describe the significance of the research findings and explain the new knowledge or insights that emerged from the study. The chapter ties together the study results from the interviews and the questionnaire with literature and existing theory. Moreover, it aims to provide the context of the data presented by comparing information drawn from descriptive statistics and significance tests from mixed methodology data. The researcher will utilise the data collected in Chapter 5 to determine whether the fundamental structure that impedes the conceptual framework identified originated from the gathered data. The conceptual framework will be presented and examined based on the research findings. The discussion intends to clarify and explain the significance of the research findings and the new knowledge or insights that have emerged from the study. Furthermore, this chapter consolidates the interview and questionnaire analysis results with existing literature and theory. In addition, the chapter aims to attribute importance and provide context to the data presented in the preceding chapter.

The participants' responses in the province of Limpopo were analysed, while the study furthermore explores the current challenges posed by using ICT services in incorporating indigenous languages for SME development. The interpretation of the results identified the role of the government in promoting and integrating ICT in SME development in Limpopo Province. However, the study aimed to develop an ICT Model to enhance SME development using indigenous languages in Limpopo Province, South Africa. According to Creswell (2014), the interpretation is significant as the researcher is drawing meaning from data analysis. Data performance occurred by integrating the results across the various multiple data sources and the hypothetical setting of the review.

Moreover, Creswell (2014), Leedy and Ormrod (2019) asserts that the process of the interpretation of data involves the extraction of meaning from the analysis of data. Furthermore, they offer assistance for the interpretation by outlining the subsequent actions: relating the findings to the original research problem and the specific research questions, describing the results concerning existing literature, concepts, theories, models and research studies, evaluating the practical and statistical importance of the discoveries and recognising the study's limitations. In this study, socio-demographic variables such as business location, age of owner/manager, gender of owner/manager and highest qualifications play a vital role in determining consumer awareness. Furthermore, the study undertakes the importance of SME growth by seeking opportunities by introducing marketing tools that increase business by expanding the customer base and employment, contributing to economic development.

The objectives of this study are to:

- i. Identify the role of government in promoting ICT and the importance of incorporating it in SME development in Limpopo Province.
- ii. To explore the challenges ICT services pose in incorporating Indigenous languages for SME development.
- iii. Demonstrate how ICT can be conceptualised to address the challenges of incorporating indigenous languages for SMEs' development.
- iv. To develop an ICT Model to enhance SMEs development using indigenous languages in Limpopo province, South Africa.

6.2. The context and nature of SMEs

The study analysed owners/managers of SMEs exploring the appropriation of ICT with the significant utilisation of indigenous languages, the development market and the improvement of their businesses and the challenges experienced. The selected respondents' geographic location is a contributing factor within their industries. The capital city of Limpopo Province, Polokwane, is located within the Capricorn district with the highest number of companies at 28% compared to Sekhukhune as the second at 26% and third Mopani at 17%.

Limpopo comprises a few strong towns, small towns, commercial farmland and a vast traditional rural area with many villages. According to Gebre and Gebremedhin (2019),

urbanization entails broader transformations that benefit the wider population, including the rural population. It has seen a need to create employment to eradicate poverty. However, participants indicate that most of their businesses benefit from the influx of people within the district. Moreover, Gebre and Gebremedhin (2019) argue that the rapid rate of urbanisation, urban poverty, limited space, higher food prices and limited water supply services are among the problems urban areas face today. Furthermore, the Vhembe district municipality is at 16% and the Waterberg is the lowest at 13% as it is a predominantly rural municipality. However, despite the poverty in rural areas, continuing dependence on social grants has enabled an enormous buying power within the rural areas. Irrespective of the low business with these municipalities, some companies operate and create employment. Jade (2019) acknowledges the South African government's role in easing unemployment's and stimulating economic growth.

Furthermore, the Republic of South Africa: Department of Small Business Development (2021a) integrates youth development into the mainstream policies, programmes and the national budget. The study's findings have shown that 21,6% were in the age range of 19-25, with the 26-35 at 19,8% being business owners/managers. The percentages are relatively low, with the government continuing to initiate various youth development and empowerment initiatives to support young people. The participants argue that irrespective of government contributions, they do not benefit from the specific programmes as they delay their businesses' growth due to geographical location.

Moreover, the adult respondents aged 36-45 years (27,6%) and business owners/managers (8,6%) were between 46-55 years of age. Furthermore, the age of the respondents 56 plus is 17,2% and 4% is not indicated. In the study, businesses in Limpopo Province are primarily managed by adults between 36-56 years of age, followed by youth aged 18-35. The Limpopo provincial government should prioritise addressing youth unemployment and all other issues affecting the advancement of youth. Rakgoale (2021) states that "the government must develop ways of analysing and finding solutions to ending unemployment".

This respondent said: “as part of the process, the Limpopo government has introduced the Limpopo procurement strategy, which encourages all spheres of government to procure goods and services from young people to help them achieve their goal of youth empowerment”. Furthermore, the study indicates that male business owners/managers constitute 42,6% of the respondents while their female counterparts constitute 46,9% while 10,5% are not indicated. The study has seen improved in the governance of female owners/managers, attesting to the importance of women-owned entrepreneurship. Smith (2021) states that “South Africa boasts exceptional women entrepreneurs who are already playing a critical role in jump-starting the economy and getting the country’s food security, job creation and financial stability back on track after a tumultuous year”.

The respondents indicated that females utilise the support services available for SME development and promotion programmes. South African women have traditionally struggled with less access to capital and fewer assets than their male counterparts. Not owning property makes it harder for women to offer collateral for business loans. However, Smith (2021) argues that women are excellent investors because they often achieve more significant credit turnover and women-led start-up businesses usually deliver double the returns of other enterprises. Establishing the importance of education, particularly in managing or operating companies was essential.

The study was based on the respondents' level of qualification and was crucial in determining whether they understood the importance of education in running a business. The respondents had different educational qualifications, ranging from no formal to a degree. Furthermore, the study has established that 25,4% of owners/managers have a diploma qualification, while most of the respondents' highest qualification is postgraduate at 39,1%. Education is essential as it provides owners with skills development and modern business concepts that help them grow and survive. Smith (2021) further argues that “gaining business knowledge, developing lifelong analytical and evaluative skills and understanding processes that rule the contemporary world”, therefore, there is a need to obtain an education to teach us how to be good managers to run businesses successfully.

6.3 The role of government in supporting SMEs

The study's findings revealed that SMEs could play a critical role in helping address the recent downturns in the South African economy. The SME sector accounts for a significant portion of the GDP globally. However, in Limpopo Province, the economic contribution from SMEs still needs to be increased and they have very few people in their employment. In the Republic of South Africa, through the DSBD (2017), the strategic objective of development is to create a sustainable environment for small businesses and cooperatives in rural and township areas. Customers and clients, especially people you have never worked with before need assurance that you are a legitimate business; and therefore it is essential to register a company. Smith (2021) discussed the role of government and those who influence it to control many institutions, including law enforcement, judicial efficiency and regulations. The institution can develop because of economic conditions, such as new business sectors, information and flexible sources. Such changes bring about new open doors for human connections.

6.3.1 SME development

This section of the research presents the organisational information of the respondents; namely, a form of business enterprise, years in business, industry or sector of the business, the number of years in business and annual turnover. Companies that wish to transact with the government and the formal sector or access specific government support are generally required to be registered with the CIPC. The participants in the study have registered their business formally, with the highest being private companies at 54% and closed corporations being the second at 21%. Nevertheless, participants argued about the cost of registering and maintaining the business account.

There are various sectors covered within the previous discussion; however, businesses that are dominant at 16.8% are operating in the construction sector, while manufacturing is at 14,1% and agriculture is at 11,6%. Regarding construction, the respondents work with the government with a varying scope of work. In the case of maintenance, they do road maintenance. The South African construction industry's

output was severely affected by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic outbreak. Manufacturing production decreased by 8,9% in October 2021 compared with October 2020. However, Skudder (2021) argues that the construction sector is one of the most critical sectors worldwide, representing about 13% of global employment.

Furthermore, this figure is about 8% in South Africa, painting a bleak picture for the industry and the economy. This industry can play a critical role in helping address the recent declines in the South African economy. Still, it needs the willingness and, more importantly, the action of all stakeholders to succeed. According to Boshoff and Fourie (2020), agriculture is the backbone of South Africa's economy and it has grown by 22% in the last five years, contributing 2.2% to the country's GDP. However, only the well-developed commercial farming sector in South Africa is the backbone of the country's agricultural economy and in 2020 showed the best growth rate of all economic sectors at 13.1%.

Moreover, the government is developing informal farming; hence, the findings show that agriculture (11,6%) shows improvement. Thulo (2019) predicts that rural and underdeveloped areas will create SME opportunities. However, insufficient transportation, state-of-the-art cold storage, better irrigation and private power generation will make agriculture projects more productive and competitive in the export market. The catering, accommodation and other trade (9,7%) and the retail and motor trade and repair services (8,8%) while other economic clusters are at 8,2%. While wholesale trade, commercial agents and allied services are at 7,1%. Business sectors are essential in the development, better placed to take advantage of the deregulating sector and are nimbler and hungrier than their larger corporate peers. Community, social and personal service follow at 5,3% and mining and quarrying at 2,9%, while finance and business services are at 4,7%. The two sectors that are the lowest are mining and quarrying at 2,9% and electricity, gas and water at 0,1%.

According to the study, 29,1% of the respondents are classified as small enterprises with a staff composition of 1-50. The lowest percentage of the total number of employees at 9,1% were between 51-200 and classified as medium-sized enterprises with more than 50 employees. There is a significant concern as most small enterprises show minimal growth potential. Most have been in operation for more than five years but are still regarded as survivalists with nil or few employees on their monthly payroll.

Makgopa (2014) emphasises that SMEs help buffer the shocks that come with the boom and bust of economic cycles in many developed and developing countries. The SME sector accounts for a significant portion of the GDP globally. However, within Limpopo Province, the economic contribution from SMEs is still minimal and they have very few people in their employment.

The study further suggests that the growth of SMEs is slow. It is envisaged that SMEs should graduate from micro-enterprise to small business, allowing a constant balance within the system. When SMEs are not growing, they create fewer opportunities for new SMEs to enter the market. This potentially results in fewer individuals being able to participate in the sector and a greater chance of being unemployed and thus impoverished. The South African government is essential for SME development and support; however, corruption has undermined Constitutional rights to human dignity, equality and freedom over the years. It endangers the stability and security of our societies and undermines the institutions and values of democracy.

6.3.2 Creation of entrepreneurship support

According to Lavery and Little (2020), competitor analysis is essential to strategic planning. Furthermore, this should provide the entrepreneur with the required information on how competitors promote their business and other ways to penetrate the market. This enables the business owner to understand the competitors' every move and offers a company an advantageous position in decision-making. Competitive analysis analyses the strengths and weaknesses of a company's marketplace competitors. Only 51% of the respondents agree that they explore their competitors, and 29% of participants strongly agree with analysing their competitors. However, only 1% of the respondents strongly disagree. Moreover, the study has established the importance of competitor analysis as a critical part of entrepreneurial development and assists in developing a competitive edge that will sustain the organisation.

Furthermore, Dia (2014) argues whether the development model underpinning ICTs helps preserve and strengthen African languages. Despite the dominance of Sepedi in the province, it is important to embrace different indigenous African languages and presents an opportunity to utilise Africa's linguistic treasure for education and

development. Furthermore, Dia (2014) argues that this assessment could help address the knowledge gaps relating to the initiatives to mainstream African indigenous languages and ICTs into development programmes, the ensuing opportunities and shortcomings and the lessons learned. In this study, as regards the decision-making process, most businesses (53%) agree that they have a decision-making process, while 18% are neutral. A total of 26% strongly agreed on the importance of formalised decision-making processes. The study has established an information reputation and organisations need to increase the data collection approach. More importantly, information relating to their business sector increases the ability of organisational knowledge for the recipient. Formal decision-making processes should be introduced within organisations, ensuring optimal performance due to a systematic operation approach. According to Sammut-Bonnici and Galea (2017), SWOT analysis uses knowledge within an organisation about its internal and external environments and formulates its strategy accordingly.

Most small businesses take at least 2 to 3 years to be profitable and become genuinely successful once they have reached the 7-10 year mark. Thus, the study's focus and population drawn for the research have been defined as all SMEs registered with the DEDET with more than five years of operation. The researcher used random sampling for a quantitative research design to acquire similar information about the study. One advantage of the random sample is that the researcher will be guaranteed equal representation of each identified stratum dealing with the problem under study as well as the number of years the business has been in operation for the respondents in the study. In the current study, 57,5 % have been operating for 5-10 years, while 38,1% of businesses have been operating for 10 years or more. Furthermore, 2,1% of respondents have not indicated. This may mean sustainability within their businesses, as shown in the study.

According to the DSBD (2020a), the department has expanded access to finance for SMMEs and Co-operatives by R80 million and R111 million, respectively, per programme. The R80 million was transferred to SEFA to implement the Blended Finance Programme. Moreover, the Department partnered with the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) to support 268 youth-owned enterprises. Despite this initiative by the government to support SMEs, in the study, the annual turnover of the respondents in business (47,8%) was less than R1 million per annum, while 24% was

within the range of between R1 million and R5 million per annum. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic challenged the operations and business environment, disrupting local-global supply chains and reducing economic activities.

Furthermore, despite losing employment, SMMEs and Co-operatives have demonstrated a spirit of innovativeness, resilience and agility to weather the storm. Despite the challenges, respondents of R6-10 million were at 16% and the lowest percentage of business (6,5%) was between R21 to 30 million. The annual turnover was affected and specific companies had to close. Moreover, the government has supported businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic by introducing various relief initiatives as SMEs are the lifeblood of the economy.

6.3.3 Institutional Support services

According to Sammut-Bonnici (2015), the “strategic management process helps an organisation and its leadership think about and plan for its future existence, fulfilling a chief responsibility of a board of directors”. The argument further highlights the importance of strategic business management to assist the business’ profit and decision-making, yet its functions can also be broken down. Strategic management sets a direction for the organisation and its employees. In the study, only 31% of the respondents strongly agreed that they have formalised strategic processes in their business. However, the businesses do not have formalised strategic management processes. The most crucial process that any organisation should have is planning. The study has established the importance of information and organisations must increase the data collection approach. More importantly, information relating to their business sector increases the ability of organisational knowledge for the recipient. This current knowledge/ information helps generate new data and assist the organisation's growth.

According to GISMA (2019), planning is an essential management tool for any company. Moreover, the strategic planning process predicts future trends that will help the business build to make this happen; strategic planning tools need to be used instead of simple planning processes. However, 7% of the respondents disagree that they do not have a strategic process. Strategic management ensures an organisation can have a forward-thinking approach, ensuring they can draw up clear, long-term

goals. This should be a standard practice, irrespective of the location as it can benefit an organisation's overall growth.

In the study, 28% of respondents are neutral on the strategic plan and 5% strongly disagree. They argue that their strategic planning might not be formal; however, they can evaluate the progress towards achieving specific goals. Managers can make profound, quick adjustments without a standard strategic plan. Furthermore, formal strategic planning benefits the organisation as it enhances communication and helps managers and employees show commitment to its objectives. GISMA (2019) outlined that an increasing number of companies use strategic planning to formulate and implement effective decisions.

Furthermore, strategic planning requires significant time, effort and money; a well-thought-out strategic plan efficiently fosters company growth, goal achievement and employee satisfaction. According to GISMA (2019), decision-making is the process of making choices by identifying a decision, gathering information and assessing alternative resolutions. Communication is crucial for decision-making as it stimulates the users' thought processes within various sectors. The study conceptualises knowledge as critical in decision making, with 46% agreeing that it is valuable. Furthermore, business owners/managers agree (25%) on the importance of information, while 21% are neutral. However, the study has established that irrespective of the significance of information, not all organisations have a system to gather information. Furthermore, they agree that organisational decision-making is primarily based on information as it is fundamental to the operations of a business and market analysis. Organisations need to gather relevant information as a critical part of the decision-making process to help them make more deliberate, thoughtful decisions and create alternatives.

The study illustrates the importance of performance and strategy implementation within organisations. However, only 40% and 38% strongly agree with the significance of analysis in their business. The highest percentage (41%) agree that they conceptualise strategies within their organisation, which shows the path to achieving the defined vision. Strategic plans offer an opportunity for organisations to achieve their plan of action to incorporate their vision and set objectives. It furthermore guides the decision-making processes to improve the company's financial stability in a

competitive market. By adopting strategies, organisations will provide a working environment conducive to the needs of all employees while providing a supportive structure within the organisation. Moreover, systems offer organisational support through solid leadership, healthy interpersonal relationships, continuous and constructive feedback and collaboration.

Furthermore, the analysis identifies market opportunities and threats by examining competitors' resources, the industry and the general environment. Lavery and Little (2020) argue that competitive analysis should identify the competitors by product line or service segment. Furthermore, a SWOT analysis focuses on analysing your venture's potential and builds on the knowledge gained from the competitive analysis grid and the three circles. Organisations should incorporate this system to identify the competitors' strengths and competitive advantages with any overlaps. Irrespective of the industry, the analysis has the eagerness and capacity to fulfil the need by purchasing the provided solution. Moreover, if you have access to the necessary resources to build an infrastructure for your business, have the right mix of products and services with a sound value proposition and secure funding, you have a real opportunity.

6.4 Challenges imposed by SMEs in implementing ICT

According to the resource-based theory, it is easier to exploit new opportunities using resources and competencies that are already available rather than to acquire new skills, traits or functions for each option. Moreover, RBV supporters say these should be prioritised within organisational strategy development. According to Reddy (2012), institutions are critical in developing entrepreneurial activity. Furthermore, the rules, regulations, property rights and enforcement contributes to development. Researchers have widely used the RBV theory to emphasise that entrepreneurs are economic agents whose actions contribute to economic development. The entrepreneur is now recognised as a significant participant in economic advancement. Jang (2013) emphasises the feasibility of achieving this by implementing regulations limiting the transfer of human resources within a company as these resources are deemed the organisation's most valuable internal assets. Foss (2011) also asserts that effective human resource management within organisations leads to enhanced performance.

This assistance proves to be invaluable, mainly when competitors engage in competition by recruiting highly skilled personnel.

According to the theory being tested, there is a dire need for resources for SMEs in Limpopo province to develop. Furthermore, Jang (2013) states that this competitive advantage can be attained by devising strategies focusing on the micro-foundations of resources, including HR, HR systems, people management, human capital and organisational learning. Lengler, Sousa, Perin, Sampaio and Martínez-López (2016) asserts that customer satisfaction is market-driven and it should be considered an asset since it is an elusive property of the firm that will empower it to change over data into activities, in this way making a powerful incentive for clients. The study further investigated the four tangible resources and capabilities adopted by SMEs in the Limpopo Province. Furthermore, the study argues the following:

6.4.1 Financial Resource Availability

Despite the number of years in business, there needs to be more financial capability to generate internal funds for SMEs. The COVID-19 pandemic further deprived the companies of opportunities to raise capacity for external capital. There is a high government support dependency.

6.4.2 Access to Physical Resources

Lee, Olson and Trim (2010) highlights the importance of resources within the organisation as a critical attribute to creating a platform to develop new innovative products, industry architectures, social capital, buyer-seller relations and creative breakthroughs. Furthermore, SMEs in the Limpopo province would benefit from the availability of resources, which is a crucial driver for the success of the SMEs. The development market, their business improvement and the challenges experienced. The selected respondents' geographic location is a contributing factor within their industry.

6.4.3 Provision of Organisational Resources

Makgopa (2014) emphasizes the importance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in alleviating the negative impacts of fluctuations observed during economic upturns and downturns in different developed and developing countries. The study further investigated the four intangible resources and capabilities adopted by SMEs within the Limpopo Province. Furthermore, the study argues the following:

6.4.4 Human Resource Capability

According to the study, 67,9% of the respondents are classified as small enterprises with a staff composition of 1-50. The lowest percentage of the total number of employees is 8,3% were between 51-200 and classified as medium-sized enterprises with more than 50 employees. There is a significant concern as most small enterprises show minimal growth potential. The SME sector accounts for a significant portion of the GDP globally. However, in Limpopo Province, the economic contribution from SMEs is still minimal and they have very few people in their employment. Moreover, Lee, Olson and Trim (2010), highlight the importance of resources within the organisation as a critical attribute to creating a platform to develop new innovative products, industry architectures, social capital, buyer-seller relations and creative breakthroughs.

6.4.5 Innovation

Jang (2013) states that “innovations are regarded as an invaluable asset for a firm, provided that they have the capacity to diminish the worth of their competitors' resources. Furthermore, Jang (2013) asserts that innovations are seen as a valuable resource for a firm but this holds true only if they possess the ability to reduce the value of resources owned by competitors. The study has established the importance of information and organisations must increase the data collection approach. More importantly, information relating to their business sector increases the ability of organisational knowledge for the recipient. This current knowledge/ information helps generate new data and assist the organisation's growth.

6.5 Incorporating processes and strategies for SME development

The study analysed owners/managers of SMEs exploring the appropriation of ICT with the significant utilisation of indigenous languages, the development market and improvement of their business and the challenges experienced. The selected respondents' geographic location is a contributing factor within their industry. According to GISMA (2019), strategic planning is the creation of specific business strategies, implementing them and evaluating the results of executing the plan as to an organisation's overall long-term goals or desires. The strategic plan is essential within the business; however, only 29% strongly agree that they have a formal strategic plan, with the higher 32% of respondents agreeing that they have a strategic plan. A proper strategic plan ensures consistency within the business's functionality, providing a systematic operational approach. Furthermore, GISMA (2019) argues that the initial implementation of the strategic plan might challenge the prevailing status quo within the organisation; however, it will ensure that organisations design their culture and structure with a systematic approach.

6.5.1 The role of analysis to the development of SMEs

SMEs are the backbone of many economies worldwide and their success is often contingent on making informed decisions, optimising resources and adapting to changing market conditions. Moreover, strategic analysis helps SMEs define clear objectives, set priorities and formulate a roadmap for growth. It allows SMEs to identify their SWOT analysis and develop strategies to capitalise on strengths and mitigate weaknesses. However, only 40% and 38% strongly agree with the significance of analysis in their business. The highest percentage at 41% agree that they perform strategic planning within their organisations. Furthermore, this highlights the importance of performance management as it improves employee engagement, retention, company product development and leveraging these core leadership competencies.

A competitive analysis gathers data about your competitors' products, sales, and marketing strategies. Businesses use this data to ascertain their areas of advantage and disadvantage and identify prospective opportunities. Only (51%) of the respondents agree that they explore their competitors, and (29%) of participants

strongly agree with analysing their competitors. Competitor analysis can help you understand the market landscape and make informed decisions to improve your position in the industry. However, only (1%) of the respondents strongly disagree on the significance of the analysis.

SWOT analysis within a business is critical to evaluating the internal strengths and weaknesses and the external opportunities and threats in an organisation's environment. Furthermore, Sammut-Bonnici and Galea (2017) argue that the internal analysis of the organisation is critical in identifying the source of competitive advantage. Moreover, more (47%) have incorporated SWOT analysis in their business. The SWOT analysis identifies resources, capabilities, core competencies, and competitive advantages inherent to the organisation. Despite the positive contribution of the analysis, only (2%) disagree that SWOT analysis within an organisation is not essential. The study has established the importance of SWOT analysis within organisations; however, most organisations still need a system to conduct this analysis. Moreover, strategic organisation management is pushed to make choices under pressure, often with limited resources.

Even though the study has demonstrated that business owner/ manager knows the organisation better as they can recognise the strengths and weaknesses of their company SWOT, there is no formal system to conduct this analysis. Furthermore, an organisation needs to have standard strategies in place. It teaches you to ensure the company's resources are used wisely and vested in the most promising opportunities in terms of products and services. According to Laverty and Little (2020), strategy clarifies how an organisation intends to compete in a market and what it means to develop at a benefit. Furthermore, it outlines the long-term organisational goals and plans to reach them. However, not all organisations have a formal strategy.

6.5.2 Performance, Vision and Business Structure

The importance of performance and implementation of strategies within organisations was highlighted in the study. However, only 40% and 38% strongly agree with the significance of analysis in their business. The highest percentage at 41% agree that they perform strategies within their organisations. Entrepreneurship is the source of strength that empowers individuals to consistently position themselves within

advantageous conditions, irrespective of the adversity of their environment. SMES need to source opportunities and discover, evaluate and exploit opportunities. The study explored the importance of institutions in developing SMEs within a society to ensure that they develop and grow within human interactions to manage opportunities and resources.

The entrepreneurship development theory has an economic lens, which can be used to turn around the status of the country's economy. Furthermore, this figure is about 8% in South Africa, painting a bleak picture for the industry and the economy. This industry can play a critical role in helping address the recent decline in the South African economy. The entrepreneur is now regarded as a significant player in economic development. However, the study has established that entrepreneurship is a challenge in the province of Limpopo.

There are four stages within entrepreneurship development:

Stage 1: “One or more significant advancements by the product’s first entrepreneur (or entrepreneurs) are commercialised”

Most businesses in the Limpopo Province have passed the first stage, as the study focused on companies that have been operational for more than five years. Scholars believe entrepreneurship is a prominent economic phenomenon widely regarded as a catalyst for economic expansion. Entrepreneurs are perceived as critical economic players and crucial in determining economic progress.

Stage 2: The time of a distinct surge in entrepreneurs and overall industry production. This stage is accompanied by a natural decline in the production price towards the conclusion of this phase

Entrepreneurship possesses inherent value as it aligns with the attention directed towards examining businesses' establishment, expansion, determination and their state of existence in management studies. It acknowledges that entrepreneurship extends beyond being merely instrumental and is frequently esteemed in its own right. The participants argue that irrespective of government contributions, they do not benefit from the specific programmes and delay their businesses' growth due to

geographical location. The Limpopo provincial government should prioritise addressing youth unemployment and all other issues affecting the advancement of youth. Kerr, P., Kerr, W. and Tina (2017) define an 'opportunity' as when goods can be sold at a profit. This is inadequate from a development perspective because it implies that entrepreneurship's utility depends only on monetary gains. 'Opportunities' should include situations when persons can create new firms to further their desired lives.

In stages 3 and 4, the industry then makes the transition to maturity, often through a “shake-out-like” process, during which the number of producers sharply decline and then stays constant and both output growth and price declines are much slower

According to Rakgoale (2021), “the government must develop ways of analysing and finding solutions to ending unemployment”. She says, “as part of the process, the Limpopo government has introduced the Limpopo procurement strategy, which encourages all spheres of government to procure goods and services from young people to help them achieve their goal of youth empowerment”. Most entrepreneurs do not reach this stage due to access to resources and opportunities. Furthermore, as discussed, the role of government and those who influence it to control many institutions, including law enforcement, judicial efficiency and regulations. The institution can develop because of economic conditions, such as new business sectors, information and flexible sources. Such changes bring about new open doors for human connections.

The theory of entrepreneurship development adopts an economic perspective, which can be employed to rectify the state of the nation's economy. The scholar's community implies that entrepreneurship is a financial undertaking predominantly regarded as a catalyst for economic expansion. Entrepreneurs are seen as individuals who partake in economic activities and are pivotal in determining economic progress. The entrepreneur is currently recognised as a prominent participant in economic development.

6.5.3 Information for decision-making

According to Reddy (2012), institutional theory is a theoretical framework for analysing social (particularly organisational) phenomena, which views the social world as significantly comprised of institutions. Moreover, the institutions endure regulations, customs and frameworks that establish prerequisites for action. Institutions are essential in elucidating the societal realm as they are ingrained within the social structure and guide the course of social existence. Various governmental policies and strategies strive to tackle the obstacles that SMEs encounters. This study sought to evaluate the efficacy of government-backed financial assistance for SMEs, facilitation of entry into local and global markets, government support through procurement for SMEs, alleviation of tax burdens, provision of business guidance, promotion of business incubation, favourable regulations (particularly tax incentives) and human resource development through training. The study explored various forms of institutions that play a critical part in development and sustainability. These are as follows:

Formal: “comprise of statutes, constitutions, common law, and other governmental regulations.” “They determine the governance structure, individual and property rights, contracts, and the enforcement system.” There is a significant dependency on and adoption of this institution for SMEs as they endure rules, practices and structures that set conditions for the action.

Regulatory: Formally codified, enacted and enforced structure of laws in a community, society or country. Based on experience. The study further suggests that the growth of SMEs is slow. It is envisaged that SMEs should graduate from micro-enterprise to small business, allowing a constant balance within the system. When SMEs are not growing, they create fewer opportunities for new SMEs to enter the market. This potentially results in fewer individuals being able to participate in the sector and a greater chance of being unemployed and thus impoverished.

Normative process: “in some circumstances, organisational change directly responds to government mandate.”

They are the constants that determine the rules of variation. Khan and Naguib (2019) argue that institutionalization allows us to specify the impact of more social aspects of decision-making, such as the effects of social position on choices made. A specific choice is possible only if the social aspects are direct parts of the analyses. Addressing this general issue of conditions of applicability requires solving some problems: how and when choices or alternative lines of action become socially defined, who acts to cause change and to diffuse that change to multiple organisations? and why/what are the potential benefits of creating similar structures? Or converging towards similar structures leading to organisational isomorphism? To make the institutional theory grow as a coherent paradigm and make lasting contributions to organisational analyses, such questions about institutionalisation processes require conceptual/empirical answers. Furthermore, GISMA (2019) argues that the initial implementation of the strategic plan might challenge the prevailing status quo within the organisation; however, it will ensure that organisations design their culture and structure systematically.

6.6 Indigenous languages and ICT

Language is an essential method of communication. Hence, the study explored the role of indigenous languages within the business. Hyun Ko (2016) argues that language functions as a mechanism for articulating ideas or emotions, which are employed and understood by a collective entity. The study's findings argue that the three dominant indigenous languages spoken within the data collection are Sepedi, Xitsonga, and Venda. The role of indigenous language is further outlined in the study, as it plays a critical role in the ability to transform circumstances into demand.

Moreover, language is a fundamental right that enables people to function fully as members of the linguistic group they are born with. The customers can express themselves better in their language, further impacting the daily lives of members of any race, creed, and region. The importance of language is fundamental in transforming the business sector; however, ICT is prominently using English as a means of transacting. There is a massive gap in incorporating indigenous languages in ICT; the study argues that this will improve business operations if adopted.

6.6.1 The role of indigenous languages

The study investigated the importance of language within the survey, arguing the importance of indigenous languages within businesses and technology. Most business owners or managers, approximately 68%, use the Sepedi language as a medium of communication while operating within the province, followed by Tshivenda, with a percentage of 17.2%. Furthermore, the ability to communicate in numerous languages is becoming increasingly significant in the integrated global business community. This is further seen in the Conversely, Xitsonga-spoken business owners or managers have the lowest percentage, accounting for 14.8%. However, Ndebele (2014) argues that negative perceptions toward indigenous African languages hinder localisation projects, ensuring a sustainable and stable business relationship discussion. Doing this automatically puts any multilingual person miles ahead of their peers in the competition for jobs and high-prestige positions.

Scholars Mawela, Ochara, and Twinomurinzi (2017) argue that “any language has the right to live and, like any other language, also has the right to transform and die when circumstances so demand.” Furthermore, indigenous language allows businesses to share directly with their target market in a manner they understand. Moreover, language is a fundamental right that enables people to function fully as members of the linguistic group they are born with. The study further investigated the importance of incorporating indigenous languages within business and technology. Most business owners argue that it is essential to integrate indigenous languages within the business (37%), and (31%) also agree that Integrating African languages with information and communication technology is critical in business development and in promoting and intellectualising African languages. The study illustrates the importance of indigenous languages native to Limpopo province and technology within organisations within the study.

There are significant opportunities in developing SMEs with available government contributions; however, inequalities prevail over the industry's growth and operation. According to Ndebele (2014), technological tools assist in teaching and learning African languages. Furthermore, the respondents are neutral (28%) on the role of the indigenous language within their companies. Moreover, the respondents are neutral at (32%). indigenous African language content also constitutes a considerably low

percentage of web content. Given the need to increase localised software and web content, the translation process could require much labour, time, and financial resources. A smaller percentage of the respondents disagree; only (3%) have not indicated. However, Ndebele (2014) reaffirms challenges that contribute to indigenous languages continued low profile, acknowledging the limited utilisation of these languages. Moreover, only (43%) of the respondents agree that indigenous language is essential in business; furthermore, (31%) of owners/managers strongly agree. The respondents showed disappointment with the government for not having the political will to develop the indigenous languages; the majority stated that they understood their language rights and were aware of them.

Moreover, Ndebele (2014) outlines the objectives of preserving homeland culture, language, and identity; these websites tend to be business oriented. These online practices can increase the international visibility of their indigenous language and locality of origin and channel transnational or trans-local networks to support homeland development. Furthermore, technological strategies outline the plan, which consists of objectives, principles and tactics relating to using technologies within a particular organisation. Implementation impacts budget allocations, operational procedures, responsibilities concerning business objectives, and day-to-day functions. The importance of indigenous language is fundamental within our business operation; despite the minimal implementation of strategies to adopt the language, the study established the reputation of the organisation's business within the various municipalities.

Despite South Africa's 26 years of democracy, the challenge of integrating indigenous languages into Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and education. This issue lingers despite laws and other matters regarding including native languages. The lack of implementation of language policies and the exclusion of indigenous languages from ICTs reflect the need for more linguistic diversity within this field—efforts to support. Unfortunately, language-related concerns do not hold significant priority for the South African government. Consequently, the indigenous population may find it disheartening when typing on Microsoft Word, as the red underlining indicates that the document does not recognise their languages.

Additionally, when using search engines, the limited number of search results for indigenous language terms implies that these languages need to be digitalised, thereby hindering the ability to conduct high-quality research in indigenous languages and rendering these languages foreign in the technological domain. Furthermore, this study underscores the need to incorporate indigenous languages within various companies, granting them the ability to thrive and expand in multiple markets. Business owners can benefit from consumers' comfort in communicating in their native languages, as it fosters positive attributes and opens up opportunities for growth and development.

6.6.2 Technology Acceptance and Perceive ease of Use

The study argues that implementing strategies within an organisation is fundamental; however, only (34%) of the data collected within the survey strongly agree. Furthermore, Dia (2014) argues that ICTs could hold significant results, but language and technical barriers are one of the main challenges. Most business owners or managers agree that (48%) have implemented technological strategies. Technological advancement allows organisations to develop and create sustainable environment utility technology as a critical entity for growth. However (12%) are neutral and only (2%) disagree with implementing technological strategies. Organisations should incorporate specialised techniques within their organisations as fundamental to their operations. This further allows organisations to develop and create a sustainable platform for the company's growth. Technological strategies are a critical creation of an overall business plan which consists of principles, objectives, and tactics for using technology to achieve organisational goals.

Businesses must communicate with their customers while integrating various ICT and marketing strategies. Marketing plays a significant role in establishing and maintaining contacts between a company and its markets. The respondents within the study acknowledge the role of language, ICT, and marketing in business. With Majority of the companies strongly agree that language (42%), marketing (49%) and ICT (52%) are essential within business operations. The researcher will used the model to measure and determine if there is a way an end user's perception of the acceptance of technology can be measured.

It is further outlined by Reimenschneider *et al.* (2003) that TAM is the model most likely to be used for IT adoption in small businesses due to the social approval of this model. A few factors influence managers' acceptance and attitude towards using technology. The Technology Acceptance Model is applied to the study by adding the following variables to perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEU), with TAM2 incorporating theoretical constructs involving social influence processes. The level to which a country experiences economic advancement is significantly influenced by the quantity of highly skilled workforce that colleges and universities produce. The presence of high-tech fields of study serves as crucial indicators of the quality of labour and the effectiveness of government initiatives implemented by a specific country (Qureshi *et al.*, 2012). In a recent study, Panicker (2020) provided a comprehensive summary of the political and economic factors that impact technological programs, including the type of government-media relationship, the level of techno-political freedom, the diffusion of technology, tertiary education, governmental initiatives, physical infrastructure, and the distribution of population.

The current research findings have demonstrated that the theoretical TAM constructs of Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use are noteworthy factors in predicting the future adoption of diverse technologies in various contexts (Davis & Venkatesh, 1996). Moreover, the Technology Acceptance Model is a dependent variable rather than a determining behaviour factor. The study significantly affects the model to ensure users' technology adoption to ensure SMEs' sustainability while utilising indigenous languages with their business. The study explores the user's role in adopting and using technology, and the function is significant within the study as the role of an indigenous language is investigated. Resources are essential in developing organisations. Hence, the extent to which an entrepreneur places importance on social objectives for the enterprise ought to be influenced positively by the presence of social capital. The framework is based on the Technology Acceptance Model within the study by adding the following variables: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEU).

6.6.3 Availability of ICT Infrastructure

According to Panicker (2020), ICT infrastructure enables rural businesses to access global markets, expand their customer base, and engage in e-commerce. This can increase economic opportunities, job creation, and improved income levels. Furthermore, Goldstuck (2018) emphasises that poor internet connection, a challenge in many areas of South Africa, unquestionably does not make adoption any easier. The advantages of technology can only be maximised when they have reliable and affordable connections. Nonetheless, those businesses with a clear plan for technological adoption will have significantly better prospects than those without. The importance is further reassured by the respondents, who agree that language (37%), marketing (28%), and ICT (26%) are significant in their business. According to Lawrence (2019), the importance of infrastructure in technology as an essential entity could be utilised to require a moral vision prescribing the importance of technology to society.

Furthermore, information and communication are mediated through technology, making them desirable and almost unthinkable alternatives. The study illustrates the importance of opportunities and support of ICT infrastructure within organisations. However, only (42%) and (35%) strongly agree with the significance of infrastructure in their business. However, those businesses with a clear plan for technological adoption will have significantly better prospects than those without. Scholars Cant, Wiid and Hung (2016) identify possible delaying factors in the adoption of ICT, outlying the lack of financial resources, high costs of ICT systems, the lack of skilled workers that can handle or maintain ICT systems, the lack of knowledge to set up the ICT systems and the lack of knowledge and understanding of ICT. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure plays a pivotal role in rural communities, contributing to their development and improving residents' overall quality of life. ICT infrastructure provides rural communities access to vast information and educational resources. This can enhance the quality of education in rural schools and provide lifelong learning opportunities for residents. The study agrees on the importance of ICT infrastructure in their organisation (34%), and a further (33%) highlights ICT support and creating business opportunities.

ICT infrastructure can enhance the delivery of government services in rural areas. Residents can access online registration, payments, and public information more efficiently, reducing bureaucratic hurdles and corruption. Furthermore, there are contributing factors towards infrastructure with a poor internet connection, which is a challenge in many areas of South Africa and unquestionably doesn't make adoption any easier. Scholars Basri, Alandejani and Almadani (2018) viewed ICT as skills-based, and numerous studies have been directed at the corresponding relationship between ICT utilisation and the demand for skilled workers. ICT infrastructure is essential for sustainable development and well-being in urban and rural communities. It empowers rural residents to access critical services, information, and economic opportunities, contributing to these regions' overall growth and prosperity. Governments, organisations, and stakeholders should prioritise investments in ICT infrastructure to bridge the digital divide and promote rural development.

6.7 Discussion of the Results in Relation to Theoretical Frameworks

The study tested theories on entrepreneurship development, Institutional, Resource-Based Views and Technology Acceptance models. The theories highlight the importance of Small and Medium Enterprises while underutilising ICT resources adequately within their operation; accordingly, they don't develop and contribute towards monetary advancement and poverty alleviation in their areas. The study created an ICT Model to enhance SME development using indigenous languages in Limpopo province, South Africa. Entrepreneurship is essential for starting any form of business. Scholars Spinelli (2016) define "Entrepreneurship as a way of thinking, reasoning, and acting that is opportunity obsessed, holistic in approach, and leadership balanced. Resources and opportunities are critical to SMEs' sustainability; however, Shane and Venkataraman (2000) argues that "research has focused on the discovery, exploitation, and consequences without much attention to the nature and sources of opportunity itself". While Ács and Naudé (2013) believe that opportunities, irrespective of the nature of the chance, make it "impossible to separate it from the individual, others contend that option is an objective construct visible only to the knowledgeable and attuned individuals".

6.7.1 Conceptual Framework Development

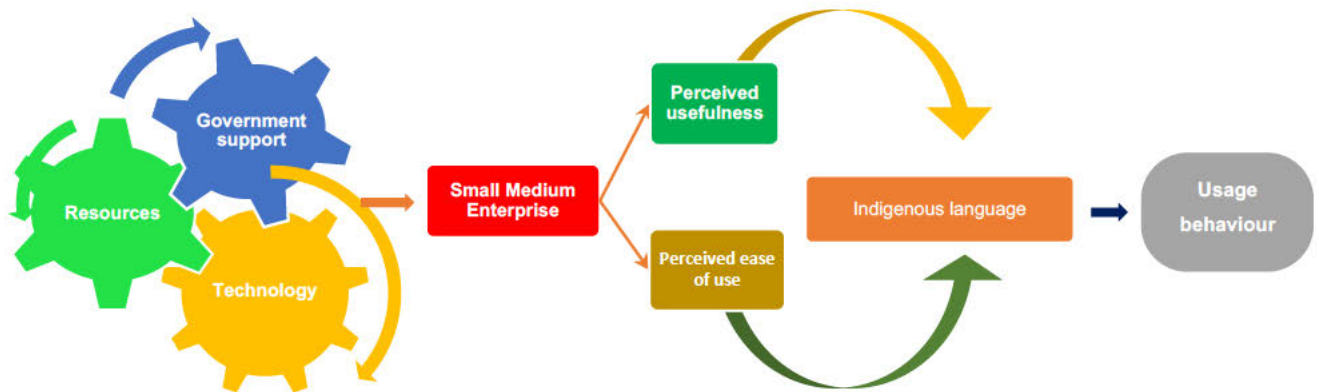
Various scholars have endeavoured to explain and clarify the concept of the conceptual framework. Furthermore, Shikalepo (2020) and Imenda (2014) define conceptual framework as “the result of bringing together several related concepts to explain and give a broader understanding of the phenomenon under research”. Moreover, it is a synopsis of various findings from the literature sources that have been reviewed about the research, setting out the research agenda for increased understanding of the research intentions.

Shikalepo (2020), a conceptual framework is built to show the variables at play and the hypotheses to be tested. When successfully analysed, the results show the relative importance of each sustainability factor in each venture business phase. This was substantiated by the contextualisation of these theories, culminating in a bespoke synthesis, facilitating the coherent assimilation of this inquiry to push the scholastic boundary. The framework facilitates the organisation of fundamental ideas and concepts derived from theories, significant discoveries from research, policy declarations, and other forms of expert knowledge that inform the research endeavour Imenda (2014).

6.7.2 An integrated ICT and SMEs framework

The conceptual framework organises the study's critical concepts to define the study's focus and direction. The study's objective was to develop an ICT model to enhance Small and Medium Enterprises using indigenous languages within the Limpopo Province. Furthermore, the study instructs the country to construct SMEs concerning the significance of ICT in Business using Indigenous languages. The proposed framework Despite the challenges of access to the internet within specific communities, the research aimed to use ICT for SMEs using their indigenous languages, given their SMEs' development.

Figure 6.1: An integrated ICT and SMEs framework



Source: Devised by the Researcher (2023)

6.7.3 Key Components of the Framework

This section explains the critical components of the framework, which developed an ICT Model to enhance SME development using indigenous languages in Limpopo province, South Africa. This study explores the importance of ICT resources with Small and Medium Enterprises and adequately implemented within their operations. Entrepreneurship influences development outcomes positively and negatively; third, development dynamics significantly determine entrepreneurship. The study embraced the concept of social entrepreneurship, which encompasses a novel amalgamation of assets to pursue favourable circumstances actively.

For the study, entrepreneurship is the source of SME development as it affirms the importance of creating business opportunities. Scholar Pandya (2012) asserts that small and medium enterprises are crucial for promoting financial and sustainable development. SMEs are significant to South Africa as they foster development and economic growth. The study explores institutions set up by government institutions to develop because of economic conditions that will enhance and establish Small and Medium Enterprises in the Limpopo Province. There are various forms of institutions, and the study explores the different forms of institutions in incorporating the development of SMEs and undertaking the organisations' growth and sustainability.

According to Reimers and Schleicher (2020), "without devices, internet connectivity, and austere physically conducive environments", it is difficult for learners to learn during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the deprivation of access to ICT highlights

a feeling of inadequacy, thereby maintaining the status quo and narrative of township people as passive recipients of government aid rather than active participants in determining their future. This study assesses ICT's role in enhancing SMEs' development using indigenous languages. Resources are essential in developing organisations; Therefore, the extent to which an entrepreneur prioritises social objectives for the business ought to be positively impacted by the presence of social capital.

The conceptual framework is constructed upon the TAM outlined in the study, encompassing the subsequent variables: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEU). According to Lai (2017), TAM was explicitly designed to be applied to adopt new technologies. It indicates how users accept and use new technologies. Several limitations have been criticised for the TAM and ICT appropriation and use, including the original models' intended generality and not considering the non-organisational setting. The study acknowledges the importance of technology offering an opportunity to develop and create a sustainable environment utility as a critical entity for growth. Furthermore, the advantages of technology can only be maximised when they have reliable and affordable connections.

The study significantly affects the model to ensure users' adoption of technology to ensure SMEs' sustainability while utilising indigenous languages with their business.

- i. Identify the role of government in promoting ICT and the importance of incorporating it in SME development in Limpopo Province.
- ii. To explore the challenges posed by ICT services in incorporating Indigenous Languages for SME development.
- iii. Demonstrate how ICT can be conceptualised to address the challenges of incorporating indigenous languages for SMEs' development.

Resources are an essential part of SMEs' advancement; the study explored the TAM theory, featuring that SMEs rely upon other institutional conditions to empower them to be aggressive and develop the market. Technological progress allows organisations to build and create sustainable environment utility technology as a critical entity for growth. The advantages of technology can only be maximised when they have reliable and affordable connections.

6.8 Chapter Summary

This Chapter has provided detailed discussions to interpret and describe the significance of the research findings and explain the new knowledge or insights that emerged from the study. The chapter ties together the study results from the interviews and the questionnaire with literature, existing theory and research. The participant responses within the province of Limpopo were discussed, while the study furthermore explored the current challenges posed by using ICT services in incorporating Indigenous Languages for SME development. The interpretation of the results identified the role of the government in promoting and integrating ICT in SME development in Limpopo Province. However, The study aimed to develop an ICT Model to enhance SME development using indigenous languages in Limpopo province, South Africa.

This chapter discusses the research findings and tackles three crucial concerns related to the performance of SMEs that the participants raised. The initial concern pertains to the government's ability to effectively disseminate information about SME policies to its officers while ensuring that such intentions are effectively communicated to all experts within the SME sector. However, this information could have effectively reached the individuals responsible for implementing SME policies. The next chapter will discuss the conclusions and recommendations drawn from this study. The academic significance of the study shall also be found in this chapter.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The chapter provides a summary of the research findings based on data presentation and a conclusion derived using data sourced in line with the research findings and recommendations. This relate to the results to the real world by making recommendations based on what has been learned from the research project and, therefore, can be used to discuss future research. The study's recommendations are based on research findings and the responsibility for implementing and benchmarking them against best practices. This chapter discusses the main results of the research, which was established at the beginning of the study. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research and recommendations. The surveys by Leedy and Ormrod (2016) and Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2016) indicated that the researcher must summarise the findings and conclusions about the research problem by interpreting the findings. They identify weaknesses and limitations in the study as it was designed or carried out, identify possible practical implications of the results and suggest areas for future research.

7.1 Problem Statement and Research Question of the Study

This section is for review purposes for the problem statement and research questions.

7.1.1 Problem Statement

The present unemployment context confronting SMEs does not just assume a critical part in the Republic of South Africa's economy. Still, it is essential to the country's economic strength and employment creation. SMEs hastened to utilise ICT resources adequately within their operations; and accordingly, they develop and contribute towards economic development and poverty alleviation in their areas. In this study, the researcher identified SMEs' failure to use indigenous languages and ICT as a significant weakness to flourishing (Makgopa, 2014). Failure to incorporate indigenous languages and ICT is a severe challenge that affects SMEs' business and potential growth. SMEs are conversant with ICT, supported by indigenous languages, yielding good results.

The study's critical concepts define the study's focus and direction. The study's objective was to develop an ICT model to enhance SMEs using indigenous languages within the Limpopo Province. Furthermore, the study instructs the country to construct SMEs concerning the significance of ICT in business using Indigenous languages. The proposed framework despite the challenges of access to the internet within specific communities, the research aimed to use ICT for SMEs using their indigenous languages.

7.1.2 Research Question of the Study

The research questions in this study were:

1. What is the role of the government in promoting ICT in SME development in Limpopo Province?
2. What is the importance of incorporating ICT in SME development in Limpopo?
3. Are there any challenges using ICT services in incorporating indigenous languages for SME development?
4. How can ICT be conceptualised to address the challenges of incorporating indigenous languages for SMEs' development?

7.2 Summary of the Results

In summarising the study's results, the research questions will be used to structure the findings from both qualitative and quantitative methods. The research questions are, at this moment, re-iterated for ease of reference.

7.2.1 Demographics and socio-economic profile

The study analysed owners/managers of SMEs exploring the appropriation of ICT with the significant utilisation of indigenous languages, the development market, the improvement of their businesses and the challenges experienced. However, participants indicated that most of their businesses benefit from the influx of people within their districts. They argue that irrespective of government contributions, they do not benefit from any specific programmes and their businesses' growth is hampered due to geographical location. The Limpopo government has introduced the Limpopo

procurement strategy, which encourages all spheres of government to procure goods and services from young people to help them achieve their goal of youth empowerment.

The study has seen improved governance of female owners/managers, attesting to the importance of women-owned enterprises. The respondents indicated that females take advantage of the support services available for SME development and promotion programmes. South African women have traditionally struggled with less access to capital and fewer assets than their male counterparts and not owning property makes it harder for women to offer collateral for business loans. The study was based on the respondents' level of qualification and was crucial in determining whether they understood the importance of education in running a business. The respondents had different educational qualifications, ranging from no formal to a degree. There is a need for education to empower them to be good managers to run businesses successfully.

7.2.2 Business and sector profile

The participants in the study registered their businesses formally while bemoaning the cost of registering and maintaining the business account. The strategic objective of development is to create a sustainable environment for small businesses and cooperatives in rural and township areas. Customers and clients, especially people you have never worked with before need assurance that you are a legitimate business; therefore, it is essential to register a company. SMEs can play a critical role in helping address the recent setbacks on the South African economy. Still, it needs the willingness and, more importantly, the action of all stakeholders to succeed. This is a significant concern as most small enterprises show minimal growth potential. Most businesses have been in operation for more than five years but are still regarded as survivalists with nil or few employees on their monthly payroll. The SME sector accounts for a significant portion of the GDP globally. However, within Limpopo Province, economic contribution from SMEs is still minimal and they have very few people in their employment.

The study further suggests that the growth of SMEs is slow. It is envisaged that SMEs should graduate from micro-enterprise to small businesses, allowing a constant balance within the system. According to the study, three dominating indigenous languages are spoken in the study area. The study investigated the importance of languages within the survey, arguing the importance of indigenous languages within businesses and technology. Despite the dominance of Sepedi within the province, it is important to embrace different indigenous African languages and presents an opportunity to utilise Africa's linguistic treasure for education and development.

Furthermore, Dia (2014) argues that this assessment could help address the knowledge gaps relating to the initiatives to mainstream African indigenous languages and ICTs into development programmes, the ensuing opportunities and shortcomings and the lessons learned. Furthermore, despite losing employment, SMMEs and Co-operatives have demonstrated a spirit of innovativeness, resilience and agility to weather the storm. The annual turnover was affected and specific companies had to close. Moreover, the government has supported businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic by introducing various relief funds as SMEs are the lifeblood of the economy.

7.2.3 Incorporating formal structure for SME development

The realisation of this mandate will lead to a transformed and inclusive economy driven by sustainable and innovative small businesses. The further argument highlights the importance of strategic business management to assist the business' profit and decision-making, yet its functions can also be broken down. However, the business does not have a formalised strategic management process. The most crucial process that any organisation should have is planning. Moreover, the strategic planning process predicts future trends that will help the business build to make this happen; strategic planning tools need to be used instead of simple planning processes. Strategic management ensures an organisation can have a forward-thinking approach, ensuring they can draw up clear, long-term goals. This should be a standard practice, irrespective of the location as it can benefit an organisation's overall growth. A proper strategic plan ensures consistency within the business's functionality, providing a systematic operational approach. Strategic planning requires significant time, effort and money; a well-thought-out strategic plan fosters company growth, goal

achievement and employee satisfaction. However, the study has established that irrespective of the significance of information, not all organisations have a system to gather information. The study has demonstrated the importance of information and organisations must increase the data collection approach. More importantly, information relating to their business sector increases the ability of organisational knowledge for the recipient. This current knowledge/ information helps generate new data and assist the organisation's growth.

Furthermore, in the study, the business owner/manager knows the organisation better as they can recognise the strengths and weaknesses of their company's strength, weakness, opportunity and threats (SWOT). However, awareness of a business's shortcomings and strong points is not enough. Strategic planning is employed to bridge the gap between the capability void and the strength of a company. The SWOT analysis identifies resources, capabilities, core competencies and competitive advantages inherent to the organisation. The study has established the importance of SWOT analysis within organisations; however, most organisations do not have a system to conduct this analysis. Even though the study has demonstrated that business owner/manager knows the organisation better as they can recognise the strengths and weaknesses of their company SWOT, there is no formal system to conduct this analysis. Furthermore, an organisation needs to have standard strategies in place. It teaches you to ensure that the company's resources are used wisely and vested in the most promising opportunities in terms of products and services.

Moreover, the study has established the importance of competitor analysis as a critical part of entrepreneurial development and assists in developing a competitive edge that will sustain the organisation. Organisations should incorporate this system to identify competitors' strengths and competitive advantages with any overlaps. Irrespective of the industry, the analysis has the eagerness and capacity to fulfil the need by purchasing the provided solution. Moreover, if you have access to the necessary resources to build an infrastructure for your business, have the right mix of products and services with a sound value proposition and secure funding, you have a real opportunity. Strategic plans offer an opportunity for organisations to achieve their plan of action to incorporate their vision and set objectives. It furthermore guides the decision-making processes to improve the company's financial stability in a competitive market. By adopting strategies, organisations will provide a working

environment conducive to the needs of all employees while providing a supportive structure in the organisation. Moreover, systems offer organisational support through solid leadership, healthy interpersonal relationships, continuous and constructive feedback and collaboration.

7.2.4 Indigenous languages and Information Communication technology

Language is an essential tool of communication; it impacts the daily lives of members of any race, creed and region of the world. Businesses must communicate with their customers while integrating various ICT and marketing strategies. Marketing plays a significant role in establishing and maintaining contacts between a company and its markets. The respondents in the study acknowledge the role of language, ICT and marketing in business. The advantages of technology can only be maximised when they have reliable and affordable connections. Nonetheless, those businesses with a clear plan for technological adoption will have significantly better prospects than those without.

The participants expressed dissatisfaction with the government's need for more political determination to promote the growth of the indigenous languages. The majority stated that they understood and were aware of their language rights. The study illustrates the importance of opportunities and support of ICT infrastructure within organisations. However, the study strongly agrees with the significance of infrastructure in their business. However, those businesses with a clear plan for technological adoption will have significantly better prospects than those without. The study agrees with the importance of ICT infrastructure in their organisation and highlights ICT support and creating business opportunities.

There are significant opportunities in developing SMEs with available government contributions; however, inequalities prevail over the industry's growth and operation. Despite much-existing legislation and other initiatives, the omission of indigenous languages into ICT and the lack of the implementation of language policies in the country reflect the lack of indigenous languages in the ICT field. This problem has many contributors, including the digital divide, English hegemony and the negative attitudes towards indigenous languages. Language problems are not a significant concern of the South African government.

The study argues that implementing strategies within an organisation is fundamental. Technological advancement allows organisations to develop and create sustainable environment for growth. This will further enable organisations to build and create a sustainable platform for the company's growth. Technological strategies are crucial to creating an overall business plan, which consists of principles, objectives and tactics for using technology to achieve organisational goals. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of implementing indigenous languages in their different companies with an ability to develop and expand into multiple markets. Consumers are more comfortable communicating using their own languages, a positive attribute for business owners offering growth and development opportunities.

7.3 Contribution of the study

The practical contribution relates to the requirement of SMEs in the Limpopo Province to integrate ICT using indigenous languages. Five theories cognate theoretical underpinnings that will significantly expand into the existing scholarly knowledge and its impact on ICT in enhancing SMEs development using indigenous languages

7.3.1 Practical Contribution

The study made a practical contribution by understanding the underlying factors contributing to the lack of ICT utilisation by SMEs within the Limpopo Province. Furthermore, this led to designing an ICT model to enhance SMEs using indigenous languages. The empirical data showed the gaps in SMEs underutilisation of ICT resources within their operations. Accordingly, they do not develop and contribute towards monetary advancement and poverty alleviation in their areas. The literature focused on integrating African languages with ICT as essential in business development and promoting and intellectualising indigenous languages. There are significant opportunities in developing SMEs with available government contributions; however, inequalities prevail over the industry's growth and operations. There currently needs to be evidence of studies done in SMEs and ICT which focus on integrating indigenous languages. The conceptual model has been designed considering the study's findings, which were informed by data collected and specific and in-depth analysis techniques.

Even though Limpopo province is one of the poorest regions in South Africa, the study develops an ICT model to enhance SMEs using indigenous languages in the Limpopo Province.

7.2.2 Theoretical Contribution

Different theories have been utilised to explain the sustainability of SMEs' development in Limpopo Province by using indigenous languages to enhance the ICT in their operations. Theories on entrepreneurship development, institutional, RBV and TAM have been used to describe how businesses can grow and sustain various venture business evolution phases in viewing previous South African and global studies that have used the TAM (Venkatesh *et al.*, 2003) and no substantiating evidence was found or anything relating to the current research.

This study explored the importance of ICT resources in SMEs and how they adequately implemented them within their operations. Entrepreneurship influences development outcomes positively and negatively; third, development dynamics significantly determine entrepreneurship. The study adopted social entrepreneurship, including an innovative combination of resources to pursue opportunities that can lead to social change and meet the community's social needs. Therefore, previous studies were not entirely related to this current study except that they both used the same models in different settings. Nonetheless, the studies showed that both models have existed for a long time and have been tested in different contexts and sectors around the globe.

Therefore, this study has conceptualised mimetic, coercive and normative institutional pressures and describes how these pressures can be hypothesised to explain organisational performance. Furthermore, institutional theory applied to entrepreneurship suggests that entrepreneurs must conform to existing institutions to gain endorsement, legitimacy and resources from essential referent audiences. Stakeholder theory outlines the role of competitive positions when utilising a RBV of the organisation. The study furthermore identified the opportunities within the organisation to enable competitiveness and growth. The original models needed to work optimally in the context of this study. Still, the results improved when these variables were introduced, reflecting the impacts of three interrelated social forces

impinging on an individual facing the opportunity to adopt or reject a new system: subjective norm, voluntariness and image. PU is “the extent to which a person believes that using a particular system will enhance his or her job performance”. However, these models have never met the needs to address the following requirements for the users: service quality, system quality, information quality, PEOU, intention to use, user satisfaction and net benefits.

7.4 Recommendations

A few issues need to be resolved before SMEs can adopt ICT as a significant obstacle to flourishing growth and incorporating indigenous languages. Additionally, specific guidelines that each stakeholder must follow must be enforced.

The following recommendations can assist in that regard:

- **SME development and sustainability**

SMEs are crucial in advancing grassroots financial and equitable sustainable development. SMEs are significant to South Africa as they foster development and economic growth. The study explores institutions set up by government institutions to develop because of economic conditions that will enhance and establish SMEs in the Limpopo Province. There are various forms of institutions and the study explores the different forms of institutions in incorporating the development of SMEs and undertaking the organisations’ growth and sustainability. Some barriers must be discussed among stakeholders and a common ground needs to be reached where all stakeholders will first put the economic development agenda before their personal, organisational or political agendas. To promote and boost sustainable and inclusive economic growth, employment, innovation and inequality reduction across the continent, it is therefore essential to create an environment that enables SMEs to thrive and participate more actively in African economies, particularly in the era of 4IR. The stakeholders need to acknowledge that the success of SMEs depends upon collective efforts, not working in silos. The Limpopo government should consider reducing the burden on SMEs by providing adequate strategic resources such as access to finance, knowledge networks and markets, inadequate education and training and uncompetitive regulatory frameworks.

- **Implementation of indigenous languages in mainstream business operations**

The significance of education (language) in transforming societies from engaging in primary economic activities to tertiary financial sector activities is well documented. Furthermore, to achieve national development in all areas, indigenous languages become pertinent in communicating information related to national development goals. This is because leaders and stakeholders in these areas need to effectively communicate information about their goals to the grassroots people, most of whom use indigenous languages as their primary language of communication and, most times, sole language of interaction. Implementing indigenous languages is necessary to communicate with the business sector. Three dominating indigenous languages are spoken within the data collection area in Limpopo Province. The importance of languages within the survey argues about the importance of indigenous languages within businesses and technology.

- **Promoting the uptake of technology**

SMEs in the Limpopo Province should embrace the use of technology and stakeholders will need something engaging that satisfies their needs and is practical and should emphasise the use of technology. Stakeholders will need something engaging that to use. The government needs to provide infrastructure to enable the adoption of technology. A series of workshops will also need to be held to educate the stakeholders on the new system. The advantages of technology should be prioritised because they assist in boosting organisational productivity and collaboration.

7.5 Directions for Policy makers Future Researchers

Following up on this study's findings could be the following research:

- Similar research should be conducted across the nation to gauge the experiences of other provinces;
- Implementing the conceptualised model in other provinces;

- A study on indigenous languages and how they shape technology and information systems;
- Further study on the implementation and leadership roles in SMEs;
- Stakeholder relationship management in SMEs and how technology can be used to facilitate the process; and
- A comparative study between South Africa and other countries (developed and developing) about indigenous languages and SMEs.

7.6 Conclusion

The study's objectives were fully met through interviews, gathering statistics and using structural equation modelling. The study outcomes have been presented and the researcher has offered recommendations.

Based on this study, the following conclusions can be made:

The implementation of indigenous languages is hindered by the dominance of English in business and education, negatively impacting the use and intellectualisation of indigenous languages. There is also a gap between the indigenous speakers and the language policy implementers. There is a need to implement language policies to develop and uplift the status and use of indigenous languages in all domains and how disadvantaged they are from their point of view. Despite many existing legislative and other initiatives, the need for more indigenous languages in ICTs and the implementation of language policies in the country are the reason for the absence of ICT languages. Many contributing factors include the digital divide, English hegemony, and negative attitudes towards indigenous languages. This study agreed that the problem continues because the language challenge is not addressed in the country and because there is a sidelining in South Africa of the discussion of the integration of indigenous languages into ICTs, which indicates the lack of a meaningful and enforceable legislative context for ICTs.

The study acknowledges that despite numerous sections of legislation and other measures, the need for languages in the sphere of ICT is shown by the exclusion of indigenous languages from ICTs and the country's lack of implementation of the

language policy. Various factors include the digital divide, English hegemony and negative attitudes towards indigenous languages. Furthermore, the level of technology adoption for development by the public sector needs to catch up to the adoption in the developed world. This study agreed with the findings that indigenous languages must be digitalised within ICT and that quality research using indigenous languages is prohibited, making indigenous languages foreign to the technological world.

The study explored institutions that have been set up by government institutions to develop because of economic conditions that will enhance and establish SMEs in the Limpopo Province. The government needs to do more to support SMEs to emphasise the use of technology and stakeholders will need something engaging that satisfies their needs and is practical and should emphasise the use of technology. Stakeholders will need something interesting to use. The government needs to provide infrastructure to enable the adoption of technology. There are various forms of institutions and the study explores the different forms of institutions in incorporating the development of SMEs and undertaking the organisations' growth and sustainability.

ICTs need to undertake an approach which leads to understanding the needs of SMEs, promoting learning from each other, knowledge sharing and innovation and encouraging faster technology diffusion. This study ensured that designing a conceptual framework is aligned with the importance of ICT resources in SMEs and adequately implemented within their operations. Entrepreneurship influences development outcomes positively and negatively; third, development dynamics significantly determine entrepreneurship. The study adopted social entrepreneurship, which includes an innovative combination of resources to pursue opportunities.

The study further outlines the importance of education as a critical asset in the adoption of indigenous languages and in transforming societies from engaging in primary economic activities to tertiary financial sector activities. This study also adhered to achieving national development in all areas; indigenous languages become pertinent in communicating information related to national development goals. This is because leaders and stakeholders in these areas need to communicate information about their goals effectively to the people at the grassroots level, the majority of whom use indigenous languages as their primary and, most times, sole language of interaction. Implementing indigenous languages is necessary to

communicate with the business sector. Furthermore, the study's findings proved a slight transformation in the education sector; those not from an English background need help understanding the content. There was a sense of feeling displaced, excluded, not represented or that their voices were marginalised through the language barrier as they could not express their ideas and thoughts in English.

The significance of education (language) in transforming societies from engaging primary economic activities to tertiary financial sector activities is well documented. Furthermore, this study explored whether languages could provide access to change and social and material conditions of its speakers and the analysis found that the lack of implementation of indigenous languages correlates to the delay in the development of the material conditions of the indigenous speakers and languages provide access to economic, social, material and economic changes. In achieving that, this study focused on users' technology adoption while promoting SMEs' sustainability while utilising indigenous languages in their business. The study further identified the role of government in fostering ICT and the significance of integrating it into SME development in the Limpopo Province. The Limpopo Province presents several difficulties for small businesses that require support embracing indigenous languages for the growth of SMEs. The study further incorporated theories on entrepreneurship development, Institutional, RBV and TAM to describe how businesses can grow and sustain various venture business evolution phases by exploring the importance of technology within their operations.

The model demonstrates the value and significance of using ICT for SMEs in Limpopo Province using their indigenous languages to develop. Resources are most important in integrating African languages with ICT; the South African government has a critical role in promoting and intellectualising African languages in business development. Entrepreneurship is the source of strength that allows individuals to continually put themselves into favourable circumstances, regardless of how unfavourable the surroundings are. Resources are essential to SMEs' advancement; the study explored the TAM theory, stating that SMEs rely upon other institutional conditions to empower them to be aggressive and develop the market. Technological progress allows organisations to build and create sustainable environment utility technology as a critical entity for growth. The advantages of technology can only be maximised when they have reliable and affordable connections.

This research also confirmed the literature on organisation and management perspectives, technology perspectives, political and policy perspectives, legislation and policies all impact inter-organisational information in the government sector. The government play a crucial role in the adoption and implementation of policies. The importance of policies and workflow development includes enhancing indigenous languages as their primary and, most times, sole language of interaction. The technological perspective in this study refers to a system that will consider issues of information security and IT capacity instead of outsourcing.

7.7 Chapter Summary

The study concludes with this chapter. It revisited the study's problem statement and research questions to remind the reader of the essential objectives of the study. This study fulfilled the objectives by determining that there needs to be a system for enhancing SMEs development using indigenous languages. Furthermore, incorporating indigenous languages is delayed by the need for more implementation from the government. The study identified existing barriers, including government participation in implementing policies and legislation, a need for an information-sharing culture, siloed stakeholder collaboration, sensitive information and ineffective information technology usage.

This study discussed the significance of education (language) in transforming societies from engaging in primary economic activities to tertiary financial sector activities. Furthermore, to achieve national development in all areas, indigenous languages become pertinent in communicating information related to national development goals. The contributions made by the study in both practical and theoretical perspectives were illustrated. Furthermore, the study instructs the country to construct SMEs concerning the significance of ICT in business using indigenous languages. The conclusions for this study were then drawn, which presented the study's findings and contributed to the use of ICT for SMEs' development using indigenous languages.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE
SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The section is asking your background information.
Please indicate your answer by ticking (X) on the appropriate box.

1.1 Age of the Owner / Manager:

19 - 25		26 - 35		36 - 45		46 - 55		56 +	
---------	--	---------	--	---------	--	---------	--	------	--

1.2 Gender of owner / Manager: **Male** **Female**

1.3 Highest qualification:

Primary School		High School		Diploma		Degree	
Post graduate degree		No Schooling at all					

SECTION 2: ORGANISATIONAL INFORMATION

The section is asking your organizational information.
Please indicate your answer by ticking (X) on the appropriate box.

2.1. Form of business enterprise:

Sole proprietorship		Partnership		Close corporation		Company	
---------------------	--	-------------	--	-------------------	--	---------	--

2.2. Business sector or subsector

Agriculture		Mining and quarrying	
Manufacturing		Electricity, gas and water	
Construction		Retail and motor trade, and repair services	
Wholesale trade, commercial agents and allied services		Catering, accommodation and other trade	
Transport, storage and communications		Finance and business services	
Community, social and personal service		Other (specify):	

2.3. Number of employees:

1 to 5		6 to 10		11 to 20		21 to 50		50 to 200	
--------	--	---------	--	----------	--	----------	--	-----------	--

2.4. Business Location :

Mopani		Vhembe		Capricorn		Waterberg		Sekhukhune	
--------	--	--------	--	-----------	--	-----------	--	------------	--

P

2.5. Type of indigenous spoken

Sepedi		Tshivenda		Xitsonga		IsiNdebele		Siswati	
--------	--	-----------	--	----------	--	------------	--	---------	--

2.6. Year of business operation

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

5 to 10 years		10 or more years	
---------------	--	------------------	--

2.7. Annual turnover

Less than R1m		R1m to R5m		R6m to R10m		R11m to R20m	
R21m to R30m		R31m to R50m		R51m to R64m			

SECTION 3: STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 to what level you agree with the following statements about strategic management, decision making and planning. 1 equals strongly disagree and 5 equals strongly agree.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

- 3.1.1 Our strategic management process is formalised.
- 3.1.2 We have a formal strategic plan
- 3.1.3 Information is valuable for decision making.
- 3.1.4 We are aware of our weaknesses and strengths.
- 3.1.5 We are aware of our opportunities and threats.
- 3.1.6 We analyse our competitors.
- 3.1.7 We perform planning, organising, leading and control.
- 3.1.8 We have a formalised decision-making process.
- 3.1.9 We implement our chosen strategies.
- 3.1.10 We monitor the performance of our strategies.

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

SECTION 4: USE OF AND INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE AND INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 to what level you agree with the following statements about strategic management, decision making and planning. 1 equals strongly disagree and 5 equals strongly agree.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

- 3.1.11 The importance of ICT in business
- 3.1.12 The importance of language in business
- 3.1.13 The importance of marketing in business.
- 3.1.14 Support on ICT infrastructure in the area .
- 3.1.15 We are aware of our opportunities and threat posed by ICTs.
- 3.1.16 The importance of indigenous language in business
- 3.1.17 Role of Indigenous language in Technology
- 3.1.18 Formalised business process-
- 3.1.19 Implement of technology strategies
- 3.1.20 Implementation indigenous languages in business

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

Interview Schedule

SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

- 1.1 Age of the Owner:
 - 1.2 Gender of owner:
 - 1.3 Highest qualification:
 - 1.4 Name of business.....
 - 1.5 Number of years in business:
 - 1.6: Type of SME:.....
 - 1.7 Total number of Employees:
 - 1.8 Location of SME:.....
 - 1.9 Annual Turnover:
-

SECTION 2: USE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE AND INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 2.1. What do you understand by Information and communication Technology (ICT)?
- 2.2. Which of the ICT technologies do you use in your business?
- 2.3. The importance of ICT in your business?
- 2.4. According to you what is the importance of marketing in business?
- 2.5. How does marketing contribute to the growth of your business?
- 2.6. Do you understand the importance of ICT in marketing your business?
- 2.7. Does the current infrastructure provide support the use of ICT?
- 2.8. Which ICT tools do you use to market your business?
- 2.9. What are some of the challenges experienced in marketing your business in Province?
- 2.10. Do you think the use of ICT as a marketing tool can help overcome challenges and how?
- 2.11. Is SMEs contributing to the economic development and sustainability of province?
- 2.12. What are some of the challenges experienced in trying to use ICT as a marketing tool?
- 2.13. How is the business currently using ICT in business?

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- 2.14. Do you think the resources you have are sufficient to ensure that your objectives are met?
- 2.15. What are the key challenges faced by SMEs?
- 2.16. Any additional comments on the use of ICT in business?
- 2.17. We are aware of our opportunities and threat posed by ICTs?
- 2.18. The importance of indigenous language in business?
- 2.19. The Role of Indigenous language in Technology?
- 2.20. Do you have formalised business process?
- 2.21. How do you implement of technology strategies?
- 2.22. How do you Implement indigenous languages in business?



LIMPOPO

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENT & TOURISM

Ref : S5/5/1
Date : 04 March 2019
Enq : Mathedimosa L.E @ 015 293 8419 082 463 9620

To : Mr Makgopa MSF
From : Director: HRD & PMS

Approval to conduct research at department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET)

1. The above matters bears refers
2. We have pleasure in informing you that your request to conduct research at Department of Economic Development, Environment and Tourism (LEDET) has been approved by the Head of Department.
3. Your request is captured as follows:
 - Information communication technology to enhance SMES development using indigenous languages in Limpopo Province.
4. You are permitted to contact the Director Mr Mabasa MW, Economic Research to commence with your study. You may contact him at [REDACTED]

Kind Regards

[REDACTED]
**DIRECTOR
HRD & PMS**

HEAD OFFICE

20 Hans Van Rensburg Street / 19 Biccard Street, Polokwane, 0700, Private Bag X 9484, Polokwane, 0700
(Switchboard) Tel: +2715 293 8300 Website: www.ledet.gov.za



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APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT LETTER FOR LEDET



15 July 2019

Mr Matome Samuel Fortune Makgopa (217078813)
Graduate School of Business & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear Mr Makgopa,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0254/019D

Project title: Information Communication Technology Model to enhance SMEs Development using Indigenous Languages in Limpopo Province, South Africa

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 04 April 2019, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 1 year from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully



.....
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Bibi Zaheenah Chummun
cc Acting Academic Leader Research: Dr Emmanuel Mutambara
cc School Administrator: Ms Zarina Bullyraj

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

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Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



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APPENDIX D: RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

04 August 2021

Mr Matome Samuel Fortune Makgopa (217078813)
Graduate School of Business & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear Mr Makgopa,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0254/019D

Project title: Information Communication Technology Model to enhance SMEs Development using Indigenous Languages in Limpopo Province, South Africa

Approval Notification – Recertification Application

Your request for Recertification dated 27 July 2021 was received.

This letter confirms that you have been granted Recertification Approval for a period of one year from the date of this letter. This approval is based strictly on the research protocol submitted and approved in 2019.

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. Please quote the above reference number for all queries relating to this study.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/ss

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville

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APPENDIX E: REVISED RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

20 March 2024

Matome Samuel Fortune Makgopa (217078813)
Graduate School of Business & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear MSF Makgopa,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/0254D/2019D

Project title: Information Communication Technology Model to enhance Small-Medium Enterprises Development using indigenous Languages in Limpopo Province, South Africa

Amended title: Information and communication technology model to enhance small-medium enterprises development using indigenous languages in Limpopo Province, South Africa

Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 18 March 2024 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in title

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.






Yours faithfully



.....
Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/ss

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
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APPENDIX F: AMENDED RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



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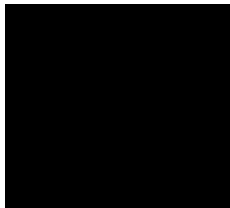
22 March 2024

MATOME SAMUEL FORTUNE MAKGOPA

Graduate School of Business and Leadership
College of Law and Management
University of Kwazulu-Natal
Durban, South Africa

This serves to confirm that a PhD thesis titled *Information and Communication Technology model to enhance Small-Medium Enterprises development using indigenous languages in Limpopo Province, South Africa* by Matome Samuel Fortune Makgopa submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration, Graduate School of Business and Leadership, College of Law and Management, University of Kwazulu-Natal has undergone both a thorough copy-editing as well as proof-reading processes.

Sincerely,



.....
Solani Ngobeni
Publishing Director
Centre for Scholarly Publishing Services (Pty) Ltd.

Cell: 
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