

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**Critical success factors of female entrepreneurs in male-dominated spaces: An exploratory study of the logistics sector in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

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“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever” (Psalm 23:6). This bible verse kept me going through this academic journey. It kept me positive in difficult times. I couldn't have done it alone.

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## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my mother, Hlengiwe Khumalo Dladla, in heaven. May her soul continue to rest in eternal peace. And to my dad, Langelihle David Dladla, for pushing through against all odds in supporting me and ensuring that I get the best in life.

## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS**

AWE	Academy for Women Entrepreneurs
AWIEF	Africa Women Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum
CIDB	Construction Industry Development Board
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
GEM	Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEI	Gender Employment Inequality
NA	National Assembly
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
RBV	Resource Based View
ROI	Return on Investment (ROI)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEDA	Small Enterprise Development Agency
SMMEs)	small, medium and micro enterprises
SONA	State of the Nation Address
STATS SA	Statistics South Africa
WLB	Work-Life Balance

## ABSTRACT

This study examines the key success factors of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The study explores the five key success factors of financial capital, human capital, innovation, social capital and work-life balance, to understand the lived experiences of females in the logistics sector. This research is qualitative as it gathers in-depth insights from 15 female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector in Pietermaritzburg and Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa using the snowball sampling technique. The physical and virtual in-depth interviews which lasted approximately 45 minutes were conducted during May to July 2022. The interviews were transcribed and recorded by the researcher. Data was analysed using NVIVO 12 software. The findings revealed that financial capital, human capital, innovation, social capital and work-life balance enhances the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. In terms of financial capital, most females reinvested their profit into the businesses and skills development. Human capital assisted the females to develop stakeholder relations, self-confidence, business innovation which led to improved business performance. Although social capital is crucial for the success of female entrepreneurs, their networking abilities were limited by male dominance in the sector and barriers such as sexual harassment and inability to grasp business lingo used in the sectors. Lastly, achieving work-life balance proved to be challenging to female entrepreneurs due to the multiple roles and responsibilities expected of them. Nonetheless, the females developed survival strategies which include effective time management, good communication and setting boundaries between work and family responsibilities. Having a good support system from family members or a spouse is essential to achieving work-life balance. This improves business productivity, promotes creativity and good mental health. This study, therefore, concludes that the five key success factors enhance the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. Consequently, the study recommends that the government should continue to prioritise and reduce bureaucratic requirements for female entrepreneur support programs. The government and the private sector are encouraged to prioritise female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector by outsourcing business from them and by contributing a portion of their corporate social responsibility towards programs that support female entrepreneurship. Future research studies should consider conducting a comparative study of female and male entrepreneurs in different male dominated spaces such as construction and engineering to examine the success factors and draw possible learnings for better representation and advancement of gender equality. The study contributes to the body of knowledge on female entrepreneurship in male-dominated spaces. The study is valuable to policymakers who are instrumental in enacting and implementing gender policy. The study acknowledges its limitation in that it gathered data from a sample of 15 female entrepreneurs. Therefore, the study results cannot be generalised to female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector in Pietermaritzburg and Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. However, the study laid a foundation for future studies on the subject.

**Keywords:** Female entrepreneurs, logistics, success factors, male-dominated, financial capital, human capital, innovation, social capital, work-life balance.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Female entrepreneurship makes significant contributions to innovation, employment, gross domestic product (GDP) and wealth creation (Brush and Cooper, 2012; Aneke, 2015; Alibhai, Buehren, Papineni and Pierotti 2017; Mroczek-Dąbrowska and Gawęł, 2020). Some researchers claim that the contributions made by female entrepreneurs are even greater than those made by men's entrepreneurial activity (Minniti, 2010; Kyalo, 2014; Xie and Wu, 2021).

Female entrepreneurs account for more than 50% of the GDP in most developed and developing countries (World Bank, 2021). Given the informal nature of African economies, the exact proportion of female entrepreneurs is unknown, but it is estimated that the proportion of females participating in entrepreneurial endeavours in Africa falls within the range of 26% to 58%. Additionally, female business owners are responsible for approximately 300 billion USD being added to the African economy, equating to about 16% of the African (Chrysostome, Barnard and Ika, 2024). Currently the South African economy grows by R175 billion annually as a result of female entrepreneurs. Additionally, they have produced about a million employment opportunities (Nwajiuba et al., 2020). Given the significant contribution of female entrepreneurs to the economy, there are gender imbalances in the entrepreneurship space (Chrysostome et al., 2024).

Based on research conducted in both developed and developing nations, it is apparent that there is a notable presence of gender segregation in the labour market and entrepreneurship. This segregation is characterised by a tendency for females to be more inclined towards employment in low-productivity industries, less financially lucrative enterprises, or engagement in unpaid family work or the informal, low-paying sector (Campos et al., 2015; Mroczek-Dąbrowska and Gawęł, 2020; World Bank, 2022). According to previous studies, the majority of female entrepreneurs work in historically patriarchal sectors like the retail, hospitality, restaurant, textile, and service industries (Campos et al., 2015; Alibhai et al., 2017; Aneke et al., 2017). There is still a significant discrepancy between the percentages of males and females participating in male-dominated spaces, notwithstanding improvements in female entrepreneurs' engagement across industries (Campos et al., 2015; Pimhidzai, 2015; Aneke et al., 2017; Mroczek-Dąbrowska and Gawęł, 2020). The Collins English Dictionary (2016) defines a male-dominated society as, “an organisation, or area of activity in which men have most of the power and influence” which is primarily controlled by, or consists of mainly men. Catalyst (2019) further agrees by indicating male-dominated sectors comprise 25% or fewer females.

According to Kare, Kumar Rajuldevi and Veeramachaneni (2009) the point of intersection and a critical component of all industries is transportation and logistics. The sector is quickly becoming digitised and changing around the world due to the increase of e-commerce, online purchasing, paperless and contactless operations (Gnutzmann Silva, 2021). All logistics fields share the same goal of minimizing resource utilisation (Gnutzmann Silva, 2021). This is particularly true now that the logistics and transportation industry is starting to take off and become one of the major employers; and a large part of that is because of the recent boost in online sales (Gnutzmann Silva, 2021). According to the most recent data, the logistics and transportation sector is playing a crucial part in the nation's economic recovery (Kare et al., 2009; Gnutzmann Silva, 2021). On a global scale, it is widely believed that the logistics sector makes up around 12% of the total global GDP (Maiden, 2020). In South Africa, the sector contributes nearly 10–12% of the GDP according to Statistics South Africa (2019), hereafter referred as Stats SA. Logistics is essential because it is a driver of countries' competitiveness, which is significant in economic growth and job creation (World Bank, 2019).

According to Jonsson and Mattsson (2005) Logistics involves planning, organising, and controlling all material flow activities from raw materials to final consumption and reverse flows of the manufactured product, aiming to meet the needs and desires of the customer and other stakeholders. This involves offering excellent customer service with minimal environmental impact while keeping costs and capital tied up low. When moving commodities or creating services, logistics is viewed as an efficient method of transportation (Nigam, 2010; Nsengiman, 2017).

Logistics management usually includes overseeing incoming and outbound transportation, fleet management, warehouse operations, material handling, order processing, logistics network planning, inventory control, and supply/demand forecasting. Third-party logistics service providers often handle these tasks within their administrative boundaries (Kare et al., 2009; Nigam, 2010; Nsengiman, 2017).

Females have historically had a harder time adjusting to life in the logistics business because it is predominantly a male-dominated field (Fraszczyk and Piip, 2019). It does not matter if this is because men are typically placed in blue-collar positions because of their physical demands, or because females' skills in the field are not sufficiently valued (Servant-Miklos, Dewar and Bøgelund, 2021). However, it has been a long journey in discussing and implementing gender diversity in industries with a male predominance, such as logistics, with only 8% of females in the workforce globally in 2010 rising to 20% now (Women in Logistics, 2023). Greater numbers of females are entering the logistics sector as they become more accepting of workplace gender equality (Women in Logistics, 2023).

Bridging the gap, workplace gender equality shapes how employees create and experience the workforce (Huang, Krivkovich, Starikova, Yee and Zanoschi, 2019). Due to the industry's emphasis on skill-based hiring, having a varied range of employees is inevitable and will bring great advantages (Huang et al., 2019). Talking openly about gender roles and equality at work creates more equitable,

secure, and well-equipped workplaces for females to thrive (Huang et al., 2019; Women in Logistics, 2023). Females are being asked, and attended to when they talk about changes in the office environments to make them more appropriate and comfortable for females and de-genderisation, with developments in technology (Huang et al., 2019; Women in Logistics, 2023). Females can now take on leadership roles or others that involve, heavy lifting and picking with forklifts leadership and sorting machineries to carry out tasks independently (Women in Logistics, 2023).

A past study conducted by Amushila and Semente (2022) discovered that the transport and logistics sectors are male-dominated spaces. In 2021, the average percentage of females in the transport and logistics industry workforce was approximately 22% in the European nations and only 13% in developing nations (Amushila and Semente, 2022). Females' participation in the transport sector is significantly low across the globe, recorded as 16.5% (Kolasińska-Morawska, Sułkowski and Brzozowska, 2019; Amushila and Semente, 2022; ESCAP 2022). This indicates that there is a huge gender gap in male-dominated industries. Despite the fact that more females are entering the logistics sector, a survey conducted by Euphoria Consulting in 2009 on the "Opportunities and Challenges faced by Women in Logistics Industries" found that females are underrepresented and paid less than their male colleagues in the field (Nigam, 2010).

According to Aneke et al. (2017), the underrepresentation of female entrepreneurs in the key industries driving the economy has a substantial negative impact on any economy's ability to grow as planned. Among these key sectors are mining, maritime, manufacturing, construction, transportation, logistics and technology. Significant economic development and growth is facilitated by these sectors (Aneke et al., 2017). This problem is more prevalent in developing nations, especially in Africa. This is because female entrepreneurs encounter numerous barriers in entrepreneurship. Studies revealed that females encounter deeply rooted socio-cultural barriers, including patriarchal views in male-dominated sectors (Nigam, 2010; Aneke et al., 2017; Aneke et al., 2021). Females are still underrepresented in South Africa's core entrepreneurial scene, despite the continent of Africa being regarded as the top continent in terms of female entrepreneurship (World Bank, 2022). Even though females make up the 51% of the South African population they are the group that is most at risk and underrepresented in economic engagement (World Bank, 2022).

In the logistics sector, businesses need to diversify their group of talent and, in doing so, involve more females. Females are proven to be effective leaders during times of disruptive change due to their collectivist nature and abilities to listen and engage (Hundera, Duvsters, Nadue and Diikhuizen, 2019). Encouraging more diversity and gender equality to engage females in logistics benefits females in general and the logistics industry because it brings new perspective. The percentage of females sitting on supervisory boards has increased from 30% to 40% in the past five years (Kirsch and Wrohlich, 2020).

Despite the fact that relatively few females select careers in logistics, it has been found that their perspectives have begun to change and females are now reshaping the field, thus, there is a great need to promote this trend and increase their participation (Kolasińska-Morawska et al., 2019; Amushila and Semente, 2022). Research shows an increase in the participation of females in the workforce and management positions (Khwela, 2019). There is limited literature on female entrepreneurship in the logistics sector. Therefore, the critical gap that motivated this study is the necessity to explore and understand female entrepreneurship in the logistics field, focusing on trucks transporting goods either locally or long-distance in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa by investigating the critical success factors of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. These factors are guided by a resource-based review theory which includes the financial capital, human capital, innovation, social capital and work-life balance.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

After apartheid (racial segregation), life for South African females demonstrates both legislative advancements and continuing difficulties (Friedman, 2019; Phaswana, 2021). Due to the enormous level of economic inequality in South Africa, notwithstanding post-apartheid advancements, each female's daily life might vary significantly based on her ethnicity, social background, and age (Phaswana, 2021). Female's contributions to South African history have finally received some recognition in the last three to four decades (Heywood, 2021). The history of females in political organisations, their fight against oppression, for communal rights and, most importantly, for gender equality, were previously ignored (Heywood, 2021). Men held positions of leadership in society, while females were viewed as subordinates to men (Naidoo, 2010; Tshabalala, 2016; Okeke-Uzodike, Okeke-Uzodike and Ndinda, 2018).

Heywood (2021) explains that traditionally, females have been primarily tasked with domestic responsibilities such as managing the home, meeting the needs of the family, and raising children. Outside of the home, females were not expected to be involved (Naidoo, 2010; Heywood, 2021). This was perceived to be more appropriately the purview of men (Naidoo, 2010). Economic involvement outside the home was permissible but not regarded as "feminine" (Naidoo, 2010). However, these expectations of female roles were challenged when the industrial economy, urbanisation, and migrant labour systems developed (Naidoo, 2010; Tshabalala, 2016).

The end of apartheid and the election of the nation's first black president marked a significant turning point for South Africa in 1994 (Friedman, 2019). Hopes were raised for a better South Africa under the new regime thanks to President Mandela (Friedman, 2019). Government in South Africa has established numerous economic policies since 1994; one of them called for a 50% reduction in unemployment and poverty between 2004 and 2014, especially among those who were previously disadvantaged (Naidoo, 2010; Tshabalala, 2016; Okeke-Uzodike et al., 2018).

The incumbent President of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa, requested a Joint Sitting of the National Assembly (NA) and the National Council of Provinces (NCOP) on the 9th February 2023, to present the State of the Nation Address. The president emphasised that entrepreneurship is a key factor in this transition and will help boost South Africa's competitiveness. He also stated that job creation is the primary component in improving the country's economic landscape, saying, "A growing economy must also be an increasingly inclusive economy" (Ramaphosa, 2023). The president further highlighted that the National Strategic Plan places a strong emphasis on female economic empowerment. The government has been focused on establishing a positive atmosphere for female entrepreneurs after stating its goal to allocate a minimum of 40% of public contracts to businesses owned by females (Ramaphosa, 2023). Over 3,400 businesses owned by females have been trained by the government to help them seize procurement opportunities (Ramaphosa, 2023). As a result of the Women's Economic Assembly (Ramaphosa, 2023), the government has seen business organisations and trade groups coming together to agree on industry-wide gender reform objectives. The Industrial Development Corporation has earmarked R9 billion for investment in enterprises owned by females (Ramaphosa, 2023).

Different initiatives have been established with the aim to support female entrepreneurs in South Africa (Neneh and Welsh, 2022). These include but are not limited to the following, the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) which provides entrepreneurial females with the information, contacts, and access they need to start and grow successful businesses. The program is operated in collaboration with the US Embassy in South Africa and the Africa Women Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum (AWIEF). The SheTradesZA Hub, a collaboration between the International Trade Centre, the Department of Small Business Development, and the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), aims to facilitate the connection of female-owned businesses with local, regional, and global markets. Last but not least, Girl Code, is an organisation that promotes the empowerment of females through technology. The foundation of the organisation is the idea that as more females work in the fields of technology, design, development, and leadership, businesses will become more successful and diversified, which will lead to better products (Botha, 2006; Neneh and Welsh, 2022).

However, past studies emphasised the absence of female-owned businesses from important and flourishing economic sectors like mining, energy, transportation, logistics, and construction (Campos et al., 2015; Aneke et al., 2017; Montague, 2017; Bishu and Headley 2020; Mroczek-Dąbrowska and Gawęł, 2020). Therefore, this study will explore the South African logistics sector and highlight the critical success factors for female entrepreneurs in this male- dominated space.

## **1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

### ***1.3.1 Problem statement***

It is indisputable that female entrepreneurship is increasing rapidly, with more females starting and operating their own businesses (Mulaudzi and Schachtebeck, 2022). However, when one thinks of the logistics sector, the first image that come to one's mind is of a male. It is true that the logistics industry has a reputation for being dominated by men, maybe as a result of the perception that it involves "moving and lifting" and other physically demanding tasks. One of the key pillars of the global economy is the logistics industry. However, males still hold the majority of the power. Although things are slowly improving, there remains a long way to go in terms of female representation in the industry. According to a study by Gartner (2021) globally, only 22% of females are in construction, and 17% in the logistics sector. Studies show that the logistics sector is still male-dominated, for example, with 7% female representation in the US and 20% in Australia, females make up just 6.7% of the Kenyan logistics sector and only constitute 1.2% of the South African logistics sector (Kamau and Mitullah, 2022). This shows a gender imbalance in the industry. To reform the logistics sector and expand the pool of females, interventions are required (Ogundana, Simba, Dana, and Liguori, 2021).

According to the World Bank (2021) South Africa's logistics sector is accountable for 11.8% of the country's GDP. This shows that the logistics contributes largely to the country's GDP, yet females are underrepresented in sector. It is not surprising as the vast majority of people undermine the role and contribution of female entrepreneurs in male-dominated sectors such as the logistics sector. According to a recent study by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), females bring new talents and higher levels of productivity to the workforce, which results in more economic advantages than previously anticipated (Hundera et al., 2019; Ogundana et al., 2021).

Regardless of the significance of females in the logistics sector they encounter numerous barriers which contribute to their failure in the sector (Edirisinghe, 2021). These barriers include, denied access in male-dominated sectors, females being confined to feminised roles, too few role models and mentors and a failure to realise the potential of females in the logistics sector (Edirisinghe, 2021). According to a study conducted in South Africa by Mulaudzi and Schachtebeck (2022), female entrepreneurs in the transport and logistics industry are confronted with numerous obstacles, including high operational expenses, a male-dominated industry, customer disrespect or denigration, a lack of trust and commitment, being marginalised, and a lack of awareness of opportunities. The few female entrepreneurs who managed to overcome these barriers and are successful in the sector represent a subset worth investigating, to determine their success factors in the logistics sector. Thus, this study seeks to answer the following question: how did the few female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector succeed to operate small businesses in male-dominated spaces?

### ***1.3.2 Research Questions***

The primary question of this study is what are the critical success factors of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa? To accomplish this, the following secondary questions directed the study:

- How does the financial capital enhance the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector?
- How does human capital promote the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector?
- How does innovation promote the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector?
- What is the role of social capital in the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector?
- How does work-life balance contribute to the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector?

### ***1.3.3 Research Objectives***

The primary objective of this study is to explore the critical success factors of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. To achieve this, the following secondary objectives guided the study:

- To determine how financial capital enhances the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.
- To determine the role of human capital in the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.
- To investigate how innovation promotes the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.
- To examines the role of social capital in the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.
- To assess how work-life balance improves the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.

## **1.4 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

In spite of the increasing importance of female entrepreneurship and its contribution to economic growth, there are research gaps in this area that must be immediately addressed (Aneke et al., 2017). Research suggests that studies on female entrepreneurs comprise less than 10% of all studies in the field, calling for more studies on the subject (Derera, Croce, Phiri and O'Neill, 2020; Kim, Abdullah,

Thuy and Boey, 2020). This research gap is also witnessed in female entrepreneurship in male-dominated spaces (Ahl, 2012; Aneke et al., 2017; Bwatou, 2020; Tiwari, 2020; World Bank, 2022). Most studies on female entrepreneurs in male-dominated spaces were conducted in developed countries (Stojanovic et al., 2014; Montague, 2017; Kolasińska-Morawska et al., 2019; Mroczek-Dąbrowska and Gaweł, 2020; Amushila and Semente, 2022). Few studies were conducted in developing countries (Kyalo, 2014; Campos et al., 2015; Alibhai et al., 2017), including South Africa (Aneke et al., 2017; Aneke et al., 2021; Mulaudzi and Schachtebeck, 2022; Kunda et al., 2022). Yet, female entrepreneurship contributes significantly to a country's GDP, job creation and poverty reduction (Aneke et al., 2017; Tiwari, 2020). There are specific sectors where studies on female entrepreneurs have been conducted.

Past research on female entrepreneurship in male-dominated spaces have focused on single sectors of the economy such as construction (Aneke et al., 2017; Aneke et al., 2021), manufacturing (Mugenyi, Nduta, Ajema, Afifu, Wanjohi, Bomett, Mutuku, and Yegon, 2020), ICT infrastructure (Kim et al., 2020; Kunda, Jordaan and Mennega, 2022), logistics (Faizan, Haque, Cockrill and Aston, 2019; Kolasińska-Morawska et al., 2019), and specific combinations of different sectors such as construction and engineering (Buthelezi, 2011), mining, engineering and construction (Smith-Hunter and Kapp, 2009), maritime and logistics (Edirisinghe, 2018), and the logistics and transport industry (Stojanovic, Biljan, Sharac and Trajkov, 2014; Amushila and Semente, 2022; EACAP, 2022).

More specifically, previous studies on female entrepreneurship in male-dominated sectors have explored factors hindering or assisting female entrepreneurs to move into male-dominated sectors (Kyalo, 2014; Campos et al., 2015; Mroczek-Dąbrowska and Gaweł, 2020), the performance and characteristics of females in male-dominated sectors (Alibhai et al., 2017), growth of female entrepreneurship in the construction and engineering industries (Buthelezi, 2011), impediments faced by female business owners in the mining, engineering and construction sectors (Smith-Hunter and Kapp, 2009) and challenges faced by female entrepreneurs in the construction industry (Aneke et al., 2017). They have also focused on factors that inspired female entrepreneurs to start businesses in the construction industry (Montague, 2017; Aneke et al., 2021), gender inequality in the maritime and logistics sector (Edirisinghe, 2018), participation of females in the logistics and transport industry (Amushila and Semente, 2022; Eacap, 2022), gender employment inequality (GEI) in the transport and logistics industry (Stojanovic et al., 2014), factors associated with female representation at the top levels in logistics firms (Faizan, Haque, Cockrill and Aston, 2019), and finally, the role and importance of females' leadership abilities in influencing the business success of firms in the logistics industry (Kolasińska-Morawska et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Campos et al. (2015) investigated different factors that may hinder or assist female entrepreneurs to move into male-dominated sectors, where they are as successful as males and

substantially more successful than females who remain in traditionally female sectors. The findings revealed considerable disparities in the factors of female entrepreneurship in male-dominated versus female-dominated businesses (Campos et al., 2015). Also, industry-specific factors play a significant role in male-dominated sectors but play a much smaller one in female-dominated businesses (Campos et al., 2015).

Aneke et al. (2017) investigated the challenges experienced by female entrepreneurs in the construction sector and the strategies they use to address these issues in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. The findings revealed that females face intensely rooted socio-cultural barriers, including patriarchal views in the construction business (Aneke et al., 2017). Females' strategies for overcoming some of the hurdles include teaming with male business owners when bidding on construction jobs and forming dependable business networks.

Still on challenges, Smith-Hunter and Kapp (2009) examined the minority female entrepreneurs and the impediments they face in the engineering, mining and construction sectors. The findings revealed that female entrepreneurs in non-traditional industries, across racial lines, do differ in various characteristics (Kim et al., 2020). The same author also explored the challenges of female entrepreneurs engaging in ICT-related businesses. The research showed an ever-changing interaction among various elements, like environmental factors such as gender equality policies and female's entrepreneurship, ICT infrastructure, and mentoring assistance (Kim et al., 2020). Personal factors consist of being actively engaged in using ICTs, as well as possessing a strong entrepreneurship mindset. These elements have impacted the entrepreneurial journey of females and played a role in female entrepreneurship (Kim et al., 2020). Finally, female business owners faced numerous obstacles stemming from long-standing societal practices that differentiate based on gender, such as balancing work and personal life.

A study conducted by Alibhai et al. (2017) compared the firm performance and characteristics of females in male-dominated sectors, with females who are in female-dominated sectors. The results demonstrate that female-owned businesses in male-dominated industries outperform those in female-dominated sectors on average, with higher profitability and more employees. It was also revealed that females in male-dominated sectors generally do not have higher level of education that specialise in the sector (Alibhai et al., 2017). However, there are factors that inspire females to start businesses in male dominated sectors.

Aneke et al. (2021) examined factors that motivated female entrepreneurs to start small businesses in the construction sector and the characteristics that have allowed their survival in a male-dominated industry. The results revealed that various reasons inspire female entrepreneurs to enter the construction business. Among these factors are the desire to empower themselves and their communities, the desire to oppose patriarchy, the hunger for independence, the desire for money, and the desire to create riches (Aneke et al., 2021). Additionally, Edirisinghe (2018) discussed the key issues caused by the gender

inequality in the maritime and logistics sector. Findings revealed that it is the general perception regarding maritime and logistics of those who have limited association with the industry that it involves only the hard labour of carrying heavy goods and driving trucks. The misunderstanding might have been caused by the technical and operational aspects of the industry, as these activities are more visible to society compared to the clerical and desk work in the back-end (Edirisinghe, 2018).

A study conducted by Amushila and Semente (2022) in Namibia established the extent to which females participate in the logistics and transport industry. According to the findings, the logistics and transportation industry in Namibia is dominated by men (Amushila and Semente, 2022). Female employees are said to make up only 31% of the overall workforce in this industry, indicating a low level of female engagement (Amushila and Semente, 2022). Female employees in technical roles in Windhoek's selected logistics and transport industries account for less than 15% on average (Amushila and Semente, 2022).

Mugenyi et al. (2020), explored the context in which females participate in Kenya's manufacturing sector. The results revealed that Kenya's manufacturing businesses are predominantly male-owned and staffed across all subsectors (Mugenyi et al., 2020). The drive of this study is to fill the research gap on female entrepreneurship in male-dominated spaces in South Africa. "More support is required too for women to venture into non-traditional areas that are often dominated by men" (Derera et al., 2014.p 53). Having surveyed the landscape based on the plethora of contributions from various scholars as outlined above of females in male dominated sectors there is a gap of literature on female entrepreneurship in the logistics sector. The goal of this study is thus to explore the critical success factors of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Focusing on the financial, human, innovation, social and work-life balance factors. The literature surveyed will be used as a springboard to enable the study to contribute to the body of knowledge on female entrepreneurship in male-dominated spaces, specifically in the logistics sector. This study can be of great value for academics as well as South African females ambitious to start businesses in the logistics sector and to ready themselves to face the complexities this presents. Finally, the study supports Goal 5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which aims to empower females and achieve gender equality (United Nations, 2015).

## **1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY OVERVIEW**

The research onion established by Saunders et al. (2007), which reveals different layers that must be covered when developing a research strategy, was utilised in this study. The research philosophy adopted in this study was interpretivism. This research is qualitative in nature as it gathered data through in-depth interviews on the perceptions of female entrepreneurs in the logistic sector. This method is also used to understand how people experience the world. For the purpose of this study, an exploratory

research design was considered appropriate in order to make enquiries, obtain fresh data, and assess singularities from a fresh perspective.

The study site for this research was in KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa. The target population was female entrepreneurs focusing on the logistics sector in KwaZulu-Natal, specifically in the cities of Pietermaritzburg and Durban. These areas were selected because of their geographic proximity and convenience to the researcher.

Although the database of female entrepreneurs operating in the logistics sector in Pietermaritzburg and Durban is unknown, the closest target population the researcher managed to establish was that 28 897 small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) were operating in the transport and communication sector in KwaZulu-Natal, according to the Stats SA (2019). Details regarding the number of females in the logistics sector were not available. Since this study is qualitative in nature, a relatively small sample is required according to Welman et al. (2005). Different researchers (e.g. Bertaux, 1981; Morse, 1994; Creswell, 1998; Payne and Williams, 2005; O'Leary, 2014) have proposed sample sizes for qualitative studies. For example, Creswell (1998) suggests a sample size of between five and 25 participants, while Morse (1994) proposes a sample size of at least six respondents. Bertaux (1981) on the other hand, argues that fifteen is the minimum acceptable sample size for qualitative research studies. Formal approval for qualitative studies that use in-depth interviews requires a sample size of 20–30 participants if one is building similar segments within the population (Payne and Williams, 2005; O'Leary, 2014). In some cases, a minimum of 10 participants is deemed acceptable assuming the population integrity is upheld in the process of recruiting the participants. Against this background, this study targeted a sample size of twenty (20) participants. The study also considered data saturation during the data collection process which was achieved at fifteen (15) participants.

This study utilised the non-probability sampling method known as snowball sampling to select female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector in Pietermaritzburg and Durban. Data was collected through in-depth interviews as the researcher intended to obtain profound answers about the identified research questions. Data quality control was considered. To ensure reliability of the research tool, a pilot test was conducted with two participants. Internal validity (credibility) was assured through data saturation. Data was analysed using NVIVO 12 software. Word clouds, thematic analysis and tree diagrams were used to manage data. Ethical considerations were well considered for this study and ethical clearance was obtained approved from the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

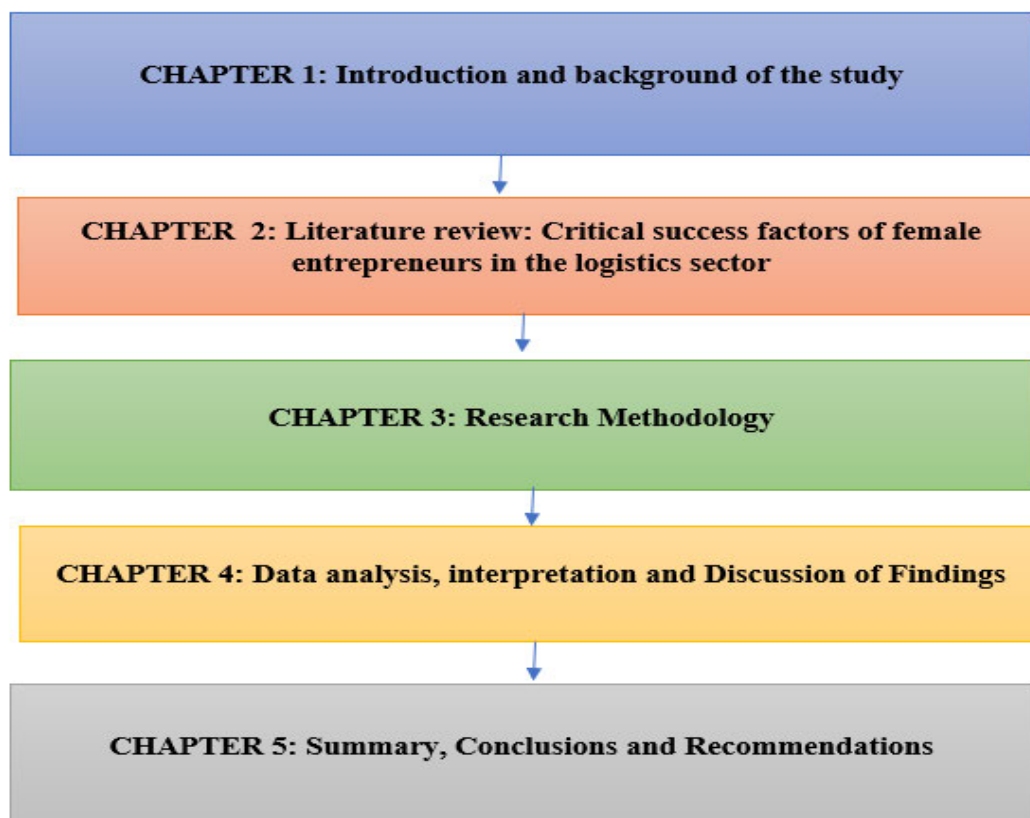
## **1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The present study was constrained by the following limitations. To begin with, the selected sample does not accurately reflect the complete population of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector in KwaZulu-Natal, as the method employed for participant selection was a non-probability sampling

technique. Consequently, the research did not encompass all female entrepreneurs within the logistics industry in the KwaZulu-Natal province of South Africa. Furthermore, the investigation was carried out in Pietermaritzburg and Durban, encompassing a select group of females involved in the field of logistics operating in the region of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. As a result, it is not possible to generalise based on the outcomes. However, the study provides insight on the success factors of female entrepreneurs in male-dominated sectors, the logistics industry in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. There is a restricted volume of literature available on the subject matter and finally, due to time and cost constraints, only two cities were the focus of the targeted sampling plan. This meant that a new study would need to be conducted in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of female entrepreneurship in the logistics sector.

## **1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION**

The illustration below demonstrates how the study is organised, followed by the summary of chapters. This study is organised into five chapters as demonstrated below:



**Figure 1.1: The structure of the dissertation**

Source: Author's own illustration

### **1.7.1 Chapter One: Introduction and background of the study**

In Chapter One, the study is introduced, providing an overview of its background and problem statement. Additionally, the research objectives and questions are discussed. The chapter also delves into the rationale behind the study, offering a concise overview of the research methodology employed. Furthermore, the limitations of the study are addressed, and the structure of the study is outlined.

### **1.7.2 Chapter Two: Critical success factors of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector**

This chapter presents an inclusive review of literature with a specific focus on female entrepreneurship in the logistics sector. The literature review is done in a thematic way, firstly reviewing entrepreneurship in the broader sense, then gender inequality and entrepreneurship. This is followed by gender relations according to feminist theories, female entrepreneurship in male-dominated spaces, factors that motivate females to establish businesses in male-dominated spaces, and the entrepreneurial skills required in entrepreneurship. Female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector are discussed. Additionally, challenges of female entrepreneurship in male-dominated spaces are briefly investigated, and entrepreneurial strategies are discussed, as well as the resilience of female entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, measures of business growth and success, and the critical success factors of female entrepreneurship in male-dominated spaces are discussed. Finally, a resource-based review and conceptual framework of the study are outlined.

### **1.7.3 Chapter Three: Research methodology**

In this chapter, the research methodology implemented for the study is discussed. The research philosophy, the research approach, research method, research and design. The data collection, study time horizon and target population are also discussed. Furthermore, the sampling technique and data quality control is outlined and finally, the adopted data analysis and ethical considerations of the study are discussed.

### **1.7.4 Chapter Four: Data analysis, interpretation and discussion of findings**

This chapter discusses the analysis and interpretation of the study's results. It also provides a comprehensive discussion of the research findings in relation to the research questions, objectives, and existing literature.

### **1.7.5 Chapter Five: Summary, conclusions and recommendations**

The summary of results, conclusions, and recommendations are presented in line with the research objectives. Implications of the study's contribution to knowledge is discussed. Finally, study limitations and areas for future research is presented in the chapter.

### **1.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter provided an introduction and background of the study, including the research problem statement, objectives, and questions. It also highlighted the rationale for the study, emphasizing the research gap in the underrepresentation of female entrepreneurship in the logistics sector. A brief description of the research methodology and study limitations was also presented. The next chapter will discuss the literature reviewed on female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector in South Africa and their critical success factors.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW: CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE LOGISTICS SECTOR**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter offers a review of literature with a specific focus on female entrepreneurship in the logistics sector. The chapter begins by reviewing entrepreneurship in the broader sense, followed by gender inequality and entrepreneurship. Gender relations and feminism theories are discussed. Further to this, female entrepreneurship in male-dominated spaces, factors that motivate females to establish businesses and entrepreneurial skills of female entrepreneurs is discussed. Additionally, female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector, challenges of female entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial strategies for female entrepreneurship and the resilience of female entrepreneurs during the COVID-19 pandemic is outlined. Furthermore, measures of business growth and success and the different success factors of female entrepreneurship which includes financial capital, human capital, innovation, social capital and work-life balance is discussed. Finally, a Resource-Based Review and conceptual framework of the study is outlined.

#### **2.2 ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

It is widely understood that there is no single unified and approved meaning of the term "entrepreneurship" (Gedeon, 2010; Storey and Greene, 2010; Westhead, Wright and McElwee, 2011; Sine, Cordero and Coles, 2022). Researchers and policymakers use questions such as "what does the entrepreneur do?" and "what is the outcome of the entrepreneurial process?" to define entrepreneurship, according to Shane and Venkataraman (2000). The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM, 2023), in collaboration with London Business School and Babson College, defines entrepreneurship as "any attempt at new business or new venture creation, such as self-employment, forming a new business organisation, or expanding an existing business, by an individual, a group of individuals, or an established business, by an individual, a group of individuals, or an established business" (Gutterman, 2014, p.4).

Gedeon (2010) indicates that scholars have added numerous adjectives to the word entrepreneurship to generate subdomain phrases like "corporate entrepreneurship," "social entrepreneurship," "opportunity entrepreneurship," and "necessity entrepreneurship" to avoid definitional issues and offer a degree of clarity. These phrases not only make it easier to designate subject populations and share data sets, but they also allow one to concentrate on and investigate distinct elements of entrepreneurship. Furthermore, Turcan and Fraser (2018) indicate that entrepreneurship is multi-disciplinary.

This research adopts a sociological perspective to entrepreneurship, believing that social experiences and environmental factors explain entrepreneur origins and success (Edewor, Abimbola and Ajayi, 2014; Bögenhold, Fink and Kraus, 2014; Turcan and Fraser, 2018). This approach relates well to the nature of female entrepreneurs in male-dominated spaces and this draws on the experiences and environmental factors that explain their origin and success.

Entrepreneurship is considered essential for addressing challenges related to unemployment, poverty, and low economic growth. It involves creating new ventures and jobs, as well as growing existing businesses (Bhardwaj and Mittal, 2017). Previously entrepreneurship or the process of starting businesses has been a male focused space, however, there has been a rise in high-growth entrepreneurship by females.

In the current post-modern era, it is inevitable that female entrepreneurs play a role in economic development by actively participating in business and aiding in the nation's progress (Campos et al., 2015; Berger and Kuckertz, 2016). Globally, there is a growing interest among females in entrepreneurship as a suitable career choice, leading to a rise in the number of female-led businesses and a rapidly expanding female entrepreneurial community (Aneke et al., 2015; Bui et al., 2018; Forkuor et al., 2020). However, despite the rapid growth of females penetrating the entrepreneurship space, there is still noticeable gender inequality (Forkuor et al., 2020).

### **2.3 GENDER INEQUALITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

One of the oldest and most persistent types of inequality in the world is gender inequality (Daly, 2019; Chancel, Piketty, Saez and Zucman, 2022). It silences females, undervalues their labour, and makes female's positions inferior to male's (Chancel et al., 2022). Although there has been substantial progress in recent years to address inequality, females still have a higher likelihood of living in poverty than their male counterparts, in every country (Daly, 2019).

In 2015, the Member States of the United Nations collectively proposed a shared agenda aimed at fostering peace and well-being for both present and future generations, encompassing individuals and the environment. The foundational aspect of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) lies in their representation of a pressing summons for all developed and developing nations to take prompt action within a worldwide alliance. According to the United Nations (2015) one of the primary objectives among the set of 17 goals is Goal 5, which focuses on attaining gender equality and empowering females across several domains.

The Sustainable Development Goals report (United Nations, 2023) reveals that females accounted for nearly 40% of the workforce worldwide in 2021, but only 28.2% were in management positions. With only a 1.0% gain since 2015, the percentage of females in management has been slowly increasing (United Nations, 2023). To reach gender equality in managerial roles at the current rate, more than 140

years would have to pass. All areas continue to have lower representation of females in management than they have in overall employment, with sub-Saharan Africa making the most progress, rising to 38.2% in 2021 (Jayne, Fox, Fuglie and Adelaja, 2021). In contrast, the lowest percentages of females in managerial positions around 15% are found in Northern Africa, Western Asia, and Central and Southern Asia (Khwela, 2019). This is likely due to the low female employment rates in those countries (United Nations, 2023). According to Huffman et al. (2017) and Oxfam (2020), females worldwide have the lowest-paying jobs and make an average salary that is 24% lower than that of males.

In emerging nations, gender inequality is a major issue, where 75% of females work and start businesses in the informal sectors of the economy. In these instances, they are unlikely to have employment contracts, legal protection, or social benefits, and they are frequently paid insufficient wages to lift themselves out of poverty. According to Hannum et al. (2009) and Oxfam (2020), 600 million females worldwide are employed in the most risky and unstable jobs. Studies also show that females in many developing countries are disproportionately affected by the arbitrary application of customary and religious laws, hold fewer leadership positions, earn less than males, own less land than males and are less likely to own property than males (Bertrand et al., 2015; Olarewaju, 2019).

Additionally, societal norm-driven gender inequalities in occupational positions may arise. Boden (1996) for instance, notes that females are more likely than males to be responsible for household responsibilities, particularly childrearing, and that there is evidence that these influences females' inclinations to be employed and start businesses. Comparing the percentage of males and females who launch or run new businesses is an obvious approach to measure the gender gap in entrepreneurship (Dheer, Li and Treviño, 2019; Amorós, Cristi and Naudé, 2021). In all three categories: owners of limited liability firms, directors of limited liability companies, and sole proprietors, female entrepreneurs tend to be underrepresented compared to their male counterparts (Krieger, Block, Stuetzer, Obschonka and Salmela-Aro 2022; Meunier, Fantoni and Kouhlani-Nolla, 2022).

## **2.4 GENDER RELATIONS AND FEMINISM THEORIES**

It is important to consider feminist perspectives when discussing female entrepreneurship. This section explores various feminist theories and selects the most relevant theory for the purpose of this study. The objective of feminist theory is to address discrimination and patriarchy, which contribute to gender inequality (Pompper, 2011).

Various researchers have affiliated with feminism and have offered various definitions and perspectives on gender. Gender, according to Fernández et al. (2014 p.245), "entails some differences and similarities between male and female in accordance with a belief system that drives their behaviour". Gender is "considered to constitute a personal identity, social standing, and also a system of interactions among male and female" Lorber (2010, p. 8). Gender disparity is thus a societal issue rather than a personal one (Lorber, 2010). Institutions, businesses, the economy, entrepreneurship and marriage have all been

affected by gender imbalance (Choudhry, Abdul Mutalib and Ismail, 2019; Adeosun and Owolabi, 2021). This study adopts the abovementioned definition by Fernández et al. (2014, p.245), that gender “entails some differences and similarities between male and female in accordance with a belief system that drives their behaviour.” This definition is most applicable to this study as the focus of this study is on female entrepreneurship in male-dominated sectors and the limited number of females entering into the male-dominated sector is as a result of the belief system that drives their behaviour. The feminist theories covered in this section includes Liberal Feminism, Feminist Social Theory, Radical Feminism Theory, and Standpoint Feminist Theory.

#### ***2.4.1 Liberal Feminism***

According to Akter et al. (2019) society tends to favour males in certain sectors traditionally considered "male-dominated," based on the belief that females are less knowledgeable and less physically capable than males. Liberal feminists believe that there are fundamental similarities between men and women, and therefore, they should be treated equally (Aneke et al., 2015; Mohajan, 2020). Liberal feminism also emphasizes the rights of and fairness towards both males and females (Aneke et al., 2015; Nussbaum, 2021). Freedom and equality for both males and females are other key principles of liberal feminism. Aneke et al. (2015), argues that women have the same capacity for rational thought as men, and that women's biological differences do not justify their exclusion from politics (Aneke et al., 2015). Liberal feminist theory clearly states that males and females are equal. However, the logistics industry remains an exception as it continues to have inadequate female representation, primarily attributable to the obstacles they encounter, such as societal and cultural prejudices that label females as frail and gentle, alongside instances of sexual harassment (Aneke et al., 2015; Bwatou, 2020; Forkuor et al., 2020; Diale and Carrim, 2022; Dzisi, 2022).

#### ***2.4.2 Feminist Social Theory***

Garner and Enns (2012) and Kitching (2019) highlight that socialist feminism holds that gender status is imposed and determined by social connections and is ingrained in historical institutions that govern social production. In essence, gender, class, and race are interwoven in such a way that they cannot be viewed separated or prioritised hypothetically (Kitching, 2019). Feminist social theory also contends that different groups of females experience gender in different ways, with some seeing gender oppression as less important than racial and class inequalities (Garner and Enns, 2012; Kitching, 2019). Furthermore, gender disparities in entrepreneurial performance and motivations may be attributed to social feminism, which encompasses the impact of socialisation experiences that restrict and place females at a disadvantage.

From an early age, deliberate socialisation techniques produce distinctions between male and female experiences that shape how they perceive the world (Akter et al., 2019). This means socialisation plays a major role in how females perceive, experience, and behave in the world they are raised to know. By

assessing the social risk and reward, the socialisation process has an indirect impact on economic decision-making, and the way females are socialised into society has an impact on the career choices of females (Akter et al., 2019).

### ***2.4.3 Radical Feminism Theory***

According to Jensen (2021) radical feminism places its main emphasis on the mistreatment and exploitation of females. Their catchphrase is "patriarchy," which refers to a structure in which men dominate both the political and social spheres (Aneke et al., 2015; Duriesmith and Meger, 2020). The suppression of females is a social process that has no basis in biology or any other cause, and thus can and should be challenged and destroyed (Duriesmith and Meger, 2020).

### ***2.4.4 Standpoint Feminist Theory***

Although Dorothy Smith has written on a wide range of subjects, such as textual analysis, Marxism, the family, and education, she is most recognised for being one of the founders of standpoint theory (Fulton, Oyakawa and Wood, 2023). Smith emphasises the idea of standpoint by demonstrating how one's subject position in society affects what they know (Fulton et al., 2023). People start with the world as they experience it, and their knowledge of it, with the "other" being dependent on that setting (Halpern, 2019; Tanesini, 2019; Cabrera, Belloso and Royo Prieto, 2020).

### ***2.4.5 Gender Theory Adopted for the Study***

The underrepresentation of female entrepreneurs in the logistics industry needs to be explored through the lens of standpoint theory. This theory examines the experiences of women and how their position in society influences their knowledge and perspectives (Halpern, 2019). According to Smith's feminist standpoint theory, each person has a unique standpoint, and one should not take their own perspective for granted (Appelrouth and Edles, 2010; Jensen, 2021). Individuals are involved in multiple standpoints that interact with each other. Females, in particular, benefit from the diversity of social positions and everyday practices of wielding power in the formation of knowledge (Halpern, Tanesini, Cabrera, Belloso and Royo Prieto, 2020).

This suggests that a female entrepreneur's perspective influences her career choices, such as entering the logistics industry. The success of female entrepreneurs can be influenced by collaborations with various individuals (Akter et al., 2019). Different social situations impact the validity of assumptions, models, and methodologies (Jensen, 2021). Developing a unique perspective allows individuals to identify constraints or issues with underlying premises (Akter et al., 2019). The following section will explore the perspective of female entrepreneurs in male-dominated fields.

## **2.5 FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN MALE-DOMINATED SECTORS**

The underrepresentation of professional females in specific sectors or industries is one of the issues they face, regardless of whether their line of work involves employment or entrepreneurship (Mroczek-Dąbrowska and Gaweł, 2020).

According to a report by the World Bank in 2019, significant gender disparity exists within the realm of entrepreneurship whereby females are more inclined to engage in low-productivity industries or operate enterprises that yield lesser success. The World Bank (2020) also notes that globally, 53.4% of females' total entrepreneurial activity is in retail/wholesale trade, compared to 43.5% of men's activity. In agreement with the World Bank studies, Kyalo (2014), Campos et al. (2015), Mroczek-Dbrowska and Gawe (2020) state that the retail and service industries are a historically gendered setting in which the majority of female entrepreneurs appear to operate. In sectors where men predominate, there are very few female entrepreneurs. The proportion of female entrepreneurs running small enterprises in male-dominated sectors like manufacturing, transportation and logistics, agriculture, mining, and construction is moderately lower (Aneke, 2015).

By means of females representing around half the populace of the world, the investigation of their role in the male-dominated sectors remains one-dimensional (Ray, 2014). This is evidence that females are not always welcome or supported when venturing into careers that are dominated by males. For instance, research from Ethiopia and Uganda suggested that sectoral segregation was a key factor in the gender gap in entrepreneurship (ID4D Sustainable Development, 2021).

The Collins English Dictionary (2016: online) defines male-dominated sectors as, “a male-dominated society, organisation, or area of activity in which men have most of the power and influence”. It is controlled mainly by or consists mainly of men. Catalyst (2019) further agrees by indicating male-dominated sectors comprise of 25% or fewer females. Male-dominated spaces and occupations are particularly vulnerable to continuing negative stereotypes and fostering hostile conditions that make it even more challenging for females to succeed (Catalyst, 2019). Figure 2.1 illustrates different sectors that are male-dominated across three specific regions.



**Figure 2.1: The Likelihood of being categorised as male-dominated or female concentrated in sectors that were identified across all three regions.**

Source: (World Bank 2022, p.26)

Figure 2.1 shows that in sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Southeast Asia, the automobile maintenance and sales and small transport sectors are male-dominated. Textile manufacturing and repair, trade of pharmaceutical products and perfumes, small domestic electronic products, waiter/food services and accommodation, and hairdressing and personal services are female-dominated in all three regions. In sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, agriculture, forestry, and fishing, construction, water supply and waste management, wood manufacturing and

repair, metal works and engineering, trade of food, beverages and tobacco retail, and real estate activities are male-dominated. In Southeast Asia, there is a balance of males and females in agriculture, forestry and fishing, construction, water supply and waste management, leather manufacturing/shoemaking and repair, and metal works and engineering.

According to Campos et al. (2015), Ncube, Soonawalla and Hausken (2021) in comparison to other regions, the African continent has the highest rate of female involvement in entrepreneurship. Research from Uganda shows that females who get in sectors with a male predominance earn as much as men do and three times as much as women who stay in industries with a female predominance (Campos et al., 2015). Females' sectoral preferences are not explained by factors like entrepreneurial skill or aptitude or credit or human capital constraints (Bui and Long, 2021). However, knowledge about the success of their small businesses, the influence of male role models, and exposure to the industry from family and friends are crucial in aiding females in bypassing or overcoming the norms supporting occupational segregation (Hallward-Driemeier, 2011; Bui and Long, 2021).

## **2.6 FACTORS THAT MOTIVATE FEMALES TO ESTABLISH BUSINESSES**

This section examines the various motivations for female participation in entrepreneurial activities, particularly in male-dominated sectors. The literature indicates that motivational factors are not universal and vary among individuals. Research also suggests that different countries have different types of motivation (Aneke, 2015). According to Aneke (2015) and Džananović, and Tandir (2020), there are two key motives, these being push and pull motives. Meanwhile, Qian and Luoma (2007) identify three primary factors influencing an individual's decision to become an entrepreneur: personal, situational, and background factors.

Previous studies have identified various motivational factors. Kraja and Berberi (2023) found that independence, scarce job opportunities, and the ability to work from home are the main motivating factors for female entrepreneurs (Kraja and Berberi, 2023). Aneke et al. (2021) discovered that female entrepreneurs are motivated by factors such as the desire for empowerment, challenging patriarchy, independence, financial gain, and wealth creation when venturing into male-dominated sectors. Roy and Manna (2014) also found that the most important motivating factors for female entrepreneurs were helping their families and self-motivation (Roy and Manna, 2014). Additionally, Mushoman (2018) revealed that female entrepreneurs in South Africa are driven by discontent with their jobs, lack of employment, desire for independence, higher earnings, natural entrepreneurial tendencies, and pursuit of a passion. Finally, Al-Ghazali, Yusoff, and Sadi (2013) found that profit achievement is the most powerful motivational factor for female entrepreneurs (Al-Ghazali, Yusoff, and Sadi, 2013).

## **2.7 ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS**

Jardim (2021) suggests that entrepreneurial skills include the information, attitudes, and abilities essential for individuals to effectively create innovative and valuable projects, products, or services that

cater to the needs of the business and the targeted audience, ultimately leading to the achievement of functional, social, or emotional goals. Al Mamun, Abdullah, Ali Fazal, and Muniady (2019) describe entrepreneurial skills as the actions or expertise required to establish and manage a business successfully. Furthermore, Faris (2019) highlights that although there is no definitive inventory of entrepreneurial skills, prosperous entrepreneurs typically exhibit specific qualities such as personal traits, interpersonal abilities, critical and creative thinking proficiencies, and practical skills.

Entrepreneurial skills are a demonstration of entrepreneurial competence, which is crucial for successfully starting and diversifying businesses and achieving sustainable profitability. Novanda (2021) suggests that entrepreneurial skills can incorporate different skills set, such as technical, leadership and business management, and creative thinking abilities. Sadera et al. (2019) further discovered that female entrepreneurs possess exceptional skills in marketing, record-keeping, business management, critical thinking, planning and research, decision-making, organisation, and oral communication. According to Jardim (2021), entrepreneurial skills encompass various qualities such as a willingness to embrace new ideas, the ability to solve problems effectively, and effective communication, all of which involve the integration of creativity and innovation. Moreover, these skills include traits like taking initiative, having a strong belief in one's own abilities, being resilient, engaging in strategic planning and evaluation, making sound decisions when faced with challenges, displaying transformational leadership qualities, effectively communicating ideas in a clear and visually appealing manner, collaborating well within a team and forming productive networks, as well as being adept at digital communication.

Shabbir, Shariff and Shahzad (2016) divided skills into four categories in their study: technical know-how, managerial aptitude, entrepreneurial characteristics, and personal maturity traits. Additionally, Guerrero and Richards (2015) found that female entrepreneurs generally lack key business skills and capabilities established by their male counterparts from professional experiences in corporate settings, including negotiation efficacy, which may be essential for launching and sustaining a business.

## **2.8 FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE LOGISTICS SECTOR**

One of the most significant segments of the global economy today is the logistics sector. However, men still dominate this sector, and even while things are steadily changing, there is still a long way to go before females are fully included (Nigam, 2010; Edirisinghe, 2018; Imán, 2023). It has been and still is the case with several fields where female involvement is not readily accepted (Nigam, 2010; Edirisinghe, 2018).

The logistics industry comprises the managing and movement of goods and resources from a specific point of origin to the point of destination (Nigam, 2010; Nsengiman, 2017). The focus of the logistics for this research is the trucks transporting goods locally or long-distance. Globally, the logistics market represents an average of almost 12% of the GDPs (Morales and Saucedo, 2015). In South Africa, the

sector contributes nearly 10–12% of the GDP (Stats SA, 2019). Logistics is essential because it is a driver of countries' competitiveness, which is significant in economic growth and job creation (World Bank, 2019). In sectors such as logistics and transport, the gender ratio is so skewed that it trumps any statistics that might indicate a trend of improvement and development (Contractor, 2021; Escap, 2021). However, as in most other sectors, it is encouraging to see that females in the logistics industry are gradually taking on roles that were traditionally deemed only suitable for males. Thankfully, several companies in India have recognised the potential of females and are actively working to make the industry more attractive to females; only 2% of logistics employees were females in 2017 (Forkuor, Buari and Aheto, 2019). Appreciatively, the situation in the United Kingdom is rather different, females made up 19% of the workforce (Croton Team, 2022). In South Africa, it was found that 70% of individuals employed in the logistics sector for the year 2017 were male, and just less than a third, 30%, were female (Stats SA, 2022). The exclusion of females in the logistics sector delays the economy's potential for growth (Mroczek-Dąbrowska and Gaweł, 2020).

The South African economy's possible growth is hindered by the systematic exclusion of female entrepreneurs in key industries (Stojanovic et al., 2014; Montague, 2017; Kolasińska-Morawska et al., 2019; Mroczek-Dąbrowska and Gaweł, 2020; Amushila and Semente, 2022). One such industry is logistics, which plays a significant role in the South African economy but is predominantly male-dominated. Despite some progress in female entrepreneurial participation in various industries, there remains a significant gender gap in the logistics industry, particularly in entrepreneurship (Nigam, 2010; Nsengiman, 2017; Edirisinghe, 2018).

Females in logistics contribute significantly to the sector with their distinct viewpoints, imagination, and creative solutions, paving the path for future female professionals. Even if the gender gap is progressively reducing, females still face many difficulties when looking for possibilities for business development (First Call Logistics, 2023).

## **2.9 CHALLENGES OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Challenges are the same across the board when it comes to entrepreneurship. However, females encounter a different set of challenges due to their gender, particularly those in male-dominated industries, and some challenges are sectoral (Derera, Chitakunye and O'Neill, 2014; Kyalo, 2014; Campos et al., 2015; Aneke et al., 2017; Mroczek-Dąbrowska and Gaweł, 2020). This section discusses several challenges faced by female entrepreneurs.

Sector-specific differences in barriers to female entrepreneurship exist. While it is understood that the challenges experienced by female entrepreneurs are specific to the industry, people are also aware of the negative effects of generalizing the results (Nxopo and Iwu, 2015; Ogundana et al., 2021).

Traditional gender hierarchies and norms that are prevalent in the family and society are the root of the difficulties that females encounter when trying to enter and succeed in male-dominated spaces (Martin and Barnard, 2013; Aneke et al., 2017). The way in which young females are nurtured in society contributes to the success and failure rates of female-owned businesses in that females may conduct business in such a way that they may find it difficult to keep the work-life balance. The prevailing social norms have a significant impact on the ability of female-owned businesses to grow larger than male-dominated businesses (Martínez-Zarzoso, 2023). These challenges are rooted in the socialization processes of both genders and influence the types of economic activities in which females engage (Ferguson, 2017). Additionally, culturally determined attitudes related to gender continue to be a barrier for females in achieving financial rewards and status in business (Ferguson, 2017). Findings from past studies by Kyalo (2014), Campos et al. (2015), Aneke et al. (2017), Mroczek-Dąbrowska and Gawęł (2020) indicate that female entrepreneurs face numerous challenges that hinder their capabilities in the entrepreneurship space; and these challenges include lack of adequate training and skills as well as lack of access to financial capital. A male-owned business is more likely to get financial support than a female-owned business (Derera et al., 2014; Small Biz Genius, 2020). It has been observed, with the above challenges that it is difficult, sometimes almost impossible for females to contend with the well-established businesses of males and the owners' associated experience (Mroczek-Dąbrowska and Gawęł, 2020) Females are underrepresented in male-dominated sectors due to the numerous challenges that are very different from those who are in more gender-balanced and female-dominated sectors.

Decal (2010) noted that numerous female entrepreneurs in emerging countries, such as India and Indonesia, lack human capital, which makes it very difficult for them to succeed. Salem (2005) also noted that female entrepreneurs in countries like China and India have a lesser amount of access to social networks than their male counterparts, hindering their business success. Mazidah et al. (2016) pointed out that female entrepreneurs in Malaysia face many hurdles in terms of social capital when running their businesses.

There are several barriers that prevent women from starting a business or increase the likelihood of failure: regulatory and cultural factors, social blockades, fear of failure, lack of entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, financial and economic barriers, including a lack of access to venture capital and financing (Martins, 2004; Hatala, 2005; Akhter and Sumi, 2014; Derera et al., 2014; Aneke et al., 2017; Chiplunkar and Goldberg, 2021). Furthermore, potential obstacles are attributed to various factors including the characteristics of the educational system, the particulars of launching a new venture, absence of assistance from individuals or family members, constraints imposed by limited time availability, prevalence of corruption, dearth of appropriate figures for emulation, impoverishment, religious affiliations, influence exerted by one's social group, and the presence of political turbulence. (Martins, 2004; Hatala, 2005; Akhter and Sumi, 2014).

Other challenges female entrepreneurs face in male-dominated spaces that are highlighted in literature (Bwatou, 2020; Forkuor et al., 2020; Diale and Carrim, 2022; Dzisi, 2022) include: social and cultural stereotypes of females being labelled as weak and soft; sexual harassment; societal norms and perceptions of women's leadership abilities; gender clichés, like the "nurturing mother" or caregiver; increased levels of stress and anxiety; limited mentorship and career development opportunities; inadequate resources, biased infrastructure, and policies; male resistance and biases have hindered genuine change; the distinct physical and professional identity of women; and achieving a balance between work and personal life.

## **2.10 ENTREPRENEURIAL STRATEGIES FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

According to Derera et al. (2020) most often, coping mechanisms are developed by individuals to address the particular difficulties they face. These techniques are frequently influenced by their surroundings. Learning how to boost one's confidence is essential for developing survival skills. Waters (2021) indicates that female entrepreneurs also use social media like YouTube, Google, and Facebook to acquire business techniques, coping mechanisms and to facilitate the process of networking with other successful entrepreneurs.

Prior investigation has demonstrated that female entrepreneurs in Africa engage in strategic behaviours that involve establishing network relationships with male partners, often husbands and family members, in order to obtain start-up capital, market information, business advice, and security support (Campos et al., 2015; Aneke et al., 2017; Mroczek-Dbrowska and Gawe, 2020). Female entrepreneurs also rely on family members and friends for childcare, moral, emotional, and spiritual support (Campos et al., 2015; Aneke et al., 2017; Mroczek-Dbrowska and Gawe, 2020).

Female entrepreneurs purposefully restrict the expansion of their businesses in order to support their husbands' roles as the household's major breadwinner (Friedson Ridenour and Pierotti, 2019). According to research, female entrepreneurs use mentorship and leadership styles such as being kind, fair, and motivating to survive in environments where men predominate (Chovwen, 2007; Martin and Barnard (2013). In contrast, research also revealed that in order to survive in male-dominated spaces, female graduates exhibited unexpectedly masculine traits including self-centeredness and individualism (Davey, 2008).

## **2.11 RESILIENCE OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The unexpected coronavirus disease of 2019 (hereafter referred as COVID-19) pandemic has had a significant impact on businesses worldwide, presenting a challenge to entrepreneurs as they navigate an unprecedented and unstable economic environment (Mashingaidze and Bomani, 2022). According to the World Health Organisation (2020), (hereafter referred as WHO), COVID-19 is believed to have originated in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China, and then spread to other parts of the world. On February

14, 2020, Egypt reported the first case of Covid-19 in Africa. Since then, the virus has spread throughout the continent (Shumba et al., 2020). South Africa, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria are the African nations with the highest infection rates at the time of writing. As of August 8, 2021, there were 7 075 119 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Africa, accounting for 3.48% of all infections worldwide (Niohuru, 2023). The result of COVID -19 has been highly negative globally, resilience has kept many individuals and businesses functioning (Shumba et al., 2020).

Resilience is the ability to overcome challenges and difficulties in an unpredictable environment. In business, resilience is the entrepreneur's ability to survive, adapt, and thrive despite adversity (Hall, 2023; Souder, 2023). COVID-19 is noted to have had a huge disruption globally in all business sectors (Niohuru, 2023). Technology and important physical assets this include digital connectivity, has assisted with business resilience during COVID-19 and has opened up new opportunities for innovation (Hall, 2023; Souder, 2023). These opportunities have arisen through the reconfiguration of existing products, a re-evaluation of delivery networks and methods, and the exploration of new strategic positions and business models (Hall, 2023; Souder, 2023). Regardless of the resilience, business have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Iwu, Sibanda and Makwara (2022) the pandemic led to significantly reduced revenues due to disrupted supply chains, mandatory curfews, and reduced consumer spending as a result of layoffs and increased consumer concerns. Furthermore, a study by Mashingaidze and Bomani (2022) revealed that the pandemic made it more difficult than usual for female entrepreneurs to obtain bank loans. Findings also show that females have strong incentives to stay in business, despite the effects of COVID-19. Three themes, namely internal motivations, contribution to society, and resource possession—emerged from their data set.

Additionally, Onoshakpor, Etuknwa and Karamalla-Gaiballa (2020) discovered that enhancements made to networks, the development of relationships with stakeholders, and dedicated attention to information technology were instrumental in expanding opportunities for organisations and affording female entrepreneurs a range of benefits such as improved access to information, increased funding prospects, amplified social and financial support, and enhanced knowledge exchange (Onoshakpor et al., 2020).

## **2.12 MEASURES OF BUSINESS GROWTH AND SUCCESS**

There is a lack of consensus, according to Irene (2017) on what constitutes the best metric of business success. Some studies (Diana and Maria, 2020; Dadd and Hinton, 2022; Govender and Adegbite, 2023) recommend using just financial metrics as measurements of business performance, such as profitability, revenue, and return on investment (ROI). Others, such as Ramana, Raman and Aryasri (2009), Maqbool, Deng and Ashfaq (2020) and Kori, Muathe and Maina (2020) believe that financial and non-financial success can be quantified. Growth and performance are strongly linked to success, and the definitions of these phrases appear to be hazy and intertwined (Reijonen and Komppula, 2007).

Financial metrics of success include growth, profit turnover, ROI, and the number of employees (Jayasuriya and Azam, 2017; Mohamad and Bakar, 2017; Dewi et al., 2019; Nguyen et al., 2019). Whether non-financial traits like independence, job satisfaction, and the ability to balance work and life are required for success is currently up for debate in the research on female entrepreneurship (Mohamad and Bakar, 2017). Female business owners are often viewed as successful when they attain a work-life balance (Rani and Hashim, 2017).

Success, according to Laily and Wahyuni (2018) is merely the capacity to manage a business smoothly. As a result, success is a subjective concept, as the individual's perspective of success determines the measure of success (Simpson et al., 2004). Lee, Stearns, Osteryoung and Stephenson (2009), on the other hand, indicate that entrepreneurial success has been well-thought-out to vary by gender of the business owner. Personal qualities such as motivation and experience have been employed in previous studies of female business owners as indicators of business success. Few studies have examined the link between female entrepreneurs' motives and important success elements in female-owned businesses.

### **2.13 SUCCESS FACTORS OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

An entrepreneur's efforts in establishing, developing, and managing a business are important (Kanapathipillai and Azam, 2019). In spite of the growth of female entrepreneurs, their success is still not well documented in literature (Alam et al., 2011; Aliyu et al., 2019; Selvadurai, 2019). As a result, conducting this research was important to fill this gap and investigate more on the success factors of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.

A success factor study in this context focuses on uncovering beneficial influencing elements that have an impact on an entrepreneurship's success. According to many researchers, it is impossible to develop a solid explanation for why certain start-up ideas fail while other fledgling businesses prosper in the long run (Al-Shami, Al Mamun, Sidek and Rashid, 2019; Alene, 2020; Al-Kwifi, Tien Khoa, Ongsakul and Ahmed, 2020). As a result, the study of success factors has steadily divided into a variety of subfields, which can further be divided into two main research streams. This is because some studies emphasize external variables, while other researchers emphasize internal success determinants (Al-Kwifi et al., 2020; Schröder, Bobek and Horvat, 2021). In both the external and internal success factor studies, there is no uniform explanation of how success is decided.

The circumstances of the many African countries and societies in which female entrepreneurs are located are what give rise to and determine their success (Ojong, Simba and Dana, 2021). Several studies have focused on success factors of female entrepreneurship (Al-Tit et al., 2019; Beaman and Platteau, 2019; Campos et al., 2015; Kanapathipillai and Azam, 2019; Forkuor et al., 2020) and their findings identified success factors of female entrepreneurship in the context of financial capital, human

capital, innovation, social capital and work-life balance. The next section discusses these success factors.

### ***2.13.1 Financial Capital***

Financial capital is critical to business development but is frequently a challenge, particularly for female entrepreneurs (Dyer, 2019). Financial capital refers to cash, credit, and other sources of funding that help people and businesses to prosper (Amadeo, 2021). Several studies suggest that females' access to financial resources is lower than that of males (Naqvi, 2011; Campos et al., 2015; Derera et al., 2014; Alibhai et al., 2017; Aneke et al., 2017). Lack of financial capital can be a noteworthy blockade to entrepreneurs; this provides enlightenment as to why some female entrepreneurs find it difficult to penetrate in core sectors like logistics (Derera et al., 2014; Aliyu et al., 2019; Dyer, 2019). Findings noted the gendered nature of start-up capital for female entrepreneurs in South Africa, and the difficulty females face in venturing into non-traditional industries (Derera et al., 2014). There is still a clear link between access to financial capital and the establishment and success of any business. Access to financial capital at the start-up stage and during the operation of a business has repeatedly been shown to be a key determinant of its sustainability and consistency of existence (Gleißner, and Walkshäusl, 2022).

Male-dominated sectors are generally more capital concentrated (Aneke et al., 2017; World Bank, 2019; 2022) which may be a barrier for female's entry given the limitations females face in accessing finances. In sub-Saharan Africa, for instance, male-owned businesses have six times the capital venture of female-owned businesses (World Bank, 2019; 2022). Due to these limitations, female entrepreneurs may choose sectors that naturally have smaller and less resources for businesses and need less financial capital contributions (Derera et al., 2014; Aneke et al., 2017; World Bank, 2019; 2022). This means that inadequate access to capital is one of the key drivers of sectoral segregation.

The difference in returns or firm size due to access to capital is not always as blunt. For instance, when comparing the number of employees of male- and female-owned businesses within Ethiopia's manufacturing and services sectors, the findings revealed that female-owned firms, despite being undeveloped on average, are greater and have more revenues compared to male-owned companies within the same sector (Bardasi and Getahun, 2008). Findings in Uganda also reveal that once they are recognised in male-dominated sectors, there is no difference between male- and female-owned businesses when it comes to capital (Campos et al., 2017; World Bank, 2022). Females in South Africa have generally been excluded from access to credit, ownership of land, education and skills development (Department of Trade and Industry, 2006; Phiri, Toure, Kipkogei, Traore, Afokpe and Lamore, 2022). Land ownership and title deeds are critical for collateral security for loans (Derera et al., 2014; Phiri et al., 2022), the lack of which is a barrier when it comes to accessing loans and other sources of funding when they venture into business.

The majority of female entrepreneurs operate businesses in the informal sector due to a lack of resources. Female entrepreneurs are more likely to rely on informal and internal funding, such as micro-financing, personal savings, or loans from family (Derera et al., 2014; Aneke, 2015; Isaga, 2019; Siba, 2019; Al-Kwifi et al., 2020). A study by Derera et al. (2020) found that most female-owned businesses in the informal sector struggle with financial management and according to Goyal and Kumar (2021) access to financial capital is important, but knowledge of financial management is equally crucial.

Studies have shown that while the government has programs to support gender empowerment, only a few females are benefiting, with many struggling to access support (Siba, 2019; Al-Kwifi et al., 2020). This aligns with the findings of a study by Derera (2021) that females are not aware of the support programs which target them. The study also argues that even when some females are aware of these programs, only a few of them have actually benefited (Derera, 2021).

Further studies reveal that a perceived lack of skills has a detrimental effect on the sales dynamics of female entrepreneurs, while financial literacy training is linked to a better likelihood of stable or increasing sales (Kanapathipillai and Azam, 2019). To successfully use financial capital, one needs to have good human capital resources, which is discussed next.

### ***2.13.2 Human Capital***

Human capital, also known as the mastery of knowledge and abilities, is a valuable resource (Schultz, 2010). Entrepreneurs with more important human capital reach greater levels of success through knowledge creation activities (Roomi, 2013; Kanapathipillai and Azam, 2019). Education, training, and work experience are ways in which human capital can be developed. These factors, or a combination of them, have helped female entrepreneurs build their human capital and have an impact on the types of businesses they pursue (Brixiová Schwidrowski, Kangoye and Said, 2019; Kanapathipillai and Azam, 2019). Education is particularly important because it is considered one of the main components for business success (Tambwe, 2015; Brixiová Schwidrowski et al., 2019; Kanapathipillai and Azam, 2019).

Compared to men, women exhibit significantly lower levels of self-confidence. Males also report much higher levels of entrepreneurial self-efficacy than females. A lack of confidence is possibly the biggest obstacle preventing females from becoming business owners (Efroni, 2017). A study conducted in Ghana revealed that female entrepreneurs were more educated than their male counterparts (Abor and Biekpe, 2006). Similarly, a study conducted in Eswatini found that the majority of participants displayed some level of education, from bachelor's degrees to master's qualifications and professional training (Brixiová Schwidrowski et al., 2019). Furthermore, a study in Nigeria found that female entrepreneurs had postgraduate qualifications (Adesua-Lincoln, 2011). Another study in South Africa revealed that at least 50.3% of female entrepreneurs held a university degree, while 25.6% had completed some university short courses (Crittenden et al., 2019).

While financial literacy training benefits males, research shows that it has no effect on the sales level of female entrepreneurs (Brixiová, Kangoye and Said, 2020). Instead, there is a clear positive relationship between tertiary education and female performance (Brixiová Schwidrowski et al., 2019). Female entrepreneurs typically have fewer technical abilities than men due to their lower educational achievement and limited knowledge in technical subjects, which prevents them from entering sectors with higher value-addition or from increasing productivity in existing businesses (Brixiová Schwidrowski et al., 2019).

According to Roomi (2013), females typically possess lower levels of human capital compared to males. This disparity is primarily characterised by lower levels of education and diminished skill sets. Moreover, the nature of human capital is not impartial to gender, as males typically exhibit greater levels of prior industrial or business-oriented expertise, encompassing employee management. The insufficient accumulation of human resources can potentially hinder females' capacity to identify and capitalise on opportunities, consequently resulting in a decline in business expansion (Roomi, 2013).

In terms of prior experience, research indicates that females contribute less management experience to the company than males (Efroni, 2017). Consistent with this, a study conducted by Roomi (2013) found that males hold more prior experience in science, technology, and management. Conversely, females tend to have less or no experience in the scientific or technical fields, but they frequently possess the greatest knowledge and experience in the service industry. Therefore, males are perceived to be more equipped to succeed in setting up a business. Past business experience actually hindered growth for both male and female business owners. Roomi (2013) proposes that knowledgeable owners may opt for slower business growth due to their awareness of the dangers associated with rapid growth, instead focusing on alternative performance metrics. Many female entrepreneurs acquire their first managerial experience when they start their own business. Their limited commercial networks and lack of prior managerial experience hinder their ability to expand their businesses (Roomi, 2013; Efroni, 2017). However, an entrepreneur's previous work experience helps them avoid mistakes and effectively manage their business (Santarelli and Tran, 2013).

According to Roomi (2013), females with higher levels of human capital tend to be more innovative. Chinomona and Maziriri (2015) further revealed that human capital contributes to business success because it helps female entrepreneurs to be very active in business, thereby elevating their living standards. Roomi (2013) shows that results of training in business management and enterprise development for female entrepreneurs in Pakistan indicate a significant increase in their self-confidence, annual revenue, and employment growth. This proves the impact of human capital for the growth of a business. In Tanzania, Tambwe (2015) found that 90% of female-owned enterprises had improved due to prior training. Female entrepreneurs with a background in education and skills need to be creative and innovative for business growth, which is discussed in the next section.

### **2.13.3 Innovation**

In order for a business to succeed, innovation is essential. This intangible resource is scarce, valued, and distinct (Popović-Pantić, 2014; Brixiova Schwidrowski et al., 2019; Huang, Li, Wang and Li, 2022). According to a study by Huang et al. (2022), innovativeness is a key feature of entrepreneurial orientation that indicates a business's propensity to participate in and promote new concepts in creative developments, leading to more business opportunities, easier profitability, and improved entrepreneurial performance. Ground-breaking activities are important in creating competitive advantages (Arcuri, Gandolfi and Russo, 2023).

Research conducted in the United States (VanderBrug, 2013), Canada (Preston, 2015), Turkey (Kabukcu, 2015), and Serbia (Pantic, 2014) has shown that female entrepreneurs have improved their capacity to offer innovative products and services, highlighting the importance of innovation for business success. However, a study by Filzah et al. (2015) reveals that female entrepreneurs in Malaysia lack innovation. This is also seen in other developing countries like South Africa.

Despite South Africa having an efficiency-driven economy, only 18% of female business owners claim that their goods or services are innovative, which is a very low percentage given the country's level of economic development (GEM, 2020). According to the GEM report, females are 5% more likely than males to innovate (GEM, 2020). However, they continue to experience a variety of personal, organizational, and institutional barriers to innovation (Jabeen, Faisal, Al Matroushi and Farouk, 2019; Machado, Braga, Correia, Braga and Silva, 2023). At the individual level, females' capacity for innovation is constrained by obligations to their families and a reliance on private networks (Visser, 2020). Improvement has been observed over the years, with the GEM (2022) report revealing that females in South Africa are amongst the most innovative and high development entrepreneurs.

Due to past oppression, female entrepreneurs often have trouble finding and accessing knowledge, credit, and networks (Subramaniam and Islam, 2014; Arcuri et al., 2023). Huang et al. (2022) further elaborated that gender labels had a negative moderating effect on female opportunity acknowledgement and development. However, females have penetrated successfully regardless of the barriers. Studies by Subramaniam and Islam (2014) demonstrate that female business owners are highly creative and willing to embrace new concepts and technology in order to enhance and expand their companies, as Arcuri et al. (2023) reveal that innovation is essential for the development of start-ups and that female entrepreneurs effectively harness the power of innovative practices for their business growth more effectively than male counterparts.

According to Arcuri et al. (2023) entrepreneur's qualities play a crucial role in the success of a business, especially during its initial stages. The choices made by the business proprietors not only impact the start-up but also determine its overall operations and growth. (Arcuri et al., 2023). Ogunyemi and Fusch (2021) and Zastempowski and Cyfert (2021) reveals that entrepreneurial qualities are significant factors

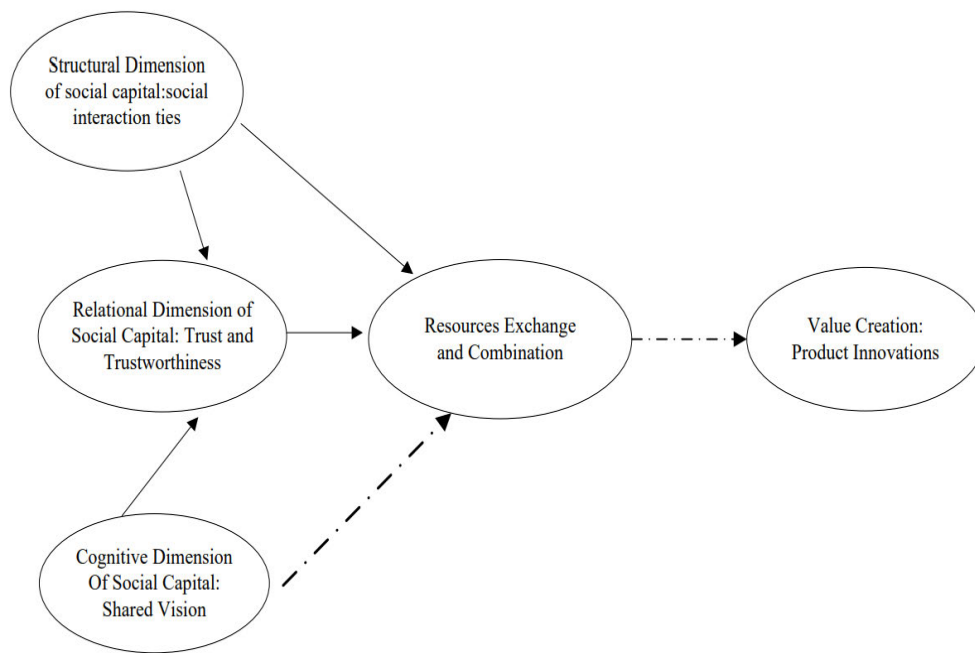
explaining business innovation propensity. Identifying the entrepreneurs behind the business is crucial for understanding the connection between start-up growth and innovation (Zastempowski and Cyfert ,2021). Subramaniam and Islam (2014) further reveal that female entrepreneurs recognise the significance of technology for business development in the extremely competitive market. This justifies the importance of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector because, according to Kare, Kumar Rajuldevi and Veeramachaneni (2009), the sector is quickly digitising and changing around the world due to the increase of e-commerce, online purchasing, and paperless and contactless operations (Gnutzmann Silva, 2021). The author further reveals that all logistics fields share the same goal of minimising resource utilisation.

Finally, there is a clear link between human capital and innovation. Subramaniam and Islam (2014) reveal that the female entrepreneurs interviewed directed that they keep investing in training for both themselves and their employees in order to improve, understanding that human capital is crucial for the development of their companies (Subramaniam and Islam, 2014). The perception which prevails among individuals is that in order for their enterprises to expand, continuous innovation and enhancement of the workforce are indispensable. The accomplishment and effectiveness of their enterprises were predominantly attributed to their managerial and leadership traits, which serve as significant catalysts for fostering creativity and originality.

#### ***2.13.4 Social Capital***

Social capital “who you know”, refers to the network of people who can connect you to resources and help you succeed in business (Madhani, 2010; Xie, 2014; Kanapathipillai and Azam, 2019). Social capital is an immaterial resource that is critical for success (Sallah and Caesar, 2020; Sulistyono and Ayuni, 2020). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1997) and Ganguly, Talukdar and Chatterjee (2019) classified two further dimensions of social capital – structural and cognitive – as well as the relational component of networks. The social interaction patterns that enable an entrepreneur to benefit from personal connections make up the structural component of social capital. The concept of assets, like trust and trustworthiness, that are present in these relationships is referred to as the relational dimension. When there is trust, people may be more willing to support an entrepreneur's endeavours than they otherwise might be (Burt, 2000; Ganguly et al., 2019). A shared understanding among network members characterizes the cognitive component of social capital, which in turn supports a shared understanding of a vision or purpose (Xie, 2014; Ganguly et al., 2019).

Figure 2.2 explains a network's combination and interchange of resources (or information) that leads to the creation of new sources of value, innovation, or support for the actions of the entrepreneur (Xie, 2014).



**Figure 2.2: Model of social capital and value creation**

*The bold lines show significant pathways, and dotted lines indicate non-significant paths.*

Source: (Xie 2014, p.26)

Female entrepreneurs in developing countries might use their social networks to access resources from their contacts (Kanapathipillai and Azam, 2019). Networks offer the fundamentals of trust and support for the launch of new organisations and spread their possible resource base (Xie, 2014). According to Rashid et al. (2015), female entrepreneurs in Kelantan, Malaysia receive network support from their families, which helps them to succeed. Consistent with this, Xie (2014), Bosiakoh and Tetteh (2019) and Kanapathipillai and Azam (2019) revealed that by utilizing various resources from their family networks, female entrepreneurs are able to overcome the many obstacles which confront them. Networks, on the other hand, might sometimes present a terrible risk and some relationships might result in harm (Vadnjal and Vadnjal, 2015).

A study conducted by Setini, Yasa, Supartha, Giantari and Rajiani, (2020) directs that social capital has a positive effect on female entrepreneurs in Bali as it can make the communication procedure more manageable and guarantee that it has business value. However, Setini et al. (2020) also identified that limited opportunities and gender differences in social capital can put female entrepreneurs in a marginal position. Another perspective is that social capital might exclude some population in society. In the South African context with its history of racial segregation and gender inequality there are still deeply rooted feelings of distrust, particularly among female entrepreneurs (Barclay, 2018; Setini et al., 2020). Further to this, research on social capital does not consider gender, yet gender is an important factor in social capital, as there is evidence that females are excluded from high status, powerful, male-oriented

networks (Efroni, 2017). Furthermore, on the topic of gender, a female entrepreneur may face sex-based stereotypes when she attempts to develop business networks; she may encounter barriers to accessing traditionally male-dominated established networks (Efroni, 2017).

Social capital can help address two issues in institutional economics: compensating for asymmetrical information about access, timing, and referrals, and reducing transaction costs through social and economic interaction (Efroni, 2017). Research also indicates that a high level of social capital benefits innovation (Efroni, 2017). The growing number of female-only networks has been seen as a potential success factor in the professional development of females (Roomi, 2013; Efroni, 2017).

### ***2.13.5 Work-Life Balance***

According to Sarkis (2023) work-life balance (hereafter referred as WLB) does not have a definite meaning. WLB is about finding the right combination of work and family responsibilities and personal fulfilment outside of work. Sundaresan (2014) defines WLB as skilfully managing personal and professional obligations. Halpern (2005) states that balancing family and work is a major social challenge currently, as people are working longer hours and doing more challenging tasks than in the past (Mutinta, 2017).

Research has shown that women often start businesses to better balance the demands of work and other areas of life (Tausig and Fenwick, 2001; Aneke, 2015; Mutinta, 2017). Brush et al. (2006) found that women are more likely than men to start their own businesses to achieve work-life balance. However, Noraini (2015) discovered that not all female entrepreneurs in Malaysia have improved their WLB since starting their businesses. Female entrepreneurs juggle multiple roles, such as business owner, mother, and spouse, making it challenging for them to achieve balance (Aneke, 2015; Mutinta, 2017).

Mathew and Panchanatham (2010) further revealed that female entrepreneurs have numerous responsibilities, including being a mother, spouse, daughter, employer, innovator, housekeeper, caregiver, and manager of personal health (Sarkis, 2023). With these different roles, it is becoming increasingly challenging for women to manage work and life responsibilities (Sarkis, 2023).

Achieving WLB requires individuals to prioritise their time, make lists, and plan effectively (Heath, 2012; Sarkis, 2023). Women are encouraged to integrate work and their personal life as equally valuable components. This proactive strategy involves clarifying values and priorities and ensuring that daily activities align with these values and goals. Implementing effective coping strategies can lead to a better quality of life (Heath, 2012; Sarkis, 2023).

Sarkis (2023) also suggests creating clear boundaries between work and family life as a key strategy for achieving work-life balance. Additional strategies include staying organised and efficient, setting boundaries, and improving communication in both the workplace and at home (Heath, 2012; Sarkis, 2023).

Studies have identified work-life balance as an important factor for success (Agarwal and Lenka, 2015). Grimm et al. (2013) found that family support can be both an obstacle and a necessity for the success of female entrepreneurs. Egga (2022) revealed a significant association between WLD and the performance of female entrepreneurs. This indicates that female entrepreneurs with greater flexibility in their work arrangements tend to have higher performance (Egga, 2022).

The conflict between work and family is also a significant factor affecting business success (Kanapathipillai and Azam, 2019; Tuffour, Bortey, and Nyanyofio, 2021; Sarkis, 2023). Neneh and Welsh (2022) suggest that high levels of emotional and active support are necessary for female entrepreneurs to achieve greater business performance and a balanced life, while male entrepreneurs can still achieve greater performance and balance with lower levels of support (Neneh and Welsh, 2022). Overall, WLB is important for relationships, health, and employee productivity, ultimately contributing to overall performance (Heath, 2012; Sarkis, 2023).

#### **2.14 RESOURCE BASED VIEW (RBV)**

The Resource Based View (RBV) offers a conceptual framework to evaluate the strategic alignment of resources from China within the developing world setting. Originally introduced by Birger Wernerfelt in 1984 and later enhanced by Barney and other researchers, the RBV of the company has garnered significant backing in entrepreneurship studies. The resource-based theory asserts that a firm's competitive advantage is dependent on its resources and capabilities (Ahn, Kim and Lee, 2022).

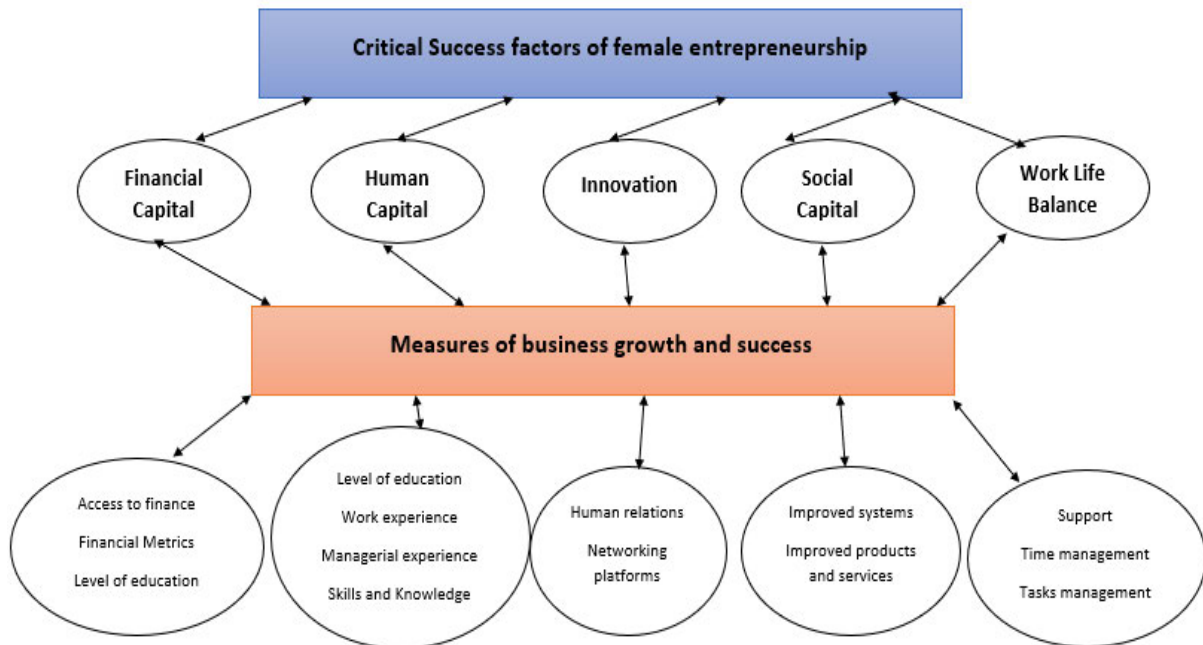
The RBV focuses on the concept of unique company traits that are difficult to replicate as drivers of outstanding performance and competitive edge (Nikmah, Rahmawati and Sukma, 2021). Resources that are hard to transfer or purchase, have a steep learning curve, or involve a major change in the organisation's environment and culture are likely to be unique to the organisation and therefore more difficult for competitors to imitate (Madhani, 2010; Kanapathipillai and Azam, 2019).

Zahra (2021) conducted a qualitative investigation to explore how entrepreneurial firms employ resource management strategies to gain a competitive advantage. The study specifically focused on independently owned start-ups, which often face limitations in resources, access to key providers, and experience in effectively assembling and managing resources. Similarly, Estensoro, Larrea, Müller, and Sisti (2022) conducted a study using mixed methods and proposed a framework based on a resource-based review for implementing Industry 4.0. The research emphasised the importance of considering the stage of development in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in this context.

This study was intended to explore the success factors of female entrepreneurs. These identified success factors derive from the RBV theory literature which provided the following success factors: financial capital, human capital, innovation, social capital and work-life balance.

## 2.15 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Figure 2.3 outlines the association of the success of female entrepreneurs and the success factors and the measure of growth and success.



**Figure 2.3: Conceptual framework of the study**

Source: Author's own compilation

Figure 2.3 illustrates the five (5) success factors on which the success of female entrepreneurship depends. It further shows the measures of business growth and success under each success factor which were utilised as guiding principles to determine the importance of each factor to female entrepreneurship's success. These measures were used to determine how female entrepreneurs use them to achieve success in their small businesses.

## 2.16 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented a review of existing literature on entrepreneurship, with a focus on gender inequality and female entrepreneurship in male-dominated industries, specifically in the logistics sector in South Africa. It also briefly explored motivational factors and entrepreneurial skills of female entrepreneurs, as well as the key challenges they face and strategies for overcoming them, including resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the chapter discussed measures of business growth and success, and success factors such as financial capital, human capital, innovation, social capital, and WLD balance for female entrepreneurs. Finally, it presented an RBV theory and the proposed conceptual framework for the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter outlined a review of literature review pertinent to the study, which aims to explore the critical success factors of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. The current chapter explains the research methodology used to address the problem statement. The study utilized the research onion developed by Saunders et al. (2007) for the logic and flow of the research methodology. Research methodology includes the research methods, procedures, and practices used to address the research problem (Kothari, 2004; Sileyew, 2019). The chapter is organised as follows: first, it will discuss the research onion and outline the different research layers. Additionally, it will cover the data collection process, quality control, and data analysis. Finally, it will address the ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research is a skill of scientific investigation; it is human action that is based on intellectual application in the examination of the problem statement and in answering questions previously unanswered questions, which leads to filling in the gap in knowledge (Goddard and Melville, 2004; Risius and Spohrer, 2017). Research is a progression of arriving at explanations to a problem over well-planned and systematic gathering, analysis, and interpretation of information (Singh, 2006; Sileyew, 2019).

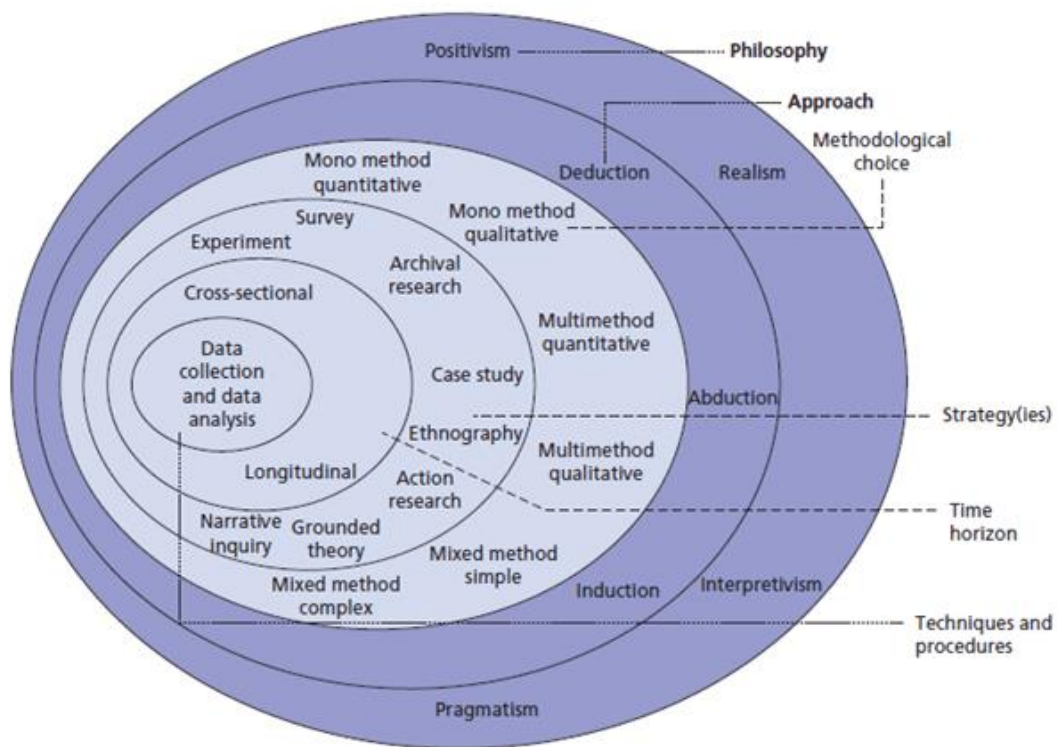
The term ‘research’ consists of two words – Re + Search (Flick, 2015). ‘Re’ means again and again and ‘Search’ means to find out something. Research is undertaken using a particular strategy called the methodology (Abbott, Collaboration, Collaboration, Sakellariadou and Burst, 2017). Methodology is a general research tactic which outlines the way in which research should be commenced (Sileyew, 2019). The approach consists of a set of beliefs and logical principles that influence how research questions are understood and guide the selection of research methods (Flick, 2015). Further to this, research methodology ensures the stability between selected tools, techniques, and ultimately the philosophy (Zangirolami-Raimundo, Echeimberg and Leone, 2018).

Research methodology construction can be based on the theoretical concept of the “research onion” (Sahay, 2016; Melnikovas, 2018). The research onion offers a comprehensive picture of the main layers which are to be achieved to express an effective methodology (Raithatha, 2017). This study utilised the ‘research onion’ ‘by Saunders et al. (2007) for the flow and logic of the current study’s methodology.

### 3.3 RESEARCH ONION

The research onion demonstrates different layers that must be covered when developing a research strategy (Melnikovas, 2018). When viewed from the outside, each layer of the onion describes a more detailed stage of the research process (Saunders et al., 2007). The research onion delivers adequate progress through which a research methodology can be constructed (Saunders et al., 2007; Sileyew, 2019). Its effectiveness lies in its flexibility for almost any type of research methodology and its ability to be used in a variety of contexts (Saunders et al., 2007; Bryman, 2012).

Research methodology has its starting point with a description of the main philosophy, choosing approaches, methods, and strategies as well as defining time horizons, which altogether take the research logic to the research design, main techniques and procedures of data collection and analysis (Sahay, 2016). The research onion consists of six main layers as presented in Figure 3.1 below,



**Figure 3.1: Research Onion**

Source (Sahay 2016, p.13)

### **3.4 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY**

The research philosophy refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge (Abu-Alhaija, 2019). Bryman (2012) further states that the research philosophy is a set of beliefs regarding the nature of the reality being investigated. It is the core definition of the nature of knowledge (Saunders et al., 2007; Sileyew, 2019). The choice of research philosophy is defined by the type of information being investigated in the research venture (May, 2011). When a researcher conducts their study, they need to be precise about their research philosophy. There are different types of research philosophies which include pragmatism, positivism, realism, interpretivism and constructivism (Saunders et al., 2007; Cazeaux, 2017; Abu-Alhaija, 2019). The different philosophies are briefly explained below and the philosophy which best suits the nature of this research study is indicated.

#### **3.4.1 Pragmatism Research Philosophy**

The word ‘pragmatism’ is originally derived from the Greek word “pragma” which means action, which is the fundamental concept of pragmatism (Pansiri, 2005). Pragmatist philosophy holds that human actions can never be separated from past experiences and from the beliefs that have been derived from those experiences (Chang, 2019; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). Human thoughts are therefore inherently correlated to action (Chang, 2019; Ormerod, 2021). Individuals take actions based on the potential outcomes of their action, and they use the outcomes of their actions to predict the consequences of similar actions in the future (Chang, 2019; Ormerod, 2021). The main argument of pragmatist philosophy is that the meaning of human actions and beliefs is found in their consequences (Chang, 2019; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). External forces do not regulate human beings, they are themselves capable of shaping their experience through their actions and intelligence (Maxcy 2003; Goldkuhl 2012; Morgan 2014). This philosophy is therefore not applicable to this study as this research aims to explore the lived experiences of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.

#### **3.4.2 Positivism Research Philosophy**

The positivist idea is based on the philosophical ideas of the French philosopher Auguste Conte, who highlighted that observation and reason are a means of understanding human behaviour (Lenzer, 2017). True knowledge is based on the experience of senses and can be attained by observation and experiment (Park, Konge and Artino, 2020). Verified data (positive facts) received from the senses are identified as empirical evidence (Lenzer, 2017; Park et al., 2020). As a result, positivism is based on empiricism (Ryan, 2018). Positive knowledge is based on natural phenomena and their properties and relations, interpreted through reason and logical observation (Ryan, 2018). Positivist thinkers adopt the scientific method as a means of knowledge generation (Zea, 2015; Lindenfeld, 2020). Positivism rejects metaphysics which examines the fundamental nature of reality, including the relationship between mind and matter, between substance and attribute, and between potentiality and actuality (Sileyew, 2019).

### **3.4.3 Realism Research Philosophy**

Critical realism is a mixture of the belief in external reality (an objective truth) with the denial of the claim that this external reality can be objectively measured; observations (especially observations on phenomena that one cannot observe and measure directly, such as fulfilment, enthusiasm, culture) will always be subject to interpretation (Clark, 1998; Hoddy, 2019). The critical realist is thus critical of one's ability to understand the world with assurance (Hoddy, 2019). Where a positivist believes that the goal of the research is to uncover the truth, the critical realist believes that the goal of the research is to progress toward this truth, even though it is impossible to reach it (Hoddy, 2019). According to the critical realist viewpoint, measures of phenomena such as emotions, feelings, and attitudes are often subjective, and the collection of data is imperfect and flawed (Sileyew, 2019). Realism does not apply to this study.

### **3.4.4 Constructivism Research Philosophy**

Constructivism is an approach to education that holds that individuals actively construct or make their knowledge and that reality is determined by the experiences of the learner (Elliott et al., 2000). Constructivists focus on the world of experience as it is lived, felt, and undergone by the social actors (Saunders et al., 2016). However, their specific outlines are the ideas of objectivism, target truth and essentialism (Lincoln and Guba, 2013; Van der Walt, 2020). Constructivism explains that human beings do not find or discover knowledge, so much as they construct or create independently (Duffy and Jonassen, 2013; Glasersfeld, 2013; Van der Walt, 2020). It holds that individuals imagine ideas, models, and plans to understand involvement, and individuals consistently test and modify these developments (Bryman and Bell, 2007).

This philosophy, therefore, stresses how people construct knowledge. Constructivism studies give people an account on issues and topics and reflects how people construct these accounts (Lincoln and Guba, 2013; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). Furthermore, constructivism holds a relativist ontology, transactional epistemology, and a hermeneutic, dialectical methodology (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Researchers who employ this paradigm are focused on the production of recreated understandings of the social world (Duffy and Jonassen, 2013; Van der Walt, 2020).

### **3.4.5 Interpretivism Research Philosophy**

Interpretivism claims that truth and knowledge are subjective, culturally, and historically established, based on lived experience and understandings of them. Interpretivism takes a realist ontological viewpoint; that reality is only knowable through socially constructed meanings and that there is no single shared reality (Sileyew, 2019). Hence, there are numerous realities because of individual constructed opinions of them. A good example for better understanding is; in an organisation each staff member will have a subjective perspective and individual experience of the treatment of managers in

the company. This will be informed by the individual's interactions with the managers and even previous experiences (Sileyew, 2019).

Saunders et al. (2016) describe interpretivism as a research philosophy emphasising that individuals differ from physical singularities since they create meanings and interpretivism studies these meanings. Interpretivism opposes that it is impossible to examine individuals and their social settings in the same way as the physical that social science researches, therefore, it needs to be different from natural sciences, and one cannot be matched by the other (Denzin, 2010; Henderson, 2011; Du Plooy et al., 2014). Interpretivism seeks to clarify how individuals understand their conditions in a social world and further holds that human behaviour is deliberate (Lindsay, 2010; Waliman, 2015). Numerous individuals of various social foundations under several conditions and diverse occasions make unique associations, thus creating and experiencing unique social meanings. Therefore, interpretivism studies these social meanings (Waliman, 2015). Interpretivism examines positivist attempts to find clear, widespread laws that apply to everyone (Broom and Willis, 2007; Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

Through the understanding of interpretivism outlined above, interpretivism is adopted in this study as it seeks to understand lived experiences of the critical success factors of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. Female entrepreneurs in the logistics industry have different background experiences, thus their stories differ in relation to how one thrives in their organisation. Interpretivism is best applicable to this research study.

### **3.5 RESEARCH APPROACH**

Following the research philosophy is the research approach. There are three approaches to research design, namely deductive, inductive, and abductive approaches.

#### **3.5.1 Deductive Approach**

The deductive approach develops the hypothesis or hypotheses upon a pre-existing theory and then formulates the research approach to test it (Silverman, 2013). The deductive approach can be considered predominantly suitable to the positivist approach, which allows the formulation of hypotheses and the statistical testing of expected results to an acceptable level of probability (Snieder and Lerner, 2009). It is described as the development from general to particular (Kothari, 2004). Thus, the general theory and knowledge base are first established, and the specific knowledge gained from the research process is then tested against it (Kothari, 2004). However, a deductive approach may also be used with qualitative research techniques, although in such cases the expectations formed by pre-existing research would be formulated differently than through hypothesis testing (Saunders et al., 2007; Mohajan, 2020). The deductive approach uses a questionnaire to create an understanding of observation which allows a researcher to evaluate the different understanding of the individuals through empirical data (Mohajan, 2020; Fischer and Guzel, 2023). An approach opposing this is an inductive approach.

### **3.5.2 Inductive Approach**

The inductive approach allows one to create a theory rather than to adopt a pre-existing one as in the deductive approach (Mohajan, 2020; Fischer and Guzel, 2023). The inductive approach is categorized as a step from the specific to the general (Bryman and Bell, 2011). In this approach, no framework primarily informs the data collection, and the research focus can therefore be established after the data has been collected (Flick, 2011). Although this may be seen as the point at which new theories are generated, it is also true that as the data is analysed, it may be found to fit into an existing theory (Bryman and Bell, 2011). This method is frequently used for qualitative research. Interviews are carried out concerning specific phenomena, and then the data may be examined for the existence of patterns between respondents (Flick, 2011). Nevertheless, this approach may also be used effectively within positivist methodologies, where the data is analysed first, and significant patterns are used to inform the generation of results. The nature of this study is mainly qualitative and exploratory; therefore, the inductive approach is most applicable to this research. It offers a holistic point of view, improves understanding and generates new ideas to understand theories. The last approach is the abductive approach.

### **3.5.3 Abductive approach**

Abductive approaches apply both deductive and inductive approaches by moving from empirical to theoretical elements of analysis (Lipscomb, 2012; Mohajan, 2020; Fischer and Guzel, 2023). Furthermore, an abductive approach can explain, develop, or change the theoretical framework before, during or after the research procedure (Awuzie and McDermott, 2017). Abductive reasoning is described by some authors as "induction plus an explanation". In other words, abduction offers stronger evidence than inductively drawn conclusions and aims to offer meaningful explanations or "educated guesses" to explain unexpected occurrences (Hurley, Dietrich and Rundle-Thiele, 2021).

## **3.6 METHODOLOGICAL CHOICES**

Methodological choice is vital for any research, to determine the type of information that needs to be collected and how it needs to be gathered. There are three choices of methodology, namely quantitative, qualitative and a combination of both the quantitative and qualitative methods known as mixed method.

### **3.6.1 Quantitative Research**

Quantitative research is the process of collecting and analysing numerical data (Ahmad, Wasim, Irfan, Gogoi, Srivastava and Farheen, 2019; Lester, Cho and Lochmiller, 2020). It can be used to find patterns and averages, make predictions, test causal relationships, and generalise results to the broader population (Ahmad, et al., 2019; Lester et al., 2020). Quantitative research can be used for descriptive, correlational, or experimental research (Fogg et al., 2001; Ahmad, et al., 2019; Lester et al., 2020).

Quantitative research exists in different forms, namely the mono quantitative method which is a strategy that uses single/one data collection system and comparing investigation methodology to answer

questions (Saunders et al., 2009; Ahmad, et al., 2019; Lester et al., 2020). In this method, the researcher attempts to understand the topic and then decides on the research procedure to apply (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Ahmad, et al., 2019; Lester et al., 2020). The second type of quantitative research is the multi quantitative method. This is where the researcher uses more than one data collection and analysis procedure to attempt to answer the research question (Saunders et al., 2009). The complexity is high as the researcher may apply both methods but end up basing the research on one research type (Lincoln and Guba, 2013; Ahmad, et al., 2019; Lester et al., 2020).

### **3.6.2 Qualitative Research**

The second methodological choice is qualitative research which involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data (Ahmad, et al., 2019; Lester et al., 2020). This includes but is not limited to texts, video, or audio to fully understand concepts, experiences, and opinions of different people (Levin, Share, and Shatil, 1996). Qualitative research is used to gather in-depth perceptions of a problem and generate ideas for research. This method is also used to understand how people experience the world (Ahmad, et al., 2019; Lester et al., 2020)

Jarmon (2014) depicts qualitative research as the investigation of the empirical world from the perspective of the individual under examination and recognises two fundamental ideologies. The first principle is that conduct is impacted by the physical, sociocultural, and psychological environment, which is the basis for naturalistic inquiry (Durrheim, 1999; Bryman, 2004; Ahmad, et al., 2019; Lester et al., 2020)). The second principle is that conduct goes beyond what is observed by the investigator (Lewis, 2015). Subjective meanings and perceptions of the topic are critical in qualitative research, and it is the researcher's responsibility to access these (Hussein, 2009; Ahmad, et al., 2019; Lester et al., 2020).

While there are many approaches to qualitative research, they tend to be flexible and focus on retaining rich meaning when interpreting data (Williams-McBean, 2019). The first approach is the mono qualitative method; where a researcher uses a single qualitative data collection tool and corresponding analyses process (Williams-McBean, 2019). An example would be if a researcher uses only in-depth interviews to collect data (Saunders et al., 2009; Ahmad, et al., 2019).

The second method is multi qualitative; where the researcher uses more than one data collection tool (Ahmad, et al., 2019; Williams-McBean, 2019). A researcher may decide to collect data using, for example, in-depth interviews and diary accounts and analyse this information using non-numerical procedures.

In consideration of these different methods, this study used mono qualitative research because the researcher required understanding, discovering, explaining, and exploring the lived experiences of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector to outline their critical success factors. Moreover, the mono

qualitative research is ideal for the study as it allows the researcher to capture the different perspectives and opinions of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.

### **3.6.3 Mixed Method Research**

The final methodological choice is the mixed research method which is the combination of the quantitative and qualitative research. The term “mixed methods” refers to an emergent methodology of research that advances the systematic integration, or “mixing,” of quantitative and qualitative data within a single investigation or sustained program of inquiry (Hall and Hall, 2020; Adu, Owusu, Martin-Yeboah, Pino Gavidia and Gyamfi, 2022). The basic premise of this methodology is that such integration permits a complete and more synergistic utilisation of data than is possible with separate quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis (Palinkas et al., 2011; Morse, 2016; Hall and Hall, 2020; Adu et al., 2022).

The mixed method simple design includes both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis procedures (Hall and Hall, 2020; Adu et al., 2022). In this method, a researcher can begin with a qualitative data collection and analysis technique. For instance, a series of focus group discussions to help decide the prevalence of possible factors, followed by quantitative data collection and analysis techniques, such as questionnaires, to determine the relative recurrence of these elements (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2003; Saunders and Tosey, 2013; Hall and Hall, 2020; Adu et al., 2022).

The above has given insight into the different methodological choices. Table 3.1. below summarise the key differences between qualitative and quantitative research.

**Table 3.1: Comparison between qualitative and quantitative research**

	Qualitative Research	Quantitative Research
<b>Objective Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploratory research to establish a base of insights on a key topic area</li> <li>• Understand underlying motivations, attitudes, and perceptions</li> <li>• Provide insight into problem definition, providing hypotheses and language for subsequent quantitative evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantify data and generalize results to the target audience</li> <li>• Measure the incidence of motivations, attitudes, and perception</li> <li>• Benchmark and track data over time</li> <li>• Predict future behaviors (with caution)</li> <li>• Understand differences between target audience segments</li> </ul>
<b>Sample</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small and narrow</li> <li>• Not statistically projectable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large and broad</li> <li>• Usually statistically projectable</li> </ul>
<b>Methodology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups, in-depth interviews, ethnographies, shop-alongs, etc.</li> <li>• Can be in-person, by phone, or online</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys conducted by phone, online/mobile, or mail</li> </ul>
<b>Data Collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semi-structured, using discussion guides</li> <li>• Can evolve over the course of the study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly structured questionnaires</li> <li>• Few changes (if any) over the course of the study</li> <li>• Wide variety of question types, both close and open-ended</li> </ul>
<b>Data Analysis</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-statistical, generally non-numeric</li> <li>• Focusing on concepts and images</li> <li>• Includes content analysis, observations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numeric and statistical</li> <li>• May include advanced analytic techniques</li> </ul>
<b>Reporting Outcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Directional in nature</li> <li>• Not projectable to the total target audience</li> <li>• Often used to develop a sound understanding as a basis for future research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports are graphical</li> <li>• Representative of the target audience</li> <li>• Provides guidance for business decisions and course of action</li> </ul>

Source: (Mehrad and Zangeneh 2019, p.5)

### 3.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is defined as a plan, structure or strategy of investigation that is considered to attain answers to investigate questions or problems (Kumar, 2011). The plan is a complete order of research which entails a framework of the process that the investigator will follow, from writing theories to the final analysis of information (Kumar, 2011; Lewis, 2015; Hall and Hall, 2020). Research design is thus a framework of research methods and techniques chosen by a researcher. This design allows researchers to focus on a research method that is suitable for the subject matter and set up their studies for success (Durrheim, 2006; Hall and Hall, 2020). Within the research design, there are different types, namely narrative, experimental, survey, case study, action research, explanatory, descriptive and exploratory research. These designs are presented in the sub-sections that follow.

#### 3.7.1 Narrative

Narrative research is when either existing stories are gathered and analysed, or they are produced for research purposes in particular forms of interviews (Chase, 2008; Flick, 2014). The central contextual assumption is that narrative research provides a manner of knowing and recalling events and procedures as well as a way of conveying important aspects of specific issues (Savin-Baden and Van Niekerk, 2007; Flick, 2014). Narrative research is used in research settings where the researcher believes that the experiences of his or her participants can best be accessed by gathering and scrutinising these as

complete stories, rather than gathering them as bits of information that stream from specific interview questions and which are then fragmented during data analysis (Durrheim, 2006; Saunders et al., 2016).

### **3.7.2 Experimental**

According to Durrheim (2006), experimental research is creating a research process that examines the results of an experiment against the expected results. It can be used in all areas of research, and usually involves the consideration of a relatively limited number of factors (Saunders et al., 2007; Hall and Hall, 2020). This is a scientific research methodology that involves manipulating one or more independent variables and applying them to one or more dependent variables to ascertain their impact on the latter (Asenahabi, 2019). It is an effort on the part of the researcher to keep all variables under control that could influence the experiment's outcome. By doing this, the researcher aims to ascertain or forecast potential outcomes (Asenahabi, 2019).

### **3.7.3 Survey**

Survey research is often linked with the deductive approach, and it is regarded as one of the finest economic research strategies (Clark, Foster, Bryman and Sloan, 2021). Rich and reliable information can be gathered through using this method (Durrheim, 2006; Hall and Hall, 2020). Survey design is mainly used in quantitative research and involves sampling a representative proportion of the population (Bryman and Bell, 2011; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). The survey strategy is mostly used to observe contributing variables among different data (Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). It permits the collection of vast data that will be used to answer the research question (Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021).

### **3.7.4 Case Study**

Case studies focus on one or more people or a single area (Durrheim, 2006; Hall and Hall, 2020). It can offer insight into the specific nature of any example and can establish the importance of culture and context when understanding differences between cases (Silverman, 2013). Case study research is the assessment of a single unit to establish its key features and draw generalisations (Bryman, 2012; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). This form of research is useful in financial research, such as comparing the experiences of two companies or comparing the effect of investment in different contexts (Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021).

### **3.7.5 Action research**

Action research is used mainly to find solutions to a particular problem (Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). This form of research is common in professions such as teaching or nursing, where the practitioner can assess ways in which they can improve their professional approach and understanding (Wiles et al., 2011; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). The concepts and methods included in action research serve as the general foundation for a number of terminologies, including critical action research, cooperative inquiry, participant inquiry, practitioner inquiry, and action learning. They all

have the following characteristics in common: firstly, conduct research to improve and bring about positive change in the social situation of the participants; secondly, produce theoretical and practical knowledge about the situation; and finally, foster collegiality and collaboration (Brown and Coombe, 2015).

### **3.7.6 Explanatory research**

Explanatory research focuses on studying a situation or a problem to clarify the relations among variables (Saunders et al., 2009; Kumar, 2011). This design also tries to illuminate why and how there is a relationship between two features of a situation or phenomenon (Kumar, 2011). For instance, describing a nation's crime rate, looking at historical trends, or contrasting rates across nations are all one thing. Developing an explanation for why the crime rate is what it is, why certain types of crime are on the rise, or why the rate is higher in some nations than others is quite a different matter (Kumar, 2011; Clark et al., 2021).

### **3.7.7 Descriptive studies**

Descriptive studies simply try to illustrate a specific profile of people, occasions, and circumstances (Durrheim, 1999; Creswell, 2003; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). This description of singularities may be done through narrative form descriptions or evaluating relationships (Durrheim, 1999; Neuman, 2006). It is therefore essential for the researcher to have a clear understanding of phenomena before gathering data (Saunders et al., 2009). Moreover, descriptive studies pursue exact observations, and the study focuses on the validity and reliability of the observations (Durrheim, 1999; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021).

### **3.7.8 Exploratory study**

An exploratory study is an effective means of discovering what is occurring (Swedberg, 2020). Its purpose is to pursue new insights, to make inquiries, and to evaluate singularities in a new light (Saunders et al., 2009; Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). It is incredibly valuable if the researcher wishes to illuminate his/her comprehension of the issue in case, for example, there is uncertainty about the exact idea of the issue (Saunders et al., 2009; Swedberg, 2020). Furthermore, an exploratory study is suitable when the researcher does not have a clear idea of the complications they may encounter throughout the study (Swedberg, 2020; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). Its advantage is that it is flexible and compliant to change (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). Exploratory research can be carried out in three ways: an exploration of literature; interviewing specialists in the subject under study; and leading focus group interviews (Tashakorri and Teddlie, 2003; Saunders et al., 2009; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). Exploratory studies are used to make initial investigations into relatively unknown areas of research (Harrison and Reilly, 2011; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021).

The exploratory research design is considered relevant for this study as it is open and flexible to investigations. This study seeks to explore the lived experiences of female entrepreneurs in the logistics

sector with a focus on their critical success factors which allow them to thrive in the traditionally male-dominated space. Therefore, by using the exploratory study, the researcher can gather new insights to make inquiries and to evaluate singularities in a new light.

### **3.8 RESEARCH TIME HORIZON**

The timeframe is vital for any research project to ensure efficiency; therefore, the next step is to clearly unpack the time horizon in research. The research time horizon mainly describes the required time for the completion of the research project work. There are two types of time horizons, namely the longitudinal and cross-sectional time horizons (Bryman, 2012; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021).

#### **3.8.1 Longitudinal study**

A longitudinal time horizon refers to the collection of data repeatedly over an extended period (Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). It is used where an essential factor for the research is examining changes over time (Goddard and Melville, 2004; Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). Longitudinal research is typically observational in nature, gathering data on any combination of exposures and measurements, with both quantitative and qualitative results, without the use of outside influences (Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021).

#### **3.8.2 Cross-sectional study**

Cross-sectional studies are undertaken where data is collected just once, perhaps over days or weeks and even months to answer a research question (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010; Hall and Hall, 2020). A cross-sectional study is an inexpensive and simple method of collecting preliminary data and finding correlations that can be further explored in a longitudinal study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010; Hall and Hall, 2020). This is used when the investigation is concerned with the study of a particular phenomenon at a specific time (Goddard and Melville, 2004; Sekaran and Bougie, 2010).

This research adopted the cross-sectional time horizon, where the researcher collected data from the targeted participants within a period of four weeks. In the case of this study, the participants were female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

### **3.9 STUDY SITE**

The location/study site is crucial in research as it specifies exactly where the study will take place. The study setting for this research was in the KwaZulu-Natal Province of South Africa. KwaZulu-Natal is located in the east of the country, enjoying a long shoreline beside the Indian Ocean and sharing borders with three other provinces and the countries of Mozambique, Eswatini, and Lesotho. The participants for this study were based in Durban and Pietermaritzburg, within the KwaZulu-Natal Province.



**Figure 3.2: Map showing Pietermaritzburg and Durban in KwaZulu-Natal**

Source: (Google Maps, 2023)

### 3.10 TARGET POPULATION

The target population is defined as "the population to which the researcher ideally would like to generalize his/her results" (Welman et al., 2005 p. 126). Bryman (2004 p. 90) depicts the target population as "the universe of units from which the sample is to be selected". The study's target population is female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector in KwaZulu-Natal, specifically, in the cities of Pietermaritzburg and Durban. The researcher selected these areas because of their geographic proximity to the researcher, which allowed for convenience.

Although the database of female entrepreneurs operating in the logistics sector in Durban and Pietermaritzburg is unknown, the researcher established that there are 28 897 SMMEs operating in the transport and communication sector in KwaZulu-Natal, according to Stats SA (2019). This database includes the logistics sector, which is the focus of this research. However, this target population cannot be used because it encompasses the whole of the province, yet the study focussed only on

Pietermaritzburg and Durban. In addition, the available data does not specify the number of females in the logistics sector.

### **3.11 SAMPLE SIZE**

A sample indicates a segment of the population (Kumar, 2011). It involves several individuals chosen from the target population (Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). However, not all components of the populace form a sample (Bryman 2004; Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). In qualitative research, the sample size selection does not follow that of quantitative sampling because the issue is about exploring different opinions on an issue at various points (O'Reilly and Parker, 2012; Robinson, 2014). Sampling in qualitative research is concerned with the abundance of information and the number of participants required; therefore, it depends on the nature of the topic and the resources available to conduct research (Francis, Johnston, Robertson, Glidewell, Entwistle, Martin, Eccles and Grimshaw, 2010). Two key considerations guide the sampling methods in qualitative research – relevance and adequacy (O'Reilly and Parker, 2012). The researcher should be pragmatic and flexible in their approach to sampling, with the adequate sample size being one that allows for sufficient data collection to answer the research questions (Hays and Wood, 2011; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021).

The sample size relies heavily on the shape and form of the data that a researcher desires to collect, and the objectives of the study (O'Leary, 2014). For instance, the in-depth nature of qualitative data will generally limit the sample size since it is difficult to gather data from thousands (Payne and Williams, 2005; O'Leary, 2014). Qualitative data analysis strategies are not dependent on vast numbers but on the richness of information (O'Leary, 2014; Ritchie et al., 2014). Since this study is qualitative in nature, a relatively small sample is required according to Welman et al. (2005). Different researchers (e.g. Bertaux, 1981; Morse, 1994; Creswell, 1998; Payne and Williams, 2005; O'Leary, 2014) have proposed sample sizes for qualitative studies. For example, Creswell (1998) suggests a sample size of between five (5) and twenty-five (25) respondents, while Morse (1994) proposes a sample size of at least six (6) respondents. Bertaux (1981) on the other hand, argues that fifteen (15) is the minimum acceptable sample size for qualitative research studies. Formal approval for qualitative studies that use in-depth interviews is to have a sample size of 20–30 if one is building similar segments within the population (Payne and Williams, 2005; O'Leary, 2014). In some cases, a minimum of 10 is acceptable assuming the population integrity is upheld in recruiting the participants. Against this backdrop, this study targeted a sample size of 20 participants.

### **3.12 SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

Sampling is when a set of methods is used for achieving representativeness (Bauer and Aarts, 2000). It is a method used to select the participants to be included in a study (Kumar, 2011; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021).

### **3.13 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES**

Sampling is done through sampling techniques which are namely, probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling technique is grounded in utilising a prearranged number of units from a sampling frame which embodies the target population (Bernard, 2000). In probability sampling, each individual has the same chance as another individual of being selected for the sample (Bernard, 2000; Daniel, 2012). Non-probability sampling technique can be defined as a case where the elements of the population have a known, non-zero chance of being chosen as subjects in the sample (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). This study undertook the qualitative approach; thus, the most appropriate technique is non-probability sampling.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013) and Cooper and Schindler (2014), there are three types of non-probability sampling methods, namely which convenience, purposive and snowball sampling.

#### **3. 13.1 Convenience Sampling**

Convenient sampling is when the sample comprises components that are involved only because they happen to be in the right place, at the right time (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). Simply put, convenience or accidental sampling implies elements that are available at the researcher's convenience (Bryman, 2004; Ruane, 2005; Clark et al., 2021).

#### **3.13.2 Purposive Sampling**

Purposive sampling is when the researcher decisively selects elements that are incorporated in the sample depending on the attributes which are recognised by the researcher (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The benefit of purposive sampling is that the researcher guarantees uniqueness of each element of a sample in the research because every element is suitable for the population restrictions of the study. If the element is not suitable, then it is omitted (Levy and Lemeshow, 2008; Oppong, 2013; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021).

#### **3.13.3 Snowball Sampling**

"In snowball sampling, the researcher approaches a few individuals from the target population; these individuals then identify other members from the same population such as acquaintances or friends for the inclusion in the sample" (Welman et al., 2005 p. 69). The latter may sequentially identify additional sets of individuals so that the sample, like a snowball, grows until it reaches its saturation point (Welman et al., 2005). In this sampling technique, the researcher begins with an index individual who is identified

as having the critical characteristics required by the research design and asks that individual to recommend others with comparable attributes (Trotter, 2012; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021).

This study utilised the non-probability sampling technique known as snowball sampling to select female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector in Pietermaritzburg and Durban. The non-probability sampling technique is subjective and therefore, the likelihood of choosing a sample is indefinite (Cooper and Schindler, 2014). Snowball sampling technique was used to select the female entrepreneurs because they are difficult to reach due to their busy schedules. Referrals from the identified entrepreneurs assisted to reach more participants for this study.

### **3.14 DATA COLLECTION**

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes (Kothari, 2004). The data collection component of research is common to all fields of study including physical and social sciences, humanities, business, etc., amongst others (Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). While methods vary by discipline, the emphasis on ensuring accurate and honest collection remains the same (Kumar, 2019). The goal for all data collection is to capture quality evidence that then translates to rich data analysis and allows the building of a convincing and credible answer to questions that have been posted (Hall and Hall, 2020; Taherdoost, 2021). Regardless of the field of study or preference for defining data (quantitative, qualitative), accurate data collection is essential to maintaining the integrity of research (Hall and Hall, 2020; Taherdoost, 2021). Both the selection of appropriate data collection instruments (existing, modified, or newly developed) and delineated instructions for their correct use, reduce the likelihood of errors occurring (Singh, 2006; Taherdoost, 2021).

Data can be collected using primary data or secondary data. Data collected from first-hand experience is known as primary data (Taherdoost, 2021). Primary data has not been published yet and is more reliable, authentic and objective (Taherdoost, 2021). Primary data has not been changed or altered by human beings; therefore, its validity is more significant than secondary data (Hall and Hall, 2020; Taherdoost, 2021). Data collected from a source that has already been published in any form is called secondary data (Singh, 2006). The review of literature in any research is based on secondary data. It is collected by someone else for some other purpose (but is utilised by the investigator for another purpose).

In primary data collection, the researcher collects the data themselves using qualitative and/or quantitative methods. The critical point here is that the data that researchers collect is unique to the researcher and until the researcher publishes it, no one else has access to it. There are different methods used to collect data. They are discussed in the sub-sections that follow.

### **3.14.1 Questionnaire Method**

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts to gather information from respondents (Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). Although they are often designed for statistical analysis of the responses, this is not always the case. Questionnaires have advantages over some other types of surveys in that they are cheap, do not require as much effort from the questioner as verbal or telephone surveys, and often have standardised answers that make it relatively simple to compile data (Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). As a type of survey, questionnaires also have many of the same problems relating to question construction and wording that exist in other types of opinion polls (Singh, 2006; Hall and Hall, 2020; Taherdoost, 2021).

### **3.14.2 Focus Group Discussion Method**

A focus group discussion (FGD) is an in-depth field method that brings together a small homogeneous group (usually six to twelve persons) to discuss topics on a study agenda (Sutton and Austin, 2015; Hall and Hall, 2020). The purpose of this discussion is to use the social dynamics of the group, with the help of a moderator/facilitator, to stimulate participants to reveal underlying opinions, attitudes, and reasons for their behaviour (Hall and Hall, 2020). In short, a well-facilitated group can help find out the 'how' and 'why' of human behaviour (Sutton and Austin, 2015; Hall and Hall, 2020).

### **3.14.3 Observational Method**

Observation is a fundamental way of finding out about the world around us (Sileyew, 2019). As human beings, we are very well-equipped to pick up detailed information about our environment through our senses (Sileyew, 2019). However, as a method of data collection for research purposes, observation is more than simply looking or listening (Sileyew, 2019; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021).

### **3.14.4 Survey Method**

Survey research is often used to assess thoughts, opinions, and feelings (Sutton and Austin, 2015; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). Survey research can be specific and limited, or it can have more global, widespread goals (Sileyew, 2019). A survey consists of a predetermined set of questions that are given to a sample (Clark et al., 2021). With a sample that is representative of the larger population of interest, one can describe the attitudes of the population from which the sample was drawn (Sileyew, 2019). Surveys provide a means of measuring a population's characteristics, self-reported and observed behaviour, awareness of programs, attitudes, opinions, and needs (Sutton and Austin, 2015; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021).

### **3.14.5 Interviews**

Interviewing involves asking questions and getting answers from participants in a study (Sileyew, 2019). Interviewing has a variety of forms including individual, face-to-face interviews and face-to-face group interviewing. The asking and answering of questions can be mediated by telephone or other

electronic devices (e.g. computers). Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured (Wisdom et al., 2012).

### **3.14 .5.1 Structured Interviews**

Structured interviews are those conducted when it is known at the outset what information is needed (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010; Sileyew, 2019). The content of a structured interview can be prepared in advance; they are thought to lead to answers that can be compared across participants and possibly quantified (Leavy, 2014; Sileyew, 2019). The interviewer provides a collection of questions to a participant and then records the responses (Kruger et al., 2005). The interviewer must adhere to the questions and has limited freedom to deviate from them (Kruger et al., 2005; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021).

### **3.14.5.2 Unstructured Interviews**

Unstructured interviews are easy-going and utilized with a specific end goal to find the area of deliberation intensely (Kruger et al., 2005; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). Participants are allowed to generously convey what needs to be conveyed in terms of the topic (Wengraf, 2001; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). An unstructured meeting generally begins with a comprehensive, open inquiry concerning the area under investigation, with succeeding inquiries relying upon the interviewee's reactions (Holloway and Wheeler, 2010). The term 'unstructured' is deceiving as it implies an interview is altogether without structure; if it were, the information accumulated might not be appropriate in terms of the research question (Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021).

### **3.14.5.3 Semi-Structured Interviews**

In semi-structured interviews, the researcher and the participants take part in a formal meeting where the analyst builds up an interview guide (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). Likewise, the researcher can pursue topical directions in the discourse that may stray from the guide (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). Semi-structured interviews comprise a few critical inquiries into the area to be investigated, yet also enable the questioner or interviewee to 'swerve off' to seek afterthought or reaction in more detail (Gill, Stewart, Treasure and Chadwick, 2008; Sutton and Austin, 2015; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021).

### **3.14.5.4 In-depth Interviews**

In-depth interviews represent a research technique that comprises of individual interviews with a limited number of participants to ascertain their perspective on a phenomenon under investigation (Byce and Neale, 2006; Morris, 2015). They are purposeful interactions in which an investigator endeavours to understand what another individual has encountered, what he/she considers and feels about it, and what significance it might have (Mears, 2012; Guest, Namey and Mitchee, 2013). The primary strategy of the in-depth interviews is to understand what the participant's experiences mean to them in their own words (Marshall and Rossman 2010). Kumar (2011, p. 160) further elaborates that "in-depth interviews

involve face-to-face, repeated interaction between the researcher and his/her informants" (Wisdom et al., 2012). It is necessary to audio-record the interview as this allows the researcher to dedicate their full attention to listening to the interviewee, taking note of the body language, and probing in-depth (Angrosimo and Rosenberg, 2011). This study used in-depth interviews to collect data to understand the subject matter in depth. The administration of the in-depth interviews is elaborated on in the section that follows.

### **3.15 ADMINISTRATION OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

The researcher used a snowball sampling technique to gather female entrepreneurs for the in-depth interview sessions to collect data for this research. The researcher interviewed one female entrepreneur and was referred by the interviewed participant to other female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. The researcher sent informed consent forms for approval via email and explained these to the participants prior to the commencement of interviews. The researcher used a structured interview guide during the interview sessions. The in-depth interviews were both physical and virtual because data was collected just after the Covid-19 pandemic from May 2022 to July 2022. The majority of the participants preferred virtual interviews which were held on the Zoom app. The interviews lasted approximately forty-five (45) minutes each. The interviews were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. While some female entrepreneurs agreed to participate in the study, others declined citing reasons that they were not interested taking part of that they were too busy.

#### **3.15.1 Structure of the interview guide**

In-depth interviews were the key tool use for gathering data in this research. The term "in-depth" reveals that the researcher aims to gain profound answers about the problem identified (Guest, Namey and Mitchell, 2013). Additionally, in contrast to other qualitative data collection methods, in-depth interviews are well suited to asking questions about sensitive, confidential, or highly personal topics (Mears, 2012). The interview guide is attached as Appendix D. The interview guide was divided into eight sections which are further discussed below:

#### **Section A: Demographic Information**

This section aimed to find out demographic information about the participants. This information pertained to age category, marital status, educational qualifications, the number of children they have and how all these factors influence their career decisions as female entrepreneurs.

## **Section B: Business/Career profile**

This section intended to find out the business/career history of the participants. This assisted the researcher to understand the opportunities that were at the participant's disposal in the previous five to ten years. The researcher also sought to understand the career history of the participants, the time it took for them to become entrepreneurs, as well as what inspired the participants to become entrepreneurs.

## **Section C: Measures of business success**

This section aimed to discover how participants measure their business success, what qualities or traits they look at to conclude that the business is growing or is successful.

## **Section D: How financial capital enhances the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector**

Financial capital availability facilitates the pursuit of resource-intensive growth strategies (Cooper et al., 1994). Therefore, this section aimed to investigate the financial aspects of the businesses owned by the participants. It also intended to elicit information on how the participants utilise their financial capital to enhance the growth and success of their businesses and to establish the priority areas/skills needed to manage the finances in their businesses for the success of the organisations.

## **Section E: The role of human capital on the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector**

Education, experience, knowledge, and skills, among other human capital traits, have long been claimed to be a vital resource for entrepreneurial success (Sexton and Upton, 1985; Pfeffer, 1994; Florin et al., 2003). This section sought to collect data to explore the role of human capital on the growth and success of the participants' businesses. It further aimed to identify their skillset, their level of education, and experience, along with how this helps to improve the growth and success of the participants' businesses and finally, to understand how they use their human competencies to thrive in their business space.

## **Section F: How innovation promotes the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector**

Research suggests that business performance is closely tied to innovation. This section aimed to collect information to discover the participants' understanding of innovation and their perceptions of what skills and qualities are required to be innovative. It also aims to determine how being innovative improves or promotes the growth and success of the participants' businesses.

## **Section G: The role of social capital on the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector**

A high degree of social capital, based on a positive reputation, appropriate prior expertise, and direct personal contacts, can help entrepreneurs gain access to venture capitalists, potential consumers, and other sources of funding success (Baron and Markman, 2000). Hence, this section aimed to determine the role of social/networking in the growth and success of the businesses of the participants. It also sought to understand the impact of networking, to determine the required qualities, if any, to access any networking platforms and how the knowledge gained from social networking can be utilised for the greater benefit of the businesses.

## **Section H: How work-life balance improves the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector**

Accessibility to WLD practices have also been linked to higher affective commitment and lower turnover intentions (Chiu and Ng, 1999; Thompson et al., 1999; Wood and de Menezes, 2008). Thus, this section aims to understand how WLD enhances the growth and success of the participants' businesses. It also aims to determine how they measure their WLD and what techniques and skills are essential to manage WLB as female entrepreneurs.

### **3.16 PILOT TEST**

A pre-test or pilot test is a small-scale trial conducted with a restricted number of participants before the main investigation (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006). Its purpose is to assess the effectiveness of the research design and data collection instruments (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006). The primary concern for the researcher is to identify misinterpretations, incomplete concept coverage, unreliable interpretations, satisficing, and context effects (Collins, 2003).

According to Cooper and Schindler (2014), when conducting pilot testing, it is crucial to involve participants from the specific target population and replicate the intended methodologies and protocols for data collection. The main objective of pilot studies is to obtain a deeper understanding of the beliefs and theories held by the individuals under investigation (Bickman and Rog, 1998). Creswell (2007) states that implementing a pilot test is deemed a crucial approach for safeguarding the validity of qualitative research investigations.

In this research study, the researcher pretested the research tool with two female entrepreneurs from the target population. The insights gained from these interviews were included in the final data analysed and presented in the following chapter. The pilot test helped identify duplicate questions, which were subsequently removed and the interview guide was refined.

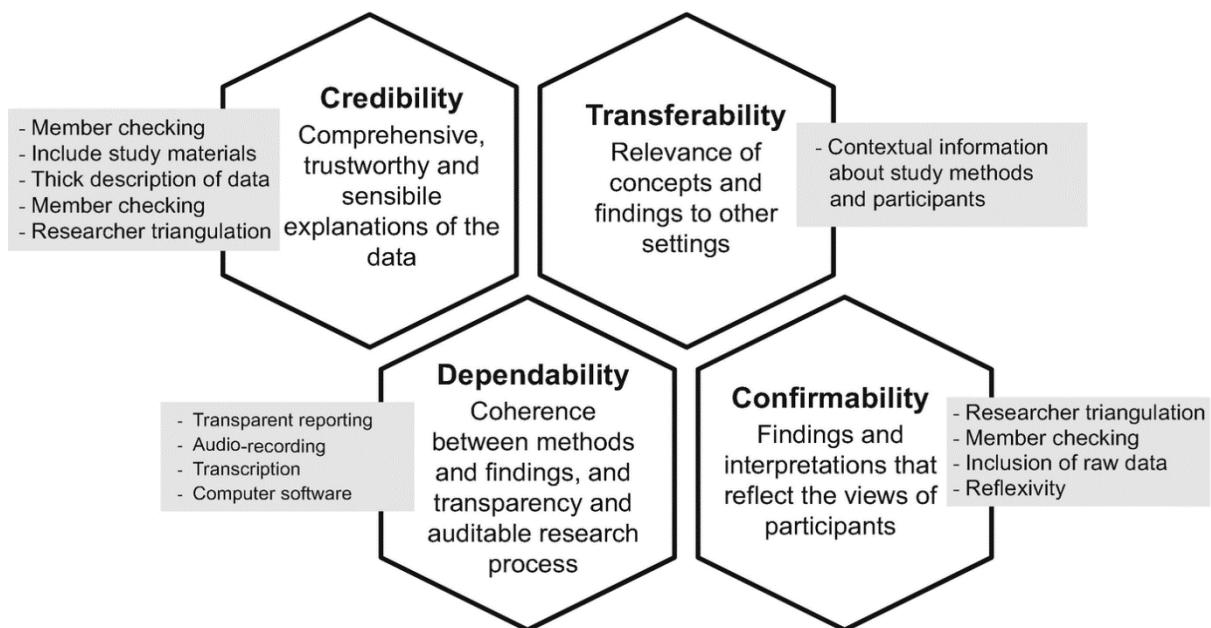
### **3.17 DATA QUALITY CONTROL**

A researcher needs to design, conduct, and report a high-quality qualitative study (Peterson, 2019; Stenfors, Kajamaa and Bennett, 2020; Tomaszewski, Zarestky and Gonzalez, 2020). A researcher needs to know what processes and criteria can be used to evaluate a study that is linguistic, empathic, contextual, non-linear and emancipatory (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). How does a researcher report reliability and validity in a qualitative study? Generally, both reliability and validity are concerned with trustworthiness (Stiles, 1993; Sutton and Austin, 2015; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021).

In academic contexts, qualitative research does not usually establish a clear distinction between observation and interpretation. However, it is highly advisable to distinguish practical trustworthiness, which aids the reader's comprehension of the observations, from the criteria used to evaluate the trustworthiness of interpretations (Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). Further, Wisdom et al. (2012) states that in qualitative research, validity or trustworthiness and reliability or consistency are discussed in terms of the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the instrumentation and results of the study.

In order to establish credibility within the context of internal validity, various effective strategies can be employed. These strategies include employing triangulation, which involves utilizing multiple sources of data or methods to gather information (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Sileyew, 2019). Additionally, prolonged contact with participants can be maintained to develop a deeper understanding of their perspectives. Member checks can be conducted, involving participants in the research process to validate and verify findings. Saturation, a technique where data collection continues until no new insights emerge, can also be employed to ensure comprehensive analysis (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Sileyew, 2019). Furthermore, reflexivity, which involves reflecting on the researcher's biases and assumptions, is crucial to maintain objectivity and rigor. Lastly, subjecting the research findings to peer review by experts in the field helps to enhance credibility and ensure the robustness of the research.

In order to ensure the transferability or external validity of a study, it is necessary to employ effective approaches such as incorporating comprehensive and detailed explanations known as "thick descriptions" as well as incorporating diversity in the selection of participants. Dependability, which is the qualitative equivalent of reliability, can be verified through the utilisation of audit trails and triangulation techniques (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016; Sileyew, 2019). Confirmability, which is the qualitative equivalent of objectivity, is established by employing reflexivity or ensuring consistency between coders, whether within each coder or across multiple coders, whenever applicable. This is exemplified in Figure 3.3, below:



**Figure 3.3: Data quality control**

Source: (Sileyew, 2019, p.122)

To ensure internal validity (credibility) in this study, the researcher adopted strategies such as data saturation. According to Tran, Porcher, Tran and Ravaud (2017), data saturation is a conceptual guide for estimating and assessing qualitative sample size. Moreover, it is a point in the phase of data analysis when incoming information provides little or no new valuable information to the research objectives (Guest, Namey and Chem, 2020). For this study, data saturation was achieved at 15 participants.

### 3.18 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the process of transforming, modelling, and cleaning information to determine valuable data (Shamoo and Resnik, 2009). It is reducing the collected information to a more controllable measurement (Miles and Huberman, 1994). This research used NVivo 12 software to analyse data. NVivo 12 software is used to organise, analyse, and find insights in unstructured or qualitative data such as interviews and open-ended survey responses (Shamoo and Resnik 2009; Ritchie et al., 2014, Silverman, 2016).

#### 3.18.1 An outline of NVivo

NVivo serves as a software tool designed to facilitate the organisation and analysis of unstructured information (Wong, 2008). It is a robust qualitative data analysis software package that caters to qualitative and mixed method research. Following the data collection phase, it becomes imperative to code, input, and refine the data (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). Wong (2008) underscores the significance of preliminary planning prior to delving into the analysis of data derived from qualitative studies, such as in-depth interviews. In the present investigation, NVivo 12 was employed as the primary data

reduction instrument. The software is adept at analysing unstructured data and generating word tag clouds, word trees, coding and themes, mind maps, and tree maps. NVivo is versatile in its ability to organise and analyse a wide array of data sources, including interviews, group discussions, surveys, video recordings, images, audio files, social media content, textual materials, and more (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). It offers a dedicated workspace for each phase of the researcher's project, ranging from material organisation to analysis, collaboration, and reporting (Bazeley and Jackson, 2013). NVivo transcends being a mere qualitative data analysis tool; it serves as an indispensable asset for project planning, team coordination, literature reviews, research frameworks, data interpretation, and report generation (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010).

According to Bazeley (2007) and Nassaji (2020), employing the use of a computer program in the work process promotes a systematic approach, comprehensive execution, and diligent involvement on the part of the user. Consequently, it is strongly advocated for qualitative researchers to extensively employ this instrument in their research endeavours (Nassaji, 2020). NVivo offers numerous benefits and enhances the research's rigor, ultimately facilitating the analysis of qualitative data and yielding more polished outcomes. Data analysis for this study followed the following procedure

### **3.18.2 Preparing the data**

The researcher transcribed the audio data from the interviews with the participants into Word format using Microsoft Office 2016. After listening to the audio recordings, the responses of each participant were transcribed with great care. This meticulous process was carried out repeatedly to ensure precision. Following this, the transcriptions underwent a detailed review to validate the accuracy of the captured information. The interview transcripts were then sorted based on the participant's identification number and imported one by one into NVivo 12 for coding and thematic analysis (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010; Saldaña, 2016; Nassaji, 2020).

### **3.18.3 Analysing the data**

The data obtained from the interviews were coded using NVivo 12. As stated by Nassaji (2020), NVivo coding involves the utilisation of words or phrases found within the qualitative data. The interview transcripts were carefully analysed and categorised to generate themes that conveyed the core of the research questions. The research questions were supported by the data collected and analysed from the interview transcripts. In qualitative research, a code represents a word or concise phrase that symbolically represents a significant, summarising, essence-capturing, or evocative attribute of a language-based or visual data segment (Saldaña, 2016). On the other hand, a category combines and organises similar codes based on shared criteria, while a higher-level category groups multiple category to identify an emerging theme. Unlike a category or code, a theme is a word or phrase that describes the content of a particular data segment (Saldaña, 2016; Nassaji, 2020).

In this study, codes were used to label data clearly and uncover concepts and patterns within extensive data sets. Categories were then used to group related codes together, aiding in arranging and identification of common characteristics. The establishment of categories helped identify patterns and themes within the data, which shed light on participants' responses and addressed research questions. The thematic analysis method outlined by Saldaña (2016) provided a framework for analysing the data, emphasising the importance of identifying codes, grouping them, and creating broader themes relevant to the study.

The aim of the thematic analysis conducted in this study is to uncover the underlying themes that provide interpretation to the data, which is relevant to the research questions (Saldaña, 2016; Nassaji, 2020). Following the Saldaña approach to thematic analysis, the study employed a four-step process for data analysis. These steps involved: (1) identifying codes within the data, (2) establishing categories for the codes and developing overarching categories, (3) evaluating the overarching categories and utilising them to generate themes, and (4) applying the emerged themes to address the research questions of the study.

### **3.18.3.1 Identification of codes in the data**

The first step in analysing the data involved coding the interview transcripts in NVivo (Saldaña, 2016). Each response was examined individually and assigned code names. The codes were then categorized and underwent a thorough process of combination, review, and revision. This resulted in a comprehensive list of codes derived from the interview transcripts, which were organized into categories. These codes are further discussed in the chapter dedicated to analysing, interpreting, and discussing the findings.

### **3.18.3.2 Creating the categories of codes and developing high-level categories**

According to Saldaña (2016), the next phase involved identifying the shared characteristics among the codes in order to create categories. This process involved organising the data and condensing it into units to establish categories. The primary objective of this phase was to generate meaningful high-level categories based on the coded data.

### **3.18.3.3 Reviewing high-level categories and using them to generate themes**

During this stage, a thorough examination was carried out on the high-level categories to verify the accurate classification of responses, thereby facilitating the development of themes. A search was performed using NVivo 12, specifically utilising word frequency analysis on each of the codes/categories. This analytical approach was instrumental in capturing the underlying patterns and concepts within the high-level categories, ultimately enabling the identification of the themes (Saldaña, 2016).

### **3.18.3.4 Applying emerged themes to research questions of the study**

Finally, the study utilised various techniques such as word cloud, thematic tables, and tree maps to apply the relevant themes to address the research questions. The application of NVivo 12 involved conducting a node preview to identify the participants' responses and present the findings based on the interview questions.

## **3.1 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical deliberations are of supreme importance in research (Welman et al., 2007; Sileyew, 2019). It enables individuals to carry out their research in an illustrious manner with honesty and respect for human rights (Sileyew, 2019; Hall and Hall, 2020; Clark et al., 2021). These issues are treated with high priority. Research should ensure that participants do not suffer pain, discomfort, loss of privacy, and embarrassment (Sapsford and Jupp, 2006; Cooper and Schindler 2014). A study should also maintain anonymity where participants' responses and identities cannot be recognised (Ogden, 2008). Cooper and Schindler (2014) highlight three guiding principles that this research had followed to safeguard against unethical treatments of the participants. The three guidelines are as follows.

### **3.19.1 Benefits**

The researcher was responsible for informing the participants about the benefits of the study, yet being careful to neither exaggerate nor devalue the benefits (Cooper and Schindler, 2014; Sileyew, 2019). For this study, the researcher clearly outlined the key benefits for participants. The participants were informed that they would get a copy of the study via email if they needed one for their interest.

### **3.19.2 Informed Consent**

Informed consent is when the researcher informs the participants about the possible risks and benefits that may impact their decision to participate in the study (Ruane, 2005; Webster, Lewis, and Brown, 2014; Sileyew, 2019). An informed consent form was issued to participants who agreed to take part in the study. The form is attached as Appendix C. The document clearly outlined what the research was about, who was conducting the research, and any risks involved. It further pointed out that participants were allowed to leave out or not answer any questions if they did not feel comfortable providing answers. There were no names mentioned of all the female entrepreneurs that participated in the study, and confidentiality was always positively maintained (Vaismoradi et al., 2016; Sileyew, 2019).

Ethical requirements are essential in any research. Ethical clearance for the study was granted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC/00003436/2021). The ethical clearance is attached as Appendix A. Secondly; a gatekeeper's letter was not required to go out to the field and interview female entrepreneurs in Pietermaritzburg and Durban as they were available in their own capacity.

### **3.19.3 Limitations of The Study**

This study was subjected to the following limitations: Initially, the sample utilized is not representative of the entire population of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector in KwaZulu-Natal, as a non-probability sampling technique was employed to select the participants. Consequently, the researcher failed to encompass all female entrepreneurs operating in the logistics industry in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Furthermore, this research was conducted in the cities of Pietermaritzburg and Durban, which encompasses a significant proportion of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The result is that the results cannot be generalised. The study provides insight into the success factors of female entrepreneurs in male-dominated sectors, specifically the logistics industry in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. There is a restricted volume of literature available on the subject matter and finally, due to time and cost constraints, only two cities were the focus of the targeted sampling plan. This means that a new study would need to be conducted in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of female entrepreneurship in the South African logistics sector.

### **3.20 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter has presented the research methodology, guided by the research onion, outlining the procedures and processes used to conduct a successful study. The aim and objectives of the research support, the research design, methods, sampling tools, and data collection approaches were also detailed. Additionally, ethical considerations were outlined to ensure all procedures are followed in an ethical manner. The next chapter will present and discuss the results and findings of this study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three offers a comprehensive analysis of the research methodology used in this study and the different techniques used to collect data. This includes discussing the research philosophy, design, approaches, sampling methods, data analysis, measures of validity and reliability, and ethical considerations. In the following chapter, the data obtained from in-depth interviews is carefully examined and the empirical findings are presented.

The methodological choice for this study is qualitative research, and the data is analysed using thematic analysis and NVivo 12 software. The chapter is divided into eight sections. Section A presents the demographic information of the participants, including age, race, marital status, children, qualifications, and career background using descriptive statistics such as pie charts. Section B contains data on the business profiles of the participants. Section C includes measures of business success. Sections D to H are directly related to the research objectives. The study consists of five objectives focusing on different aspects of business success, including financial capital, human capital, innovation, social capital, and work-life balance.

#### 4.2 RESPONSE RATE

Twenty (20) female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector were contacted for data collection. However, only fifteen (15) of these females were interviewed. These fifteen (15) participants offered their time and made themselves available for interviews. The response rate was thus 75%, as indicated in Table 4.1.

**Table 4. 1: Table of participants' response rate**

Participants contacted	Participants interviewed
20	15
Response rate	75%

Table 4.1 shows that the study achieved a response rate of 75%. Data was collected from May 2022 to July 2022 when the country had just opened from lockdown due to the global Covid-19 pandemic and most business owners were busy trying to reopen their businesses. As females in the logistics sector,

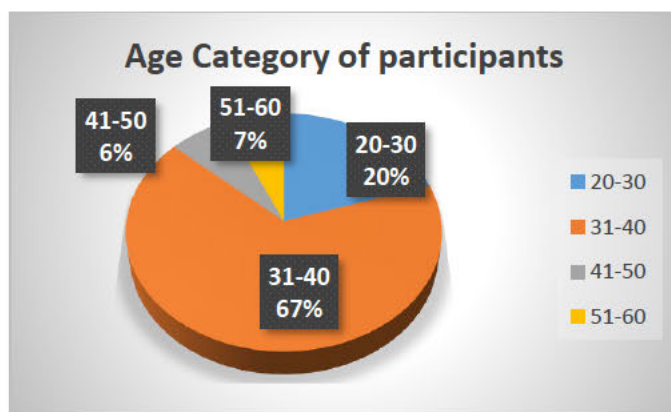
the participants did not operate much during the lockdown. This made it challenging for the researcher to reach them, although the scholar made several efforts through cell phone calls as well as emails to encourage female entrepreneurs to partake. Some participants failed to honour appointments that were scheduled with the researcher. In this study, anonymity by identifying participants with numbers was used to protect the identity of the participants (e.g. Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, etc.).

#### 4.3 SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Personal background factors such as age, education, and work experience influence female entrepreneurship (Kyalo and Kiganane, 2014; Reissová, Šimsová, Sonntag and Kučerová, 2020). Therefore, demographic characteristics of the fifteen (15) female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector were crucial to the study as the participants were interviewed to collect background information on the following: age of participants; race, their marital status, if they had children, highest educational qualification, as well as their career background. The results and findings were interpreted using pie charts.

##### 4.3.1 Age category of participants

In order to gather personal information on the age demographics of the female entrepreneurs who were interviewed, the participants were requested to select the age bracket that best represented their age. Figure 4.1 shows the participants' age categories in years.



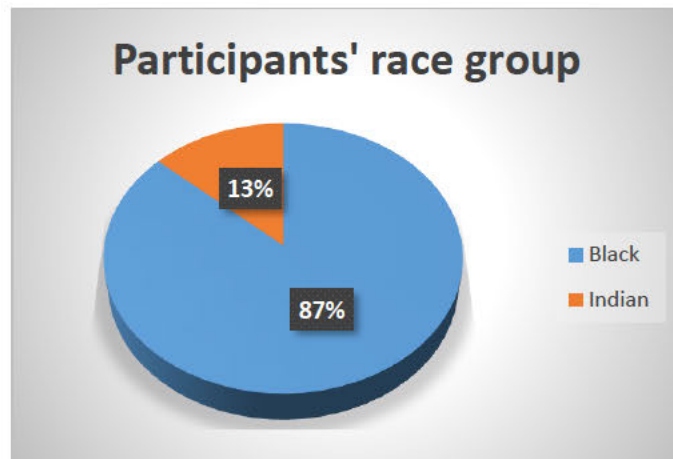
**Figure 4. 1: Age categories of participants**

Figure 4.1 shows that the majority (67%) of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector fell within the age category of 31–40 years. This is followed by the 20–30 age category which represents 20% of the female entrepreneurs. The 41–50 age category represents 6% of them and finally, the 51–60 age category represented 7% of the participants.

The above findings agree with studies which reveal that most entrepreneurs are aged between 31 and 40 years, which shows that most entrepreneurs are young and active (Nieman and Nieuwenhuizen,

2009; Barringer and Ireland, 2010; Xavier et al., 2012; Liang, Wang and Lazear, 2018; Zhao, O'Connor, Wu and Lumpkin, 2021). A study conducted by Aneke et al. (2017) also revealed that the majority (56%) of female entrepreneurs were aged between 30 and 49 years. Females aged below 30 years represented 25% of the sample.

#### 4.3.2 Participants race group

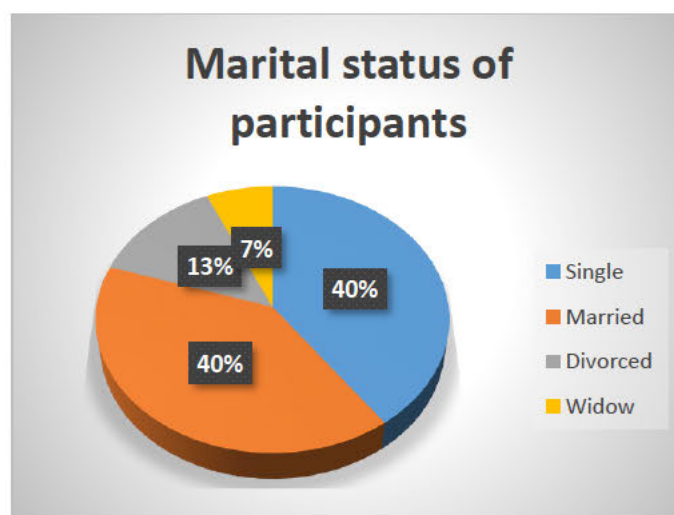


**Figure 4. 2: Participants by race group**

Figure 4.2 shows that majority of participants, 87%, were, while only 13% of the participants were Indian.

#### 4.3.3 Marital status of participants

Figure 4.3 shows the different marital statuses of the female entrepreneurs interviewed in this study.



**Figure 4. 3: Marital status of participants**

The findings presented show that 40% of the participants are married. This is equal to the number of participants who are single as they also represented a further 40% of the sample. This is followed by 13% of participants who are divorced and only 7% of the participants are widowed.

According to Bula (2012), marital status does not significantly impact the business performance of female entrepreneurs. However, Khwela (2019) found that marriage, having children, and managing household responsibilities increase women's domestic duties. This imbalance between work and personal life can affect their progress in management positions and entrepreneurship (Naidoo, 2010; Khwela, 2019; Heywood, 2021). As a result, participants were questioned about their marital status and whether it influenced their roles as female entrepreneurs.

**Table 4. 2: Influence of marital status on female entrepreneurship**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response frequency</b>
Need a good family support system	<b>11</b>
Numerous roles and responsibilities as a female are difficult to manage	<b>5</b>
Managing business and marriage is difficult	<b>3</b>
Marriage can be a hindrance to career development	<b>1</b>
Being side-lined in business opportunities	<b>1</b>

Table 4.2 shows that the majority of participants, with a frequency of eleven (11), believe that a strong support system is necessary to pursue entrepreneurial dreams while balancing business and family responsibilities. Female entrepreneurs also expressed the challenges of managing multiple roles and responsibilities, and the difficulty of balancing business and marriage. One entrepreneur even mentioned that being married can hinder career development. Below are a few quotes from participants that support these themes.

Participant 1 said:

*“Being married and being an entrepreneur is difficult. You are not 100% there. It requires you to have a partner who understands your dreams and goals. I am not on this entrepreneurship journey alone. My husband is incredibly supportive. He is always there to hold my hand.”*

Participant 2 said:

*“It’s sometimes difficult to pursue your wife duties. I am always busy so having business and family responsibilities requires sacrifices. I think the family needs to understand that you are building a legacy.”*

Participant 4 said:

*“It goes in two ways neh, in terms of like support structure and finance, I think being married has really helped me in terms of going to the market without thinking about paying the bills because I know I have someone with a solid financial structure to take care of home.”*

These findings are consistent with a study conducted by Neneh and Welsh (2022) which suggests that female entrepreneurs require high levels of emotional and active support in order to achieve high business performance and a balanced life. In contrast, male entrepreneurs can still achieve high levels of business performance and a balanced life even when emotional and active support is low (Xie and Wu, 2021).

Female participants expressed the challenges of managing business and family roles due to their multiple responsibilities as mothers, spouses, daughters, employers, innovators, housekeepers, caretakers, and societal contributors. This finding is consistent with previous research conducted in India (Mathew and Panchanatham, 2010) and supported by Bullough, Guelich, Manolova and Schjoedt (2022) who highlighted the biases and societal expectations placed on females.

Married participants specifically mentioned the difficulty of balancing marriage and entrepreneurship, citing a lack of time and constant busyness. Research by Dewitt, Jafari-Sadeghi, Sukumar, Aruvanahalli Nagaraju, Sadraei and Li (2023) acknowledges the changing family dynamics that encourage female entrepreneurship but also notes the biased expectations placed on married female entrepreneurs, leading to stress and impacting their professional duties.

Participant 1 said:

*“Being married can also be a hindrance in some cases. In a male-dominated industry, it can lead to being side-lined because it's assumed you won't engage in certain behaviours to advance your career. Wearing a wedding ring can also limit certain business opportunities and affect how people interact with you. However, it ultimately depends on your perspective and the type of person you are. For me, being young, black, vocal, and married can sometimes work against me in my career.”*

The quotes above suggest that having a supportive spouse makes it easy to juggle work and marital responsibilities, while single individuals did not perceive any distinction between the two situations, as mentioned in the following quote.

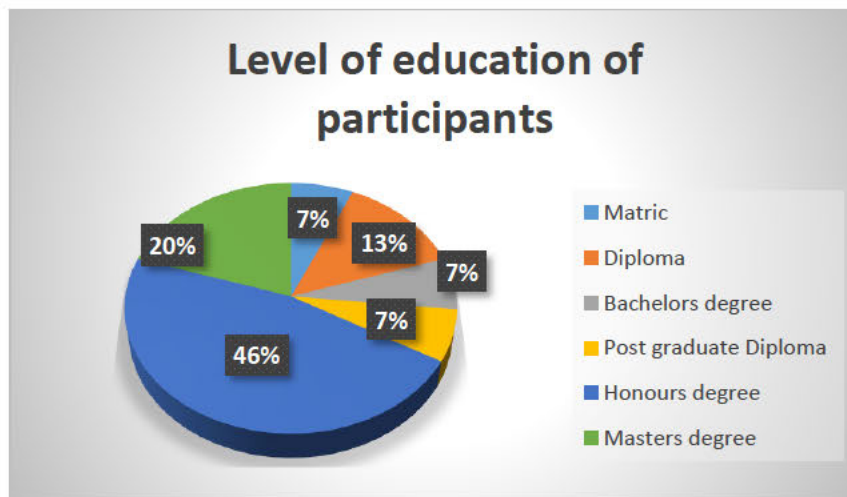
Participant 6 said:

*“I am single, which allows me to focus on my career and goals. I currently live alone.”*

The influence of marital status on female entrepreneurs is unclear, with both positive and negative impacts reported in the findings. Most participants saw their marriage as a support system from their spouse, while others felt that being married brought on additional responsibilities that made it difficult to manage their businesses. Additionally, some participants expressed that being married hindered their career development and led to them being side-lined.

#### 4.3.4 Educational qualifications of participants

A female with a higher level of education, more market knowledge and business experience are more likely to spot an opportunity and pursue entrepreneurship (Lackeus, Lundqvist and Middleton, 2015). Regarding this matter, participants were inquired about their level of educational attainment. Figure 4.4 shows the educational levels of the participants.



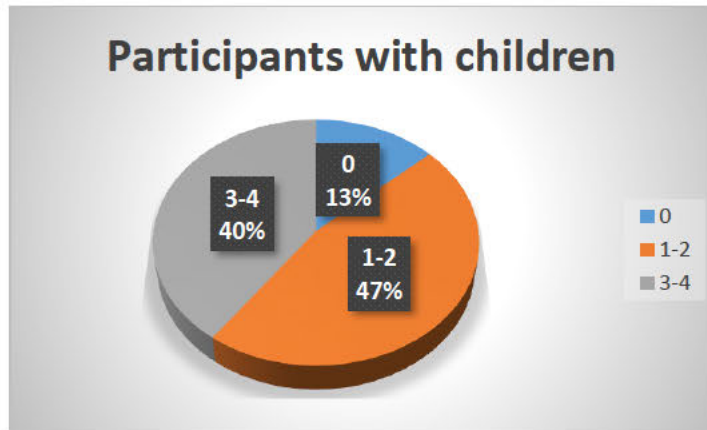
**Figure 4. 4: Education level of participants**

Figure 4.4 illustrates that the majority (46%) of female entrepreneurs hold honours degrees, while 20% hold master's degrees, 13% hold diplomas, and 7% each hold post-graduate diplomas, degrees, and senior school leaving certificates (Matric). These diverse qualifications demonstrate the hard work and dedication of female entrepreneurs in the industry. These findings support Kyalo and Kiganane's (2014) conclusion that females with higher education levels are more likely to recognize opportunities and engage in entrepreneurship. Previous studies also support these results, with a study in Ghana finding that female entrepreneurs were more educated than their male counterparts (Abor and Biekpe, 2006), and a study in Eswatini showing that the majority of participants had varying levels of education, from master's degrees to bachelor's degrees and professional training (Brixiová Schwidrowski et al., 2019).

#### 4.3.5 Participants with children

Research in the relevant literature indicates that female entrepreneurs with children struggle to balance their work and family responsibilities, which in turn impacts their performance as entrepreneurs

(Posholi, 2012; Poggesi, Mari and De Vita, 2019; Kaciak and Welsh, 2020). As part of the study, participants were queried about whether they had children, and those who did were asked how having children affected their role as entrepreneurs. Figure 4.5 illustrates the percentage of participants with and without children.



**Figure 4. 5: Participants with children**

Figure 4.5 indicates that the majority (47%) of females have 1-2 children, 40% of the participants have 3-4 children, and only 13% did not have any children. Participants were also inquired about their ability to juggle both children and work simultaneously. Below are a couple of responses that have been quoted.

Participant 3 said:

*“They are a great help to the business; they are grown-up and the last born is 40 years.”*

Participant 12 said:

*“I am extremely fortunate to have a supportive system. My kids are raised by my extended family as well.”*

According to the answers provided earlier, it is clear that a few participants have no trouble managing work and family due to the assistance provided by relatives who help raise children or have older children who can help with family responsibilities. However, there are also participants who stated the opposite.

Participant 1 said:

*“I am not a 100% absent parent because sometimes I try to avail myself when it’s necessary, but I am not raising my kids the way I would have wished or wanted to because of the time factor as a female entrepreneur.”*

Participant 5 said:

*“One sure thing is kids are very demanding and there is no break in motherhood. I am tired 90% of the time because I try balancing my work and being a fully present mom in my son's life.”*

Participant 8 said:

*“I currently do not have any children.”*

The findings show that balancing work and family demands is particularly challenging when children are young. Parents with grown-up children can greatly benefit from their children's contributions to the business, although having grown-up children does not guarantee their support of the parent's business.

#### **4.3.6 Participants’ career background**

Al-Kwafi et al. (2020) found that successful female business entrepreneurs often have prior experience in their field. Therefore, participants were asked about their career backgrounds to identify their previous work experiences before becoming entrepreneurs. It is important to note that participants often provided multiple responses to the questions, so the total sum of responses may not equal the number of participants.

**Table 4. 3: Participants’ career background**

<b>Career background</b>	<b>Response frequency</b>
Business Management	<b>21</b>
Agriculture	<b>2</b>
Environmental management	<b>1</b>
Law	<b>1</b>
Education	<b>1</b>
Psychology	<b>1</b>

Table 4.3 indicates that the majority of participants with a frequency of twenty-one (21) have a business management background. The second highest frequency was seen in two (2) participants who have agriculture as their career background. This was followed by environmental management, law, education and psychology, each with a frequency of one (1).

The overall findings revealed that each participant had some level of previous career background and prior experience. Most participants had experience in business management, while others had backgrounds in agriculture and ventured into entrepreneurship. Some participants had experience in

environmental management, law, education, and psychology. It was noted that all prior experiences contributed to participants venturing into the business space.

According to Aneke (2015) experience is crucial and can be broadly classified into two categories: previous work experience and entrepreneurial experience. Entrepreneurial experience is crucial when launching a business endeavour, as it is the foundation of many successful business ventures. Aneke (2015) also revealed that female entrepreneurs in male-dominated sectors lack experience specifically related to those sectors. The findings of this study support this, as no female entrepreneur indicated previous experience in a male-dominated sector.

#### 4.4 SECTION B: BUSINESS PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS

This section provides analysis and discussion of data related to four areas of the participants' business types within the logistics sector. These areas include storage, warehousing and materials handling, packaging and unitization inventory, and transport. Additionally, this section explores the motivation for starting a business in the logistics sector and the number of years the business has been operating.

**Table 4.4: Types of businesses**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response frequency</b>
Transportation of general goods	<b>9</b>
Transportation of construction materials and equipment's	<b>7</b>
Transportation of agricultural goods/vegetables and fruits	<b>2</b>
Transportation of minerals	<b>1</b>

Table 4.4 indicates that the majority of the participants engage in the transportation of general goods as indicated by a frequency of nine (9). The second highest was the transportation of construction materials and equipment with a frequency of seven (7), the minority of participants stated that they transport agricultural goods (2) and finally, a participant with a frequency of (1) transports minerals.

The following quotes are on a theme of transportation of general goods.

Participant 7 said:

*"We are generally just suppliers of transportation – of trucks transporting goods."*

Participant 6 said:

*“I own trucks to transport goods and some trucks are used as construction vehicles. We deal with flowing of goods and services from area to another area. This includes transporting sand, bricks, cement and other goods from different companies.”*

The following quotes are on a theme of construction materials and equipment.

Participant 1 said:

*“I work in construction and ended up owning trucks that we use as construction vehicles. As we continued building houses, we realized that transporting materials and equipment to different sites was costing us a lot of money, as we were paying people to do the transportation.”*

The following quotes are on a theme of agricultural goods/fruit and vegetables.

Participant 8 said:

*“My company is a logistics business which makes use of science and technological applications in transporting of agricultural produce – mainly fresh produce.”*

The following quotes are on the theme of minerals.

Participant 3 said:

*“It is a logistics business that deals with code 14 horse and tipper trailer transport, I am transporting 34–36 tons of manganese ore, from Kuruman, Northern Cape, to Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape.”*

These results emphasise that female entrepreneurs are still operating at the periphery of the small business sector as they generally operate in the services sector (Derera et al., 2015; Faizan et al., 2019; Kolasińska-Morawska et al., 2019; Aneke et al., 2021). These females are not operating at the core of the sector with potentially higher profit margins. These females should be supported to venture into the core activities of the logistics sectors which are still male dominated. Only one participant showed huge success in the logistics operations where the participant indicated that her business transports minerals (34–36 tons of manganese) across different provinces. This shows great progress in the business of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. Such success stories should be supported to further expand their businesses and showcased as role models or mentors for other female entrepreneurs.

#### **4.4.1 Participants’ motivations to start the business and how they started the business**

Motivation for entrepreneurship has been a significant research focus in recent years, with many studies examining it in relationship to female entrepreneurs choose to start a business (Benzing, Chu and Kara, 2009; Gabrielsson and Politis, 2011; Meyer and Landsberg, 2015; Aneke et al., 2021). Numerous motivational factors influence an individual’s choice to start a new business or persist in an existing

one. Therefore, participants in this study were asked what motivated them to start a business, particularly in a male-dominated sector like the logistics sector.

**Table 4. 5: Emerging themes of female entrepreneurs’ motivation to start businesses**

Theme	Response frequency
Gender gap in the logistics sector (empowerment)	11
Love and interest for logistics	4
Academic background and mentor	2

Table 4.5 shows that the majority (see frequency of eleven) of the participants stated that they saw a gender gap within the logistics sector and wanted to tap into the sector. The other participants (frequency of four) indicated that it is because of their love of and interest in the logistics sector and finally, the remaining participants directed that their participation in the sector is driven by their academic background and mentors. These findings are supported by the quotes below.

The following quotes are on the theme of the gender gap in the logistics sector (empowerment).

Participant 1 said:

*“I saw a gap in the construction business, transportation was very expensive and decided to buy trucks and that’s how we ventured into the logistics sector.”*

The following quotes are on a theme on a love for and interest in logistics.

Participant 2 said:

*“It has always been my dream, and I saw that we as females are afraid to tackle bigger things. We fear getting out of our comfort, as I started with a kitchen business in town where most woman are. With the profit I invested in a truck and that how it all started. I am not there yet but I have started.”*

Participant 3 said:

*“I have a great passion in [for the] transport industry as I have been in the taxi sector for more than 30 years. I wanted to grow and try more challenging business with a large turnover.”*

The following quotes are on a theme on academic background and mentor.

Participant 6 said:

*“I learnt a lot about business entrepreneurship from my education background which motivates me to start my business. Then I did my research on [the] logistics sector where I found that mostly males are*

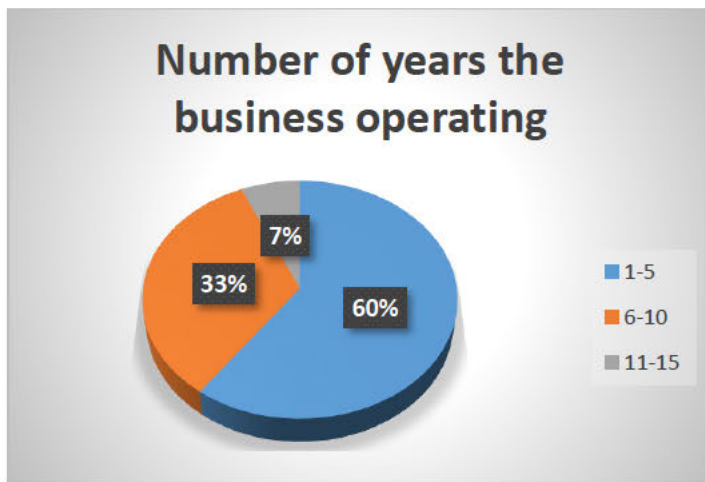
*dominated [dominant] in the logistics sector. Then I saw a gap of [for] women in [the] logistics sector – this is where I told myself that I want to join the logistics sector and decided to buy trucks and that's how I entered the logistics sector.”*

Regarding the motivation of female entrepreneurs to start-up businesses in the logistics sector which they knew was male-dominated and not very welcoming to females, participants had motivations that varied. Analysis of research data showed that the desire to empower females and wanting to bridge the gap in male-dominated sector emerged as a very strong motivation. This finding is in support of research findings from a study conducted by Aneke (2015) on female entrepreneurs in the construction industry. Finally, education and mentorship were also a motivational factor for some participants and this finding aligned with Aneke (2021) where education was also found to be a motivational factor for female entrepreneurs to start businesses in the construction industry.

The logistics sector, like the construction industry, is among the most male-dominated industries worldwide. However, in South Africa, females are making headway into the industry and can improve even further. According to the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB), 48% of South Africa's construction companies are owned by females (CIDB, 2018). This study shows a link between females in the logistics and the construction sector where 47% of females started in the field of construction and expanded into owning transportation in the form of trucks, which then exposed them to the logistics sector. This indicates that an increase in females' involvement is apparent and is expanding to other sectors.

#### **4.4. 2 Participants' years of operating business**

The success of a business can be impacted by many years of operation. Studies have indicated that demographic variables like the number of years in business can affect a company's marketing communication strategies (Phokwane and Makhitha, 2020). The purpose of this question was to know the exact number of years the business has been operating, notwithstanding that the number of years of business operations is not considered a measure of the success of a business.



**Figure 4. 6: Number of years of business operations**

Figure 4.6 shows that the majority (60%) of the participants have been operating their businesses for 1–5 years, 33% of them have been operating for 6–10 years, and only 7% have been operating for 11–15 years.

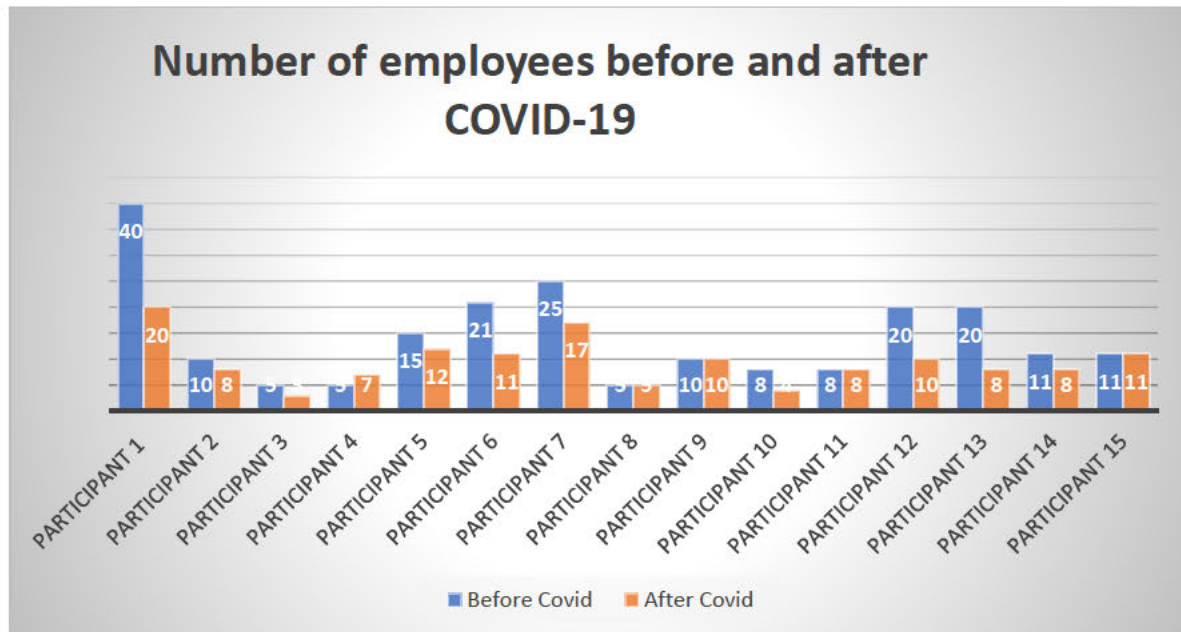
The overall analysis shows that 60% are new entrants into the sector which indicates that females are closing the gender gap in male-dominated spaces. These results are encouraging as they align with the South African government’s stance on achieving gender equality. According to the State of the Nation Address (Ramaphosa, 2023), the government has worked to create a supportive environment for female entrepreneurs ever since declaring its intention to provide at least 40% of public procurement to female-owned enterprises. The participants with more than five years in the sector show resilience for surviving in male-dominated spaces.

#### **4.5 SECTION C: MEASURES OF BUSINESS SUCCESS**

There is a lack of agreement, according to Irene (2017) on what constitutes the best metric of business success. Success, according to Laily and Wahyuni (2018) is merely the capacity to manage a business efficiently. As a result, success is a subjective perception, as the individual's perspective of success determines the measure of success (Simpson et al., 2004). The study used financial and non-financial measures to explore the success of female entrepreneurs. Financial metrics of success include growth, profit turnover, return on investment, and the number of employees (Jayasuriya and Azam, 2017; Mohamad and Bakar, 2017; Dewi et al., 2019; Nguyen et al., 2019; Dadd and Hinton, 2022). Whether non-financial traits like independence, job satisfaction, and the ability to balance work and life are required for success is currently up for debate in the research on female entrepreneurship (Mohamad and Bakar, 2017). This section used two financial measures to measure business success namely number of employees and annual returns.

#### 4.5.1 Number of employees before and after COVID-19

According to Aneke (2015), businesses differ in size and the number of employees; this is often dependent on the survival time and cost-effectiveness of the business. Regarding this, participants were asked the number of employees they had during and after COVID-19. The reason why before and after COVID-19 was chosen as timeframe was to show resilience of female entrepreneurs and finally to illustrate the contribution of female entrepreneurs to employment. The results are presented in Figure 4.7.



**Figure 4.7: Number of employees in participants' businesses before and after COVID-19**

Figure 4.7 illustrates the number of employees the participants had before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The blue bar illustrates before COVID-19 and the orange bar illustrates after COVID-19. The graph shows that a total of 10 of the 15 participants had some level of decrease in the number of employees after COVID-19. For example, Participant 1 had 40 employees before COVID-19 and decreased to 20 employees after the pandemic. A total of 4 participants retained the same number of employees, namely Participant 8, 9, 11 and 15. Finally, one participant indicated an increase in employee numbers after COVID-19, moving from a total of five to seven employees.

The following quotes are highlighted with regards to the number of employees before and after COVID-19.

Participant 5 said:

*“The business started with only two employees for administration and one driver and as the business gained exposure we were able to employ more drivers so they would exchange with the driving and conductors for loading and off-loading”*

Participant 1 said:

*“I started with a cooking business and had only 3 employees and expanded the cooking business and had numerous branches so I had close to 20 employees and I then ventured into the trucking space where I use the same staff but have also hired more where in total I have about 30 employees and more”*

Participant 8 said:

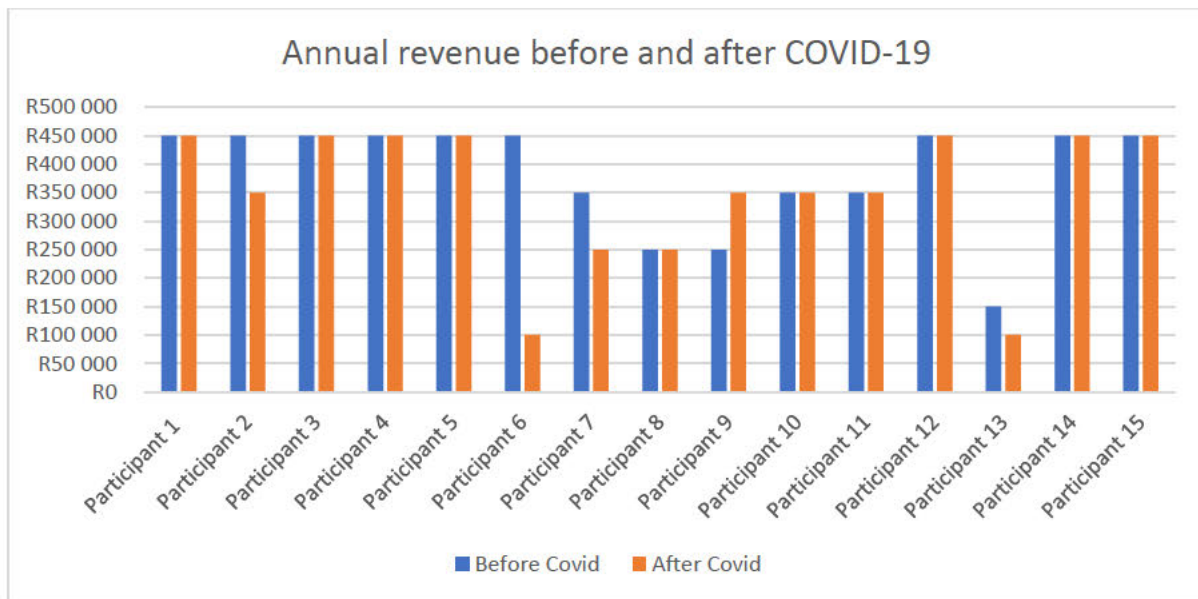
*“I started with very few employees and employed as and when I have a project, so in total I have employed close to 20 employees.”*

The number of employees in female-owned businesses is evidence of the contribution of female entrepreneurs to employment. Several studies have shown that female entrepreneurship significantly contributes to innovation, employment, gross domestic product (GDP), and wealth creation (Brush and Cooper, 2012; Aneke, 2015; Alibhai et al., 2017; Mroczek-Dąbrowska and Gaweł, 2020).

A study conducted by Mashingaidze and Bomani (2022) shows that despite the effects of COVID-19, females have strong incentives to remain in business. The data set revealed three themes: internal motivations, contribution to society, and resource possession (Mashingaidze and Bomani, 2022). These findings support the study's focus on the contribution to society with regards to employment.

#### **4.5.2 Annual revenue before and after COVID-19**

According to Diana and Maria (2020), Dadd and Hinton (2022) and Govender and Adegbite (2023) financial metrics can be used as measurements of business performance and success. Thus, the participants were asked their business's annual revenue before and after COVID-19 to measure their survival and success in the logistics sector. The results are presented in Figure 4.8.



**Figure 4.8: Annual revenue of participants’ businesses before and after Covid -19**

Figure 4.8 shows the annual revenue of participants before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The blue shading illustrates amounts before COVID-19 and the orange shading illustrates amounts after COVID-19. A total of four participants showed a decrease in their annual revenue after COVID-19, e.g. Participant 2 whose revenue fell from R450 000 to R350 000. A total of 10 participants showed that there were no changes in annual business revenue after COVID-19 the, as it was reported to remain the same, e.g. the following Participants maintained R450 000, Participant 1, 3, 4, 5 12, 14 and 15. Finally, one participant showed an increase after COVID-19 from R250 000 to R350 000 annual revenue.

The quotes below highlight the annual revenue of participants before and after COVID-19.

Participant 3 said:

*“I am transporting minerals across different provinces so my revenue is very high. It’s above R450 000. However, it is very difficult to get such projects, one really needs to persevere because, sometimes it can get very quiet in operations.”*

Participant 4 said:

*“Earning revenue was challenging at the beginning of the business. To be honest, we didn’t make any revenue for quite a while, only the bare minimum. However, as time passed, our revenue increased to R350,000. Unfortunately, the pandemic did reduce our revenue.”*

The findings indicate that female entrepreneurs were able to sustain their businesses despite the challenges of COVID-19. Although the revenue decreased during the pandemic, females were still able to generate income as it is noted that 10 participants maintained their annual revenue before and after the pandemic. A study by Iwu, Sibanda and Makwara (2022) supports these findings, showing that the

pandemic caused a significant drop in business revenues due to disrupted supply chains, mandatory curfews, and reduced consumer spending as a result of layoffs and increased consumer concerns.

#### **4.6 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS ACCORDING TO OBJECTIVES**

This section presents, analyses and discusses data directly related to specific research aims and objectives. Themes that emerged, word clouds, tree maps and participants’ quotes from the analysis of data are presented and discussed under relevant headings formulated from specific research objectives.

##### **4.6.1 SECTION D: OBJECTIVE 1: To determine how financial capital enhances the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector**

This first objective of the study was to determine how financial capital improves the success of female entrepreneurs, looking precisely at female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. To explore this objective further, four questions (20, 21, 22, and 23) presented in the interview guide were asked (see Appendix D). The results of the objective on how financial capital improves the success of female entrepreneurs in logistics are presented below.

###### **4.6.1.1 Question 20: What financial resource(s) did you use to start your business?**

There is a link between access to financial capital and the establishment and success of any business. Access to financial capital at the start-up stage and during the operation of a business has repeatedly been shown to be a key determinant of its sustainability and the consistency of its existence (Gleißner and Walkshäusl, 2022). To be able to understand the influence of financial capital on the growth and success of the business, determining the source of capital was the first question. The answers to this are presented in Table 4.6.

**Table 4. 6: Emerging themes on financial resources**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Response Frequency</b>
Personal savings	10
Bank loan	6
Family support	4
Retirement and inheritance and investment	3
Empowerment programmes, competitions and funds	2
Deposits from clients	2

Table 4.6 highlight various sources of financial capital that the participants used to start their businesses in the logistics sector. The above analysis shows that majority with a frequency of (10) female entrepreneurs used their personal savings to start their business. This is followed by six (6) participants who used bank loans to start their businesses. A frequency of three (3) directed that some participants

used retirement and inheritance, while a frequency of two (2) directed that these participants accessed start-up capital from empowerment programmes and from upfront deposits for work from clients. It should be noted that the answers given were not mutually exclusive, which shows that the entrepreneurs relied on more than one source of financial capital for their businesses.

Below are quotes, which supports the theme on personal savings which had the highest frequency.

Participant 4 said:

*“I used my own money; I never got any funding. I mean funding has yooh ahhh I am still on the request to get funding and that is another thing about access to funding. It is there, that’s the thing. It is there, it exists; we hear about it, but we do not get it”.*

Participant 9 said:

*“I used my personal savings for the first small truck.”*

Participant 10 said:

*“I used my personal savings and assistance from family because I did not really seek any external funding as its very difficult to get if you don’t know anybody.”*

Participant 14 said:

*“I started my business with my savings, used that money as capital to bid for small request for quotations from government institutions [and then] qualify for [a] bank loan.”*

Below are quotes which support the theme on bank loan which had the second highest frequency.

Participant 6 said:

*“Firstly, I struggled a lot to find funding for my business because I did not have any capital to start my business. I ended up borrowing some capital from one of the banks to start my business and I also saved some money from my previous job until I had enough to start my own business.”*

Participant 2 said:

*“I started with one truck from a bank loan.”*

Participant 13 said:

*“I didn’t have funding from anyone, I got a personal loan from the bank.”*

Below is a quote from a participant, which supports the theme of family support which had the third highest frequency.

Participant 15 said:

*“Personal savings and with support from my husband, we both invested in this business.”*

Below are quotes from two participants, which supports the theme on retirement funds and inheritance.

Participant 3 said:

*“I used the start-up capital that was my payment from G.E.P.F after retirement, pension fund and the gratuity.”*

Participant 7 said:

*“I applied for a loan and used it as capital and my parents gave me their retirement fund in the form of the investment.”*

Below are two quotes from participants, which support the theme on empowerment programmes, competitions and funds.

Participant 1 said:

*“I entered another competition about the women in construction and went to compete in Cape Town. There was cash obtained from my winning from the competition”*

Participant 7 said:

*“Loan and investment support from my parents. I didn't get funding”.*

Below is a quote from a participant, which support the theme on deposits from clients.

Participant 1 said:

*“I didn't have funding from anyone and used [my] business model to obtain deposits.”*

In addition to the thematic table, the data is also presented and analysed in a word cloud. The word cloud illustrates different themes by using varying font size and colour to represent the frequency and usefulness of the words, indicating important information related to the study. The researcher chose this visual display of results to make it easier for both the researcher and the reader to identify the key words used for financial resources.



**Figure 4.9: Word cloud showing key words for financial resource(s) by means of personal savings**

Figure 4.9 shows that participants used personal savings to start their businesses. In this graph, results show that ‘savings’ in red was central to the word analysis, and that it was the subject of significance as its font size was big and bolded in a distinct colour. The words which were larger (personal and savings) meant that they were the main themes which encompass subthemes of the smaller words around them.

While some participants used their personal savings to start their businesses, other participants directed that they used bank loans as start-up capital for their businesses.



**Figure 4.10: Word cloud showing key words for financial resource(s) as a bank loan**

Figure 4.10 indicates that participants utilized bank loans to initiate their businesses. In Figure 4.10, the results highlight the significance of 'bank loan' (in red) in the word analysis, as it is represented with a large, bold font in a different colour. The larger words such as 'business', 'used', 'banks', and 'got' represent the main themes, encompassing subthemes of smaller words around them.

The overall findings indicate that the majority of participants reported used personal savings as their start-up capital for their businesses. Other participants reported using loans, family support, retirement funds, and deposits from clients. These results are consistent with existing literature, which suggests that female entrepreneurs are more likely to rely on informal and internal funding sources such as micro-financers, personal savings, or loans from family (Derera et al., 2014; Aneke, 2015; Isaga, 2019; Siba, 2019; Al-Kwif et al., 2020). Access to financial capital is an important factor, and past studies have shown that female entrepreneurs are more likely to use these alternative funding sources.

#### 4.6.1.2 Question 21: How does being a female impact your access to financial capital?

The results of the study on financial resources for female entrepreneurs clearly showed that most participants had used personal savings, bank loans, and family support to start their businesses. The question aimed to determine the impact of gender on accessing financial capital, with the key themes depicted in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7: Emerging themes on gender and access abilities to financial capital for the participants**

Theme	Response frequency
Gender bias in male-dominated industries with access to financial capital	19
Race differences in entrepreneurship	3
Benefits from programmes for females in entrepreneurship	1

Table 4.7 highlights the impact of gender on access to financial capital for female entrepreneurs. The analysis above shows that the majority of female entrepreneurs with a frequency of (19) indicated gender bias in access to capital in male-dominated sectors. Literature suggests that gender bias often has negative effects on access to finance, especially in developing countries and among females (Shoma, 2019; Onoshakpor et al., 2020). A study by Derera et al. (2014) revealed the gendered nature of start-up capital for female entrepreneurs in South Africa. Three (3) respondents mentioned that race plays a factor in accessing finances in entrepreneurship, and one (1) respondent indicated that they benefited from programs in place to empower female entrepreneurship.

Below is a quote from Participant 1, which supports the theme on gender bias in male-dominated industries, which had the highest frequency.

*“Being a female in a male-dominated industry makes a lot of people doubt you. So sometimes you would apply for certain funding but because of your gender in the certain [particular] industry, the funders question the success of that project or business you want to execute.”*

Participant 4 said:

*“Funding is there, that’s the thing. It is there, it exists; we hear about it, but we do not get it. Being black, female, and young on paper I am supposed to be in [at] the forefront but that’s not the case in implementation.”*

The study by Derera et al. (2014) revealed the gendered nature of start-up capital for female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector in South Africa, as well as the challenges females face when

entering non-traditional industries. This study also supports previous findings by Derera et al. (2014) that there is gender bias in male-dominated industries regarding access to financial capital. Additionally, the results of this study showed racial differences in access to financial resources for female entrepreneurs. The end of apartheid and the election of South Africa's first black president in 1994 marked a significant turning point for the country (Friedman, 2019). Hopes were raised for a better South Africa under the new regime led by President Mandela (Friedman, 2019). However, the results of this study contradict Friedman's (2019) statements, as racial differences continue to affect female entrepreneurs in a country that has been democratic for 29 years (1994–2023).

The above quote from Participant 4 agrees with a study by Naidoo et al. (2006) as it states that access to finance in South Africa is not equal across all groups. Race and gender remain important variables in the lack of access, and black African females are 'at the bottom of the pile'.

In contrast, Participant 14 has benefited from programmes intended to support female entrepreneurs as quoted below:

*“I have benefited a lot from programs intended to uplift women in business financially. So, it has worked in my favour in accessing financial capital.”*

The fact that only one female in the sample reported having benefited from empowerment programs goes against the South African government's goals of gender empowerment. It would seem that despite the government's various programs to support gender empowerment, only a small number of females are actually benefiting, while the majority struggle to access support. This finding aligns with a study by Derera (2021) which suggests that females are not aware of the support programs available to them. The study also argues that even among those who are aware of the programs, only a few have actually benefited (Derera, 2021).

The word cloud below (Figure 4.11) depicts the words in red that were central to the word analysis, indicated by their larger and bolded font in a distinct colour. The larger words represent the main themes, which encompass smaller subthemes represented by the smaller words around them.



**Figure 4.11: Word cloud showing key words for access abilities to financial capital**

The diagram above illustrates the key words related to access to financial capital, including gender, women, female, and male-dominated sectors. Other words in the word cloud reflect the challenges females face in accessing funding, such as ‘hard’, ‘discrimination’, ‘incapable’ and ‘doubt’. The figure demonstrates the role of gender in accessing finances. The word cloud also highlights racial connotations in access to funding with words like "black, Indian, and white," which aligns with Naidoo et al.'s (2006) findings of unequal access to resources across different groups in South Africa.

**4.6.1.3 Question 22: What are the priority areas of finance in your business that improve the growth and success of your business?**

Financial literacy is a crucial factor in the growth of businesses owned by women, especially during the start-up phase. A study by Egbo et al. (2020) found that financial skills are essential for the growth and smooth operation of female-owned businesses. Yingjun, Jahan, and Qamruzzaman (2021) identified the business challenges that female entrepreneurs face in implementing financial strategies. The study concluded that without appropriate monetary management skills, enterprise survival and growth are unlikely. To measure their monetary management abilities, the researchers asked female entrepreneurs about their financial priority areas in their businesses, leading to the emergence of the following themes, as presented in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Emerging themes for priority areas of finance in the business**

Theme	Response frequency
Financial management (e.g. budget for the business)	7
Cash flow for the business	7
Business model and sustainable client base	6
Investments	3

Keeping costs low	2
Employees	1

Table 4.8 above clearly shows that the majority of participants with a frequency of seven (7) consider financial management, including budgeting and cash flow, to be the primary focus and priority areas in their business finances. This is followed by the business model and sustainable client base, with a frequency of six (6) investments with a frequency of three (3), keeping costs low with a frequency of three (3), and finally, employees with a frequency of one (1).

Long-term financial strategies often involve starting small and growing a new venture as it becomes profitable (Shane, 2003; Lerner and Nanda, 2020). Therefore, capital is necessary for survival, growth, profitability, and viability. However, success does not solely depend on financial resources but also on the development and implementation of strong strategies for utilizing these resources. The literature above aligns with the findings of this study, indicating that participants need to identify their priority areas and develop strategies to ensure the success of their business. The following quotes from the participants are in alignment with these themes.

The two quotes below are in support with theme on financial management (e.g. budget for the business).

Participant 2 said:

*“Budgeting and knowing your cash flow are very important, I ensure that I budget and track every cent that goes out or in the business. I am assisted by my husband with finances.”*

Participant 6 said:

*“With the help from our financial consultant /accountant for the business ensure we up [are] to date with checking the business financial statements, track day to day operation and budget/plan accordingly.”*

The following quotes are in support of the theme on cash flow for the business.

Participant 13 said:

*“I am not very good with the finances in the business, so I am assisted by an accountant to track the cash flow of the business, I think that it’s important to know how money is used in the business.”*

The following quotes are in support of the theme on business models and a sustainable client base.

Participant 1 said:

*“One main priority is the business model and the ability to have a sustainable client base.”*

The following quotes are in support of the theme on investments.

Participant 7 said:

*I ensure that all my income and expenditure is balancing and track my trial balance for the business. Over and above that I ensure I do [make] investments to grow business funds.”*

The following quotes are in support of theme on keeping costs low.

Participant 3 said:

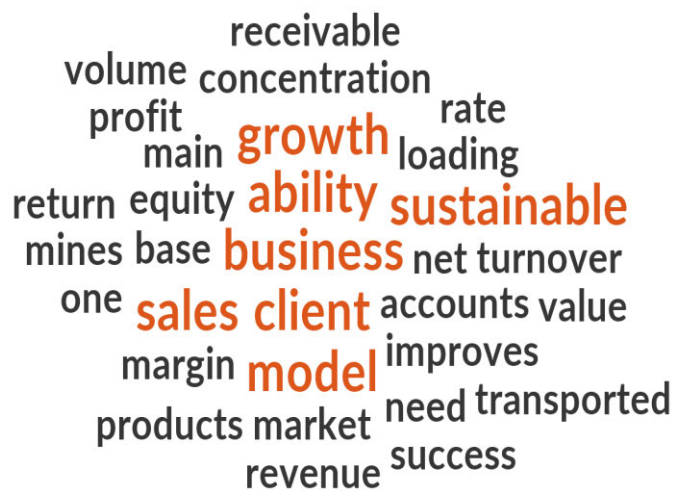
*“Always keeping costs down minimises wastage and making sure that I press on the cream, the cream being the hot stuff that is happening at that time because if I keep costs down then I can get a better time to be in the market for a greater profit.”*

The following quotes are in support of the theme on employees.

Participant 4 said:

*“I prioritize my employees because I believe that happy employees perform well and stay longer, which is good for the business and leads to financial sustainability. Good staff turnover is essential for the success of the business.”*

The above quotes are supported with the word cloud diagram presented in Figure 4.12 below.



**Figure 4.12: Word cloud showing key words for priority areas of finances in a business sustainable business model and client base**

The diagram indicates that the words "sales," "client," "model," and "business" are central to the word analysis, as they are displayed in red and in a larger, bolded font. This suggests their significance. These larger words encompass smaller subthemes behind them. Additionally, words like "growth," "sustainability," and "sales" emphasize the financial success of female-owned businesses. The

interviews also revealed the importance of financial management, with key accounting terms such as "profit," "margin," "return," "equity," "net turnover," and "accounts" emerging as crucial for the success of female-owned businesses.

Similar to the results presented in Table 4.8 above, the word cloud below shows that cashflow management is central to the financial strategy for the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.



**Figure 4.13: Word cloud showing key words for priority area of cash flow**

Figure 4.13 indicates that 'cash flow' in red was the focal point of the word analysis, as evidenced by its large, bold font in a distinct colour. The larger words represent the main themes, which encompass subthemes represented by smaller words. Words like “daily”, “tracking”, “checking”, “time”, and “dates” illustrate the key fundamentals of how female entrepreneurs are managing their cash flows to enhance the success of their businesses.

Access to financial capital is important, but knowledge of financial management is equally crucial (Goyal and Kumar, 2021). The study identified key areas in financial management for businesses, including budgeting, cash flow, business models, client bases, investments, cost reduction, and employee investment. Most participants relied on external consultants and/or support from their spouses to manage their business finances. Orser et al. (2006) support these findings, noting that female entrepreneurs in formal sectors tend to manage business finances well, but there is still room for improvement. Additionally, Sarkis (2023) indicated that companies with senior-level females tend to perform better financially. However, a study by Derera et al. (2020) revealed that most female-owned businesses in the informal sector are not well managed financially.

#### **4.6.1.4 Question 23: How can you use financial capital to improve the growth and success of your business?**

According to Khan, Li, Safdar, and Khan (2019), there are various methods for measuring financial success for business owners. Business owners utilize finances in diverse ways to promote business

growth (Gleißner Günther et al., 2022). In light of this, the researcher inquired about how participants utilise financial capital to enhance the growth and success of their businesses. The following themes were identified, as shown in Table 4.9.

**Table 4.9: Emerging themes on usage of financial capital to improve the growth and success of the business**

Theme	Response frequency
Investing profit back into the business	11
Investing in skills development for the team	5

Table 4.9 above, clearly indicates that the majority of participants, with a frequency of eleven (11), reinvested their profits back into their businesses for growth. This aligns with a study conducted by Derera et al. (2014) which found that reinvesting profits is a common strategy used by female entrepreneurs to grow their businesses. Similarly, Yingjun et al. (2021) observed that some female entrepreneurs withdraw profits to maintain small businesses, while others save and reinvest their profits to expand operations.

Contrary to these findings, a study by Kyalo and Kiganane (2014) on the challenges faced by female entrepreneurs in Africa noted that managing funds for new business ventures is a significant challenge for females. Additionally, five (5) participants indicated that they invest in skills development for their teams. The following quotes from participants support the themes identified above.

The two quotes below relate to the theme on investing profit back into the business.

Participant 1 said:

*“By having the ability to branch out to other business models to grow the business. When you branch out it means you have money and a sustainable plan to branch out.”*

Participant 4 said:

*“The business is still at the growth phase, so we put all the profit back into the business. Because of economies of scale, the bigger you buy, the less it costs. I put the money back in the business to buy more and increase the [profit] margin and this helps me grow.”*

The quote that follows relate to the theme on investing in skills development for the team.

Participant 7 said:

*“I always budget for things I will need separately and use the profit to upgrade the system if it is beneficial for the business. I use the profit to improve my skills and the skills of the team. Proper planning prevents deficient [poor] performance (my 5 Ps).”*

Over and above the themes in Table 4.9, word clouds are also used to illustrate how the finances in the business improve the success of the business.



**Figure 4.14: Word cloud showing key words for financial improvement to grow business**

In the word cloud diagram in Figure 4.14, the results Demonstrate that the phrase "grow business" highlighted in red was pivotal in the analysis of words, as it was emphasised with a large, bold font in a unique colour. The bigger words represented the central topics which included smaller surrounding subthemes.

The following word cloud (Figure 4.15) illustrates that finances are also used in skills development to improve business success.



**Figure 4.15: Word cloud showing key words for financial improvement through skills development**

The word cloud diagram in Figure 4.15, demonstrates that the word "skills" stood out in the analysis due to its importance, with a large and bold font in a unique colour. The bigger words represented the main ideas that included smaller subthemes within them.

#### **4.6.1.5 Summary of findings for objective 1**

The main objective of this study was to determine how financial capital contributes to the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. The results indicate that access to finances does indeed enhance the growth and success of their businesses. Therefore, it can be concluded that financial resources play a crucial role in the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.

Participants emphasized that with access to finances, they were able to reinvest the funds back into their businesses, leading to further growth. Additionally, participants used the funds to invest in skills development for their employees, highlighting the importance of investing in their workforce as a priority for business growth. These findings align with a study by Derera et al. (2020), which found that many female-owned businesses struggle with financial management. However, it is worth noting that in this study, some female entrepreneurs sought and received assistance from external consultants. The study also found that financial resources contribute to the growth and success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector, as evidenced by their annual revenues, which were close to R450 000 and more for their businesses.

#### **4.6.2 SECTION E: OBJECTIVE 2: To determine the role of human capital in the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector**

Based on the findings and discussions above, it is clear that access to financial capital plays a crucial role in enhancing the growth and success of female entrepreneurs' businesses. The second objective of this study is to examine the impact of human capital on the success of female entrepreneurs.

The acquisition of knowledge and skills, referred to as human capital, is a valuable asset (Schultz, 2010). This study aims to investigate the impact of human capital on the success of female entrepreneurs. To assess the role of human capital, it is important to determine whether gender affects their ability to utilize their skills and education. Additionally, the development of human capital for their employees is also crucial. To further explore this objective, four questions (24, 25, 26, and 27) were included in the interview guide.

##### **4.6.2.1 Question 24: How does being a female impact on the utilisation of human capital in your business?**

Through knowledge creation activities, entrepreneurs with more significant human capital achieve greater success (Kanapathipillai and Azam, 2019). Therefore, the question of whether being female impacts the utilization of these skills arises, to ensure that females engaged in creative activities fully utilize their skills and abilities in their businesses. The following themes emerged, as presented in Table 4.10.

**Table 4.10: Emerging themes on human capital**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response frequency</b>
Human capital is not gendered	13
Female entrepreneurs work extra hard	5

Table 4.10 indicates that the majority of the participants, a frequency of thirteen (13), directed that human capital is not gendered, while participants with a frequency of five (5) directed that female entrepreneurs work extra hard to prove themselves in the entrepreneurship space, precisely in male-dominated spaces. The three quotes below support the theme that human capital is not gendered.

Participant 1 said:

*“This one is quite tricky because I don’t think that the skills I have acquired in my journey has nothing [anything] to do with me being a female or not because at the end of the day I have learnt skills in my academic journey, in the industry. Human capital is not gendered.”*

Participant 4 said:

*“Being a female, it does not impact me in any way. Anything that requires my capacity as a human being has no restrictions, there is no gender link to one’s capabilities.”*

Participants 2 said:

*“Education has no gender therefore the skills one has should not be gendered. I entered a male-dominated space with the kitchen management skills and I told myself I will do it. Gender does not limit me’ rather the social concepts of gender can limit me in how people see females.”*

The results show that females work in male-dominated spaces, but they believe that their skills and capabilities in terms of human capital are not determined by gender. This means that males’ and females’ skills are not defined by their gender. These results support the liberal feminist theory, which argues that females have the same capacity for thought as males (Aneke et al., 2015; Mohajan, 2020). The liberal feminist theory clearly states that men and females are equal (Aneke et al., 2015; Mohajan, 2020).

The following two quotes support the theme on female entrepreneurs having to working extra hard.

Participant 7 said:

*“As a female, I am on the one hand expected to work and exhaust myself to a point that is crazy to prove I deserve a spot in the industry.”*

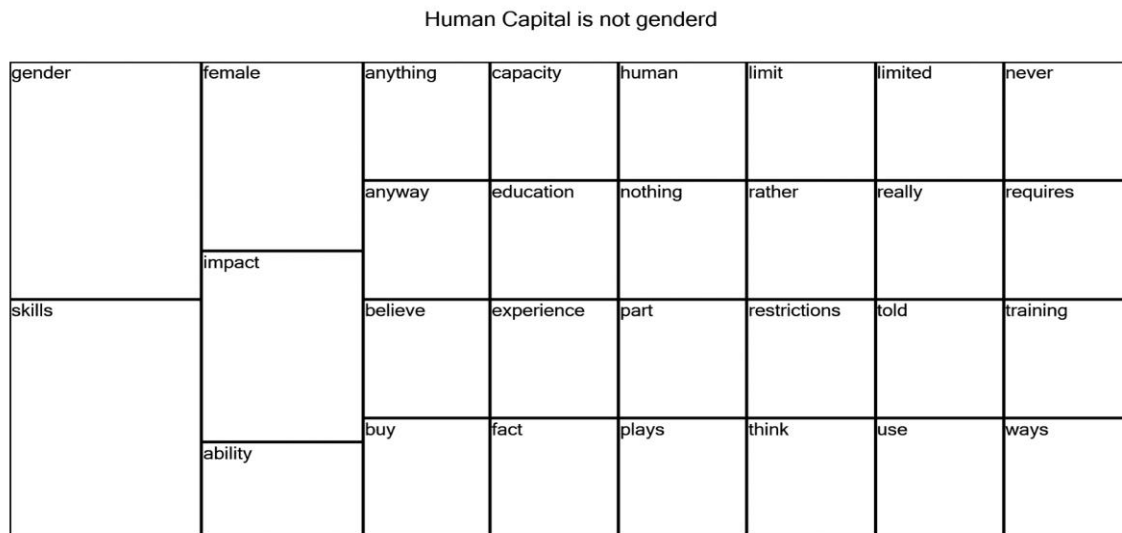
Participant 9 said:

*“There is that element that as a female you need to work extra hard to prove yourself in a male-dominated sector.”*

The quotes also demonstrate that females need to exert extra effort to succeed in male-dominated environments. In contrast to the above findings, Roomi (2013) observed that the type of human capital

possessed is not gender-neutral: men typically have higher levels than females of prior industrial or business-related experience, including employee management.

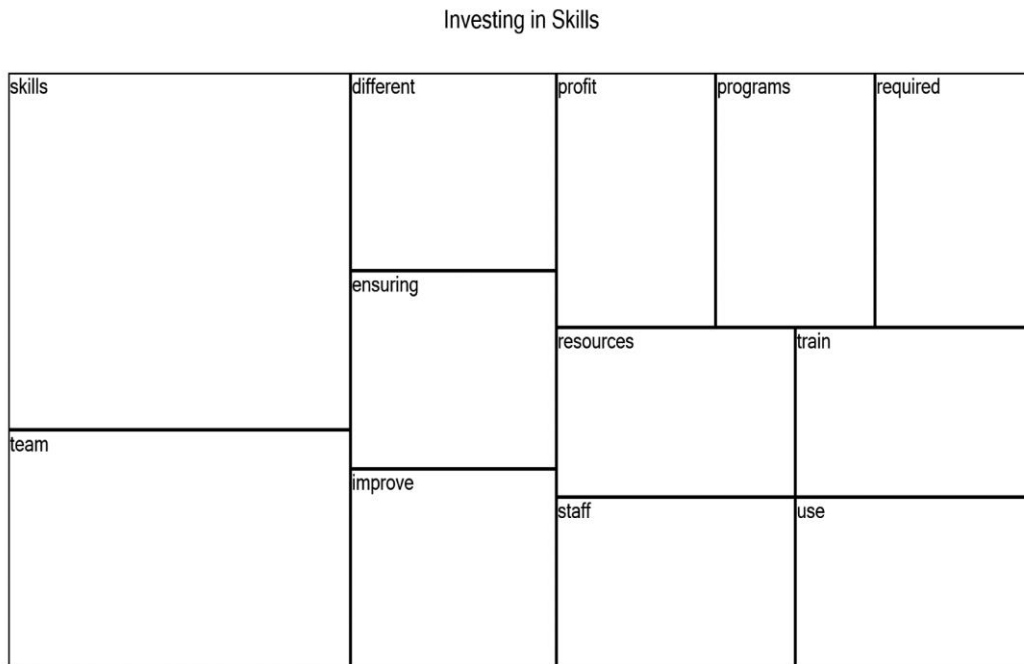
The following diagram expands on the finding that human capital is not gendered. A tree map is a visual representation that displays hierarchical information in the form of nested rectangles with different sizes. It is presented in Figure 4.16.



**Figure 4.16: Tree map showing analysis of key words used to describe human capital**

Figure 4.16 shows how all the words in the tree map have been selected. The word “skills” in the second box of the first column and “impact” in the second box of the second column are both in the larger boxes, meaning that they represent an importance of skills development as it will have great impact on the success of the business. In the fourth column, “capacity”, “education” and “experience” in the three boxes illustrate that the words were used by participants to indicate their human capital abilities. It further shows that the skills the participants have are obtained through a combination of education, work experience and capacity building.

It is important to note that human capital is not gendered in the above analysis. However, it is also observed that participants indicated they invest in skills development for their growth and success in male-dominated spaces. The following tree map in Figure 4.17 illustrates data relating to participants' investment in skills.



**Figure 4.17: Tree map analysing investment on skills for human capital**

Figure 4.17 shows the importance of skills development as a female entrepreneur. The first two words being “skills” and “team” in the first column are the largest, meaning that they appear several times from the participants, showing the emphasis placed on employees having adequate skills for the growth and success of the business. “Improve” in the third box of the second column directs that skills will improve the organisation with access to resources.

The following quotes from participants support the tree map above.

Participant 2 said:

*“Skills development’s important for the team, to ensure the staff is able to work effectively, I invest in skills development for the employees.”*

Participant 4 said:

*“Through workshops and training I improve on skills and this also applies to my employees. I really encourage team work, team building for smooth business operation.”*

**4.6.2.2 Question 25: How does human capital development such as training, education and career contribute to and influence the success of your business?**

Education is of paramount importance, as it is considered a key factor in business success (Tambwe, 2015; Brixiová Schwidrowski et al., 2019; Kanapathipillai and Azam, 2019). This study aims to

examine the impact of human capital on the success of female entrepreneurs' businesses. Table 4.11 below outlines the themes that developed from the participants.

**Table 4.11: Emerging themes on the influence of training and education**

Theme	Response frequency
Identify gaps and creativity	11
More knowledgeable and professional	8
Improves employees' confidence	5

Table 4.11 indicates that the majority, with a frequency of eleven (11) of the participants, indicated that they become creative and can identify gaps in the market as a result of training and education. Participants with a frequency of eight (8) indicated that with training and education they gain more knowledge and professionalism. Lastly, participants with a frequency of five (5) indicated that with education and training their confidence levels improve. The themes are supported by the following quotes.

Participant 1 said:

*“Okay. I have gained a lot of knowledge and skills from the trainings, short courses, and workshops I have attended, both professionally and personally. This has helped me to think outside the box for my business and identify gaps within it. For example, I identified a transport gap and a block making gap in my business, which has helped me to grow and succeed.”*

Participant 6 said:

*“Business-related training has helped me grow my business by enabling me to bring innovation and explore new ways of making money. I apply the knowledge gained from these trainings and workshops to my business every day.”*

Participant 7 said:

*“When you give your team good training and mentorship, they become more innovative and give you the best results. Frequent training makes room for more improvement as they acquire great leadership skills. Training on accountability is also useful, as your team does not become afraid to own up to a mistake they made. They become very creative.”*

The following are quotes on the theme of being more knowledgeable and professional.

Participant 4 said:

*“We can't deceive ourselves. Yes, it is possible to run a business without formal education, and there are many successful millionaires in business who lack formal education. However, without education, you may struggle to understand the proper ways to spend and manage your money. Education opens doors and provides opportunities that may not be available to those without it. With education, you can manage your business more professionally and have a better understanding of the complexities of business.”*

Participant 5 said:

*“Formal education matters a lot. It has helped because you are taken seriously, and your word weighs a bit more, especially because I am female. You became more professional, knowing the business lingo in male-dominated professionals' space.”*

The following are quotes on the theme on improving employees' confidence.

Participant 10 said:

*“It boosts employees' confidence so they can be productive at work. I also attend. For me it's a great investment for the staff and myself, trained staff does their best with the knowledge they have and they are happy employees”.*

The overall findings on how training and education contribute to the success of a business show that participants are able to identify gaps in the market and be creative in their businesses. Participants also indicated that they become more knowledgeable and professional, and finally, they have improved the confidence of their employees, which is crucial for business development. Similar to the above results, Roomi (2013) points out that the results of training in business management and enterprise development for female entrepreneurs in Pakistan indicate a significant increase in their self-confidence, annual revenue, employment growth, and their ability to be innovative. This proves the impact of human capital on the growth of a business. In Tanzania, Tambwe (2015) found that 90% of female enterprises had improved due to prior training.

#### **4.6.2.3 Question 26: What impact does your prior work experience have on the growth and success of your business?**

Over and above education and training for human capital, prior work experience plays a significant role in the success of a business. The participants were asked about their prior work experiences. The following themes emerged, as presented in Table 4.12,

**Table 4. 12: Emerging themes on the impact of work experience**

Theme	Response frequency
Communication and stakeholder engagement	17
Business management and project management	9
Professionalism	7
No prior skills learnt from the business	3
Planning and monitoring	2
Personal development	1
Legal matters	1

Table 4.12 shows that majority of the participants with a frequency of seventeen (17) highlighted that prior work experience assisted them in terms of communication and stakeholder engagement, participants with a frequency of nine (9) indicated that it assisted with business management and project management skills. Participants with a frequency of seven (7) directed that prior experience assisted when it comes to professionalism in the workplace, and a frequency of three (3) directed that they did not have prior work experience and a frequency of one (1) each indicated that it assisted with personal development and legal matters.

The following are quotes on the theme of communication and stakeholder engagement.

Participant 4 said:

*“My experience has been one of my greatest blessings. Back in the days I was a salesperson earning [a] minimum [minimal] amount but the skills I have learnt there created the type of entrepreneur that I am today. Sometimes working in low lines helps you understand the market better. Because, you are working on a daily basis with those people. I was able to understand the different stakeholders in the beginning and how to communicate effectively.”*

Participant 10 said:

*“I acquired a lot of skills to manage people, manage the store and ensure that all the logistics are there in time for the next day, I learnt how to work with different people from different cultures. I gain[ed] communication skills and planning skills.”*

Participant 15 said:

*“It has contributed so much in laying the foundation of supply chain management. The process flow, professionalism, communication and a whole lot of other skills. Risk management which is important when it comes to business sustainability”.*

The following are quotes on the theme of business management and project management.

Participant 1 said:

*“I am in a managerial position in my business. I do project management by ensuring I provide all the resources needed in that project, including human resources, skills from different people and [to] manage people and ensure that they are doing everything in line with our company.”*

Participant 11 said:

*“Where do I begin? I learnt so many skills. Project management, I know it from start to finish, communication skills, being professional in a workplace and also how to engage with different stakeholders. There is a lot I have learnt [and have] even developed personally”.*

The following are quotes on the theme on professionalism.

Participant 7 said:

*“I have gained a lot on how to be a professional in a workplace, this includes behaviour and work ethics in a workplace.”*

The following are quotes on the theme of no prior skills learnt from the business.

Participant 13 said:

*“I do not have any prior work experience beside my own business.”*

The following are quotes on the theme on planning and monitoring.

Participant 2 said:

*“I have a good foundation of administrative work, planning schedules to meet deadlines and tracking performance of the business through constant monitoring.”*

The following are quotes on the theme of personal development.

Participant said:

*“I have gained good experience which assisted me personally and professionally in a working environment. I have grown as an individual.”*

The following are quotes on the theme of legal matters.

Participant 12 said:

*“When it comes to the legal functions, I make sure so [that] my experience has assisted me to not make much [many] mistakes in the legal side of the business. I have also learnt how to communicate with people, so better communication skills, better conflict management skills and being professional in general”.*

The study focused on the impact of prior work experience on the success of female entrepreneurs. The results showed that most participants had some form of management experience, which improved their communication, stakeholder engagement, business management, professionalism, planning, progress tracking, personal development, and legal issues. However, some participants had no prior work experience apart from that gained within their businesses.

In contrast to the results, research indicates that women contribute less management experience to companies compared to men (Efroni, 2017). Additionally, a study by Roomi (2013) found that men have more prior experience in science, technology, and management, while women have less experience in these fields but possess greater knowledge and experience in the service industry. Supporting the results, literature suggests that most female entrepreneurs gain their initial managerial experience when starting their own businesses. However, their lack of basic commercial networks, combined with a lack of prior managerial experience, hinders their ability to grow their businesses (Roomi, 2013; Efroni, 2017). Nevertheless, an entrepreneur's prior work experience helps them to avoid mistakes and more successfully manage their business (Santarelli and Tran, 2013).

**4.6.2.4 Question 27: How does human capital enhance the growth and success of your business?**

While the previous question intended to identify how prior work experience has equipped participants to ensure their business success, the current question highlighted how all the skills and knowledge gained through education, training and prior work experience contribute to the growth and success of the business. The themes that emerged are presented in Table 4.13.

**Table 4.13: Emerging themes on the impact of human capital on business success**

Theme	Response frequency
Increased and better stakeholder relations	10
Improved business performance and management systems	6
Being innovative	5
Good organisational culture and image	4
Better decision making	2
Business efficiency	2

Table 4.13 indicates that the majority of the participants with a frequency of ten (10) highlighted that human capital increases stakeholder relations and well-maintained stakeholder relations and engagement. Participants with a frequency of six (6) indicated that it assisted with improved business performance and management systems. Participants with a frequency of five (5) directed that human capital assists with innovation. A frequency of four (4) directed that it is good for organisational culture and image. Lastly, a frequency of two (2) participants indicated that it assisted with decision making and business efficiency.

The following are quotes on the theme of increased and better stakeholder relations.

Participant 4 said:

*“I am able to negotiate better because of the knowledge I have and speaking [a] similar language. Closing deals is for the growth and success of my business so I close so many deals also because I am more self-aware.”*

Participant 8 said:

*“Skills and knowledge that one possesses are crucial in running a business or even founding a business. You could have all the capital you require but without the accurate skills and knowledge, your business fate is sounding very much like Titanic. It will sink. The business has grown so much, professionalism has improved, stakeholder engagements has increased.”*

The following are quotes on the theme of improved business performance and management systems.

Participant 10 said:

*“I think having [developing] the right skills through workshops and training really assist in business performance and how to manage your business for it to be sustainable and grow”:*

The following are quotes on the theme of being innovative.

Participant 6 said:

*“My skills and previous experience have helped me to enhance the growth and success of my business through bringing innovation which has generated income for my business.”*

The following are quotes on the theme of good organisational culture and image.

Participant 5 said:

*“Through training and education, I have really gained a lot, the most important aspect is having good organisational culture and reputation, with my staff we are able to maintain good business behaviours.”*

The following are quotes on the theme of better decision making.

Participant 13 said:

*“With my prior experience and training, I am able to make more informed decisions for the business.”*

The following are quotes on the theme of business efficiency.

Participant 15 said:

*“With my human capital skills and knowledge, I am able to be fast paced in the business and things flow easily. My staff is skilled which makes it easier to run the business.”*

#### **4.6 2.5 Summary of findings for objective 2**

The second objective of the study was to determine the impact of human capital on the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. The overall results indicate that most participants believe that human capital provides benefits for their business’ growth and success. Therefore, it can be concluded that human capital does play a role in the success of the business. These benefits include improved stakeholder relations, enhanced business performance and decision-making, support for innovation, a positive organisational culture, and increased business efficiency. Supporting literature includes a study by Roomi (2013) which found that females with higher levels of human capital tend to be more innovative.

Additionally, Chinomona and Maziriri (2015) revealed that human capital contributes to business success by enabling female entrepreneurs to be more active and efficient, thereby improving their living standards. Furthermore, a study conducted by Novanda, Khaliqi, Bakhtiar, and Amiruddin (2021) suggests that entrepreneurial skills can encompass a broad range of skill sets, such as technical skills, leadership and business management skills, and creative thinking. Sadera et al. (2019) found that female entrepreneurs excel in marketing, record-keeping, business management, critical thinking, planning and research, decision-making, organisation, and oral communication skills. Based on the above findings and discussions regarding human capital, it is clear that innovation enhances the growth and success of businesses owned by female entrepreneurs.

#### **4.6.3 SECTION F: OBJECTIVE 3: To investigate how innovation promotes the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector**

The third objective of this study is to examine how innovation contributes to the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. The purpose of this objective was to investigate how innovation promotes the success of female entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial success depends on innovation (Gomez et al., 2017; De Silva et al., 2018). Innovation is an intangible resource that is rare, valuable, and unique, and it is critical for business success (Barney, 1991; 2001; Bunduchi, 2013; Khan, Atlas, Ghani, Akhtar, and Khan, 2021). To explore this objective further, four questions (28, 29, 30, and 31) were asked and presented in the interview guide.

#### 4.6 3.1 Question 28: How does being a female impact your innovation capabilities?

Innovation, an intangible resource that is scarce, valued, and distinct, is essential for business growth and success (Popović-Pantić, 2014; Brixiová Schwidrowski et al., 2019; Huang, Li, Wang and Li, 2022). The participants were asked about the impact of being female on their innovation capabilities. The themes that emerged are detailed in Table 4.14.

**Table 4.14: Emerging themes on innovation**

Theme	Response frequency
Innovation is not gendered	9
Female entrepreneurs are innovative	9
Limited skills and resources	2

Table 4.14 shows that the majority of the participants with a frequency of nine (9) highlighted that innovation is not gendered and females are innovative. This agrees with the GEM report (2022) which revealed that females in South Africa are amongst the most innovative and ‘high development’ entrepreneurs. The other participants, see frequency of two (2), indicated that innovativeness can be limited due to limited skills and resources. A few responses are quoted below.

The following are quotes on the theme of innovation not being gendered.

Participant 2 said:

*“For me everyone can be innovative. No circumstances will hinder you from being innovative, therefore no gender can limit you from being creative and innovative. It’s the mind-set you have that will limit you, not your gender or race.”*

Participant 8 said:

*“My gender has not affected my innovation capabilities in any way. In fact, being a female has improved my innovation capabilities. I think being female and under-looked motivated me to be the leader of the pack.”*

The following are quotes on the theme of females being innovative.

Participant 10 said:

*“I believe females are the most innovative human beings and not afraid of change.”*

The following are quotes on the theme of limited skills and resources.

Participant 11 said:

*“Okay, gender does not impact my innovation capabilities; however, I feel that limited resources and knowledge can be a limiting factor to innovation.”*

The findings on the impact of gender on innovation capabilities reveal that innovation is not gendered and that females are innovative. However, it is noted that due to limited skills and resources, one might not be fully innovative. Past studies support these findings. Studies conducted in the United States (VanderBrug, 2013), Canada (Preston, 2015), Turkey (Kabukcu, 2015), and Serbia (Pantic, 2014) revealed that female entrepreneurs have improved their capacity to offer innovative products and services, highlighting the importance of innovation for business success. According to the GEM report (2017), females are 5% more likely than males to innovate. The GEM report (2022) also revealed that females in South Africa are among the most innovative and high-development entrepreneurs.

Contrary to these results, a study by Filzah et al. (2015) reveals that female entrepreneurs in Malaysia lack innovation and are not impressive in their corporate activities. Further studies by Subramaniam and Islam (2014), Arcuri et al. (2023), and Shuang et al. (2022) reveal that female entrepreneurs often have difficulty finding and accessing information, credit, and networks. Shuang et al. (2022) further elaborated that gender stereotypes have a negative moderating effect on female opportunity recognition and development.

#### **4.6.3.2 Question 29: What is your role as a female entrepreneur on innovation for the growth and success of your business?**

To gain a different perspective, the role of female entrepreneurs in driving innovation in their businesses is being explored with participants in South Africa.

**Table 4.15: Emerging themes on the role of innovation in business success**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response frequency</b>
Provide leadership and management of the business	<b>15</b>
Happy employees for better performance	<b>3</b>
Open to new ideas	<b>3</b>

Table 4.15 shows that the majority of the participants with a frequency of fifteen (15) highlighted that their role is to provide leadership for and management of the business, while participants with a frequency of three (3) directed that their role is to keep their employees happy, because happy employees perform better. A frequency of three (3) was also reported on the theme of being open to new ideas. A few responses are quoted below.

The following are quotes on providing leadership for and management of the business.

Participant 1 said:

*“I lead by example; I make sure I walk the talk in anything I do and speak.”*

The following are quotes on happy employees for better performance.

Participant 9 said:

*“I ensure that as the founder I keep on top of things and try different techniques to make the work easier and accessible to everyone. My biggest role is to keep employees happy.”*

The following are quotes on being open to new ideas.

Participant 11 said:

*“I think it is really to open a safe space for learning and development in the business, to welcome ideas and to lead by example to the employees.”*

Participant 15 said:

*“Providing training and workshops to keep the team knowledgeable and innovative. I lead by example and encourage creativity.”*

The results of the study highlight the significant role of female entrepreneurs in driving innovation and ensuring business success. Participants were found to primarily provide leadership within their organisations and to prioritise employee satisfaction, leading to improved employee performance. This, in turn, fosters openness to new innovative ideas, ultimately contributing to the success of the business. These findings align with previous literature, such as Arcuri et al. (2023), which emphasizes the importance of entrepreneurial characteristics, particularly in the start-up phase, for business success.

The success and performance of businesses led by female entrepreneurs can be attributed to their strong management and leadership qualities, which are key drivers of innovation (Arcuri et al., 2023). The decisions made by business owners not only shape the start-up itself but also influence its overall operations and development (Arcuri et al., 2023). Ogunyemi and Fusch (2021) and Zastempowski and Cyfert (2021) also highlight the importance of entrepreneurial traits in driving business innovation. Understanding the link between start-up growth and innovation requires a focus on the entrepreneurs behind the business.

Furthermore, studies by Subramaniam and Islam (2014) have shown that female entrepreneurs are highly innovative and receptive to adopting new ideas and technology to enhance and expand their businesses. This aligns with the findings of the current study, which emphasize the openness of entrepreneurs to new ideas and strategies.

#### 4.6.3.3 Question 30: What role does your team play in innovation for the growth and success of your business?

In addition to the entrepreneur's role in innovation, development is a collective approach. Therefore, the involvement of employees in innovation is crucial (Subramaniam and Islam, 2014). The previous question focused on the impact of female entrepreneurs on their business growth and success. The question aimed to examine the role that the team (employees) plays in the growth and success of the business, with the theme of the responses provided in Table 4.16.

**Table 4. 16: Emerging themes in the role of the team in innovation**

Theme	Response frequency
New strategies and systems	18
Problem solving	4

Table 4.16 indicates that majority of the participants with a frequency of eighteen (18) highlighted that the team plays a critical role in generating new ideas, and participants with a frequency of four (4) indicated that the team is innovative and assists in solving problems when a crisis arises. A few responses are quoted below.

The following are quotes on new strategies and systems.

Participant 11 said:

*“My team contributes so much to my business; they are the drivers of the business in my absence. The culture that is created within the business allows everyone to be a leader. The team is the one that comes with better ideas and strategies, including systems to run the business.”*

Participant 4 said:

*“My team is me and I am the team, they are free to express ideas and we go as far as implementation.”*

The following are quotes on problem solving.

Participant 1 said:

*“By the team attending training they became more alert to different things, hence the creativity kicks in. We allow our team to think independently and allow them to solve problems independently.”*

The overall results show how employees contribute to innovation and ensure the success of the business. Most participants reported that their employees provide new strategies and systems for business development, while others noted that their employees are problem solvers who attend to business crises.

This is evident in objective two of the data, which noted that participants also invest in skills development for their teams, making them effective problem solvers. Subramaniam and Islam (2014) found in their study that female entrepreneurs continue to train themselves and their employees to advance, recognizing human capital as the driving force behind organisational growth. They believe that constant innovation and the improvement of human capital are vital for business growth.

#### 4.6.3.4 Question 31: How does innovation promote the growth and success of your business?

The previous questions focused on the capabilities of women in innovation, the role of female entrepreneurs in driving innovation for business success, and the contribution of employees to innovation for business success. The current question aims to identify how innovation in the business as a whole promotes growth and success. The themes which emerged from the interview are presented in Table 4.17.

**Table 4.17: Emerging themes on how innovation promotes business success**

Theme	Response frequency
Expand and grow in business	12
New ideas to improve the business	10
Improves efficiency and effectiveness	9

Table 4.17 indicates that the majority of the participants with a frequency of twelve (12) highlighted that innovation promotes ways of expanding the business. The other participants, as indicated by a frequency of (10), directed that the process of innovation generates new ideas to improve the business and finally, participants with a frequency of (9) indicated that innovation improves efficiency and effectiveness in the business. A few responses are quoted below.

The following are quotes on expansion and growth in business.

Participant 1 said:

*“Successfully branching out to new business models is being innovative so the success of the business model is the growth of the business.”*

Participant 2 said:

*“As I have indicated that I started with a kitchen business and ventures to owning one trust and later got into the logistics space formally, this for me was expanding my business.”*

The following are quotes on new ideas to improve the business.

Participants 9 said:

*“My business is built around innovation; the foundation of my business is innovation. Innovation is what brought success in my business. The business grows, expands and opens new doors of improvement.”*

The following are quotes on new ideas to improve the business.

Participant 11 said:

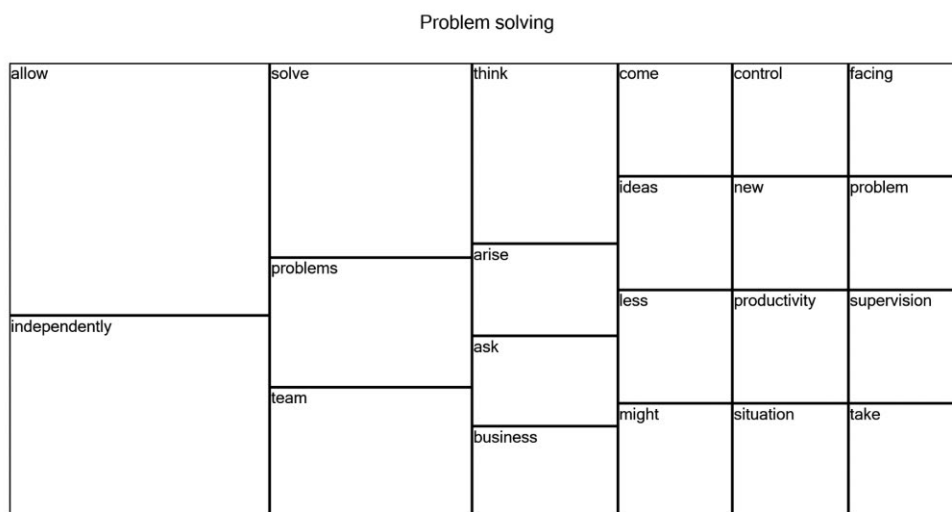
*“I have really invested so much in the business and my staff as most. I ensure that we have one goal and that is to ensure we stay at a competitive advantage by coming up with new business ideas and methods to improve the business.”*

The following are quotes on improved efficiency and effectiveness.

Participant 12 said:

*“The business is slowing improving, it’s a journey but we are getting there. I really encourage the team to work effectively and efficiently so we constantly gather in planning meetings to navigate how we can work smart and not hard, sometimes even with the drivers.”*

Innovation is crucial for solving problems and promoting business success (Pantic, 2014). Figure 4.18 highlights important information that emerged from interviews with female entrepreneurs.



**Figure 4.18: Tree map analysing the importance of innovation in problem solving**

The tree map in Figure 4.18 indicates the words used to highlight that innovation is used to solve problems in the business. The tree map shows two words in large boxes which are “solve” and “problems”, followed by the third box with “team”. This clearly stipulates that when innovation is implemented by a team in the business, it solves problems and improves “productivity”.

The following quotes support the tree map on problem solving.

Participant 10 said:

*“Well, for me innovation is when you are able to identify a problem or a challenge and try to find solutions for better ways of doing something. Therefore, innovation is problem solving, the team is encouraged to be solution driven.”*

Participant 15 said:

*Business in general is all about identifying a problem and finding a solution to it, so innovation is exactly business. I am really trying to invest in team effort and making sure I have a skilled team by ensuring I invest in skills development.”*

#### **4.6.3.5 Summary of findings for objective 3**

The results indicate that innovation promotes business success through expansion, improvement in business strategies and systems, and increased efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, it can be concluded that innovation plays a key role in the success of female entrepreneurs.

#### **4.6.4 SECTION G: OBJECTIVE 4: To examine the role of social capital on the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector**

Based on the above findings and discussions on innovation, it is well noted that social capital enhances business success. The fourth objective of this study focuses on the role of social capital in the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.

Social capital refers to the network of individuals who can provide access to resources and support for business success (Madhani, 2010; Xie, 2014; Kanapathipillai and Azam, 2019). According to RBV theorists (Barney, 1991; 2001; Taksa and Groutsis, 2009), social capital is an intangible but crucial resource for success. To further explore this objective, three specific questions (32, 33, and 34) were included in the interviews.

##### **4.6.4.1 Question 32: How does being a female impact your networking abilities?**

The first question aims to investigate whether being a female affects one's networking abilities, especially in male-dominated spaces. This question is motivated by the challenges identified by female entrepreneurs in male-dominated spaces, one of which is sexual harassment, among many others (Bwatou, 2020; Forkuor et al., 2020; Diale and Carrim, 2022; Dzisi, 2022). The themes relating to the impact of networking are presented in Table 4.18.

**Table 4.18: Emerging themes on the impact of networking**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Response frequency</b>
Networking abilities are not gendered	7
Being a female in male-dominated industries is limiting	6

Sexual harassment	<b>4</b>
Female entrepreneurs work extra hard in male-dominated industries	<b>2</b>
Social and cultural stereotypes are a hindrance	<b>1</b>

Table 4.18 indicates that majority of the participants as indicated with a frequency of seven (7) highlighted that networking abilities are not gendered. The second highest frequency of six (6) was for the participants who indicated that being in a male-dominated sector is limiting when it comes to networking. A frequency of four (4) directed that effective networking is hindered by sexual harassment in male-dominated sectors. A frequency of two (2) participants directed that when you are a female entrepreneur in a male-dominated sector, you need to work extra hard to prove your worth and space in the sector. Finally, a frequency of one (1) directed that social and cultural stereotypes can be a hindrance to being able to fully network in a male-dominated sector. A few responses are quoted below.

The following quotes support the theme on networking abilities not being gendered.

Participant 3 said:

*“I can network very well; I am bold and have learnt so much in the business space. My gender does not affect me in networking. The challenge comes in male-dominated platforms. As a female you can be undermined so there [it] may be [that] gender does have that limitation on my ability to network.”*

The following quotes support the theme on male-dominated industries being limiting for females.

Participant 4 said:

*“Sometimes, being a female can limit your opportunities, especially in male-dominated environments like a white Afrikaners boys' club. For example, in networking situations like golf games, you may not have the same level of skill as others, which can hinder your ability to socialize and make connections. As a woman, not being exposed to these types of games can limit your abilities, as you can't be expected to excel in sports you haven't had the chance to participate in. It's not intentional, but rather a result of not being exposed to these activities, while others in the group already have established connections and experience.”*

The following quotes support the theme on sexual harassment.

Participant 8 said:

*“I think being sexualized takes the cup. As a female in a male-dominated industry, you get overlooked, sexualized, and viewed as incapable. Men tend to think you could never be the face behind such a rapidly growing business.”*

The results indicate that most social skills are not gender-specific, but being a woman in male-dominated industries can be limiting due to barriers such as sexual harassment and social and cultural stereotypes. The findings also suggest that females need to work extra hard in male-dominated spaces, which aligns with the results in human capital, indicating that women still need to work hard to be recognized in male-dominated spaces, despite their skills and social networks.

In contrast to the results on male-dominated spaces having barriers, literature on social capital often overlooks gender (Efroni, 2017). However, gender is an important factor in social capital, as there is evidence that women are excluded from high-status, powerful, male-oriented networks (Efroni, 2017). Additionally, in the context of gender, female entrepreneurs may encounter sex-based stereotypes when attempting to develop business networks and face barriers in accessing traditionally male-dominated established networks (Efroni, 2017).

#### **4.6.4.2 Question 33: What skills have you obtained, if any, in networking platforms that improve the growth and success in your business?**

Social capital can be either a barrier or an opportunity for entrepreneurs (Efroni, 2017). The question aimed to highlight different skills obtained in the networking platforms that improves the success of the business for females.

**Table 4.19: Emerging themes on skills gained in networking**

Theme	Response frequency
Good communication and negotiation	<b>8</b>
Build confidence	<b>3</b>
Leadership	<b>1</b>
Mentorship	<b>1</b>

Table 4.19 shows that the majority of the participants with a frequency of eight (8) highlighted that from the networking platforms they have obtained good communication and negotiation skills; and a frequency of three (3) directed that they have gained confidence in the networking platforms. Finally, a frequency of one (1) directed that they have obtained leadership skills and mentorship. A few responses are quoted below.

The following quotes support the theme of good communication and negotiation.

Participant 2 said:

*“I am involved with SEDA which I learn so much business-related matters, I get training and I can to network and ask different people questions on their journey in business and I take lessons from them. I*

*have learnt how to speak professionally, negotiation skills and learnt the right questions to ask to get relevant information.”*

Participant 3 said:

*“Good communication skill, leadership skills, good marketing skills”.*

Participant 4 said:

*“The networking platforms that I have used. I think its [the] exposure more the skills. Communication is my greatest extraction from the networking sessions”.*

The following quotes support the theme of self-confidence.

Participant 7 said:

*“I have gained a lot of knowledge in terms of how to run the business in the logistic sector and how to deal with challenges as women in the logistics sector. I am now more confident.”*

The following quotes support the theme of leadership.

Participant 8 said:

*“Firstly, I learnt that you have to dress the part and master the business lingo because nobody will give you the time of day if they feel you are not worth them reading your profile. Presentation of yourself as well as the company makes a huge difference which is something we really are not focusing on, leadership, being a leader”.*

The following quotes support the theme on mentorship.

Participant 5 said:

*“I have found mentors through my networking skills and that has helped me grow my business and this has increased my outreach in other provinces.”*

Skills obtained from networking communities is further illustrated using word clouds. The following word cloud shows one of the skills which were dominant from the data analysis of this study.

The results indicate that females have developed valuable skills through their networking communities, including strong communication and negotiation abilities. These skills are believed to be beneficial for maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders and customers, ultimately contributing to the success of the business. Additionally, regular engagement and the sharing of experiences were found to

boost confidence and enhance leadership competencies among females, leading to improved business management and leadership, which is expected to drive business success.

Supporting this, literature suggests that a high level of social capital can also contribute to innovation (Efroni, 2017). The growing number of female-only networks has been recognized as a potential factor in the professional development and self-confidence of females (Roomi, 2013; Efroni, 2017). Furthermore, a study by Jardim (2021) recognises qualities needed for entrepreneurship like willingness to try new things, finding solutions, successful interaction, original thinking, introducing new ideas, taking the lead, believing in oneself, bouncing back from setbacks, making wise choices, inspiring others, clear and engaging communication, working together, building connections, and using technology to communicate.



**Figure 4.19: Word cloud of key words for skills obtained in social capital**

Figure 4.19 shows that skills such as communication and negotiation, highlighted in red, were central to the word analysis. These skills were of significance, as indicated by their large, bold font and distinct colour. Larger words represented the main themes, encompassing smaller subthemes behind them. Communication and negotiation are significant skills obtained from social networks, supported by literature. The success and performance of businesses are largely due to the entrepreneur’s management and leadership qualities, which drive innovativeness and business success (Subramaniam and Islam, 2014; Arcuri et al., 2023). A study by Sadera et al. (2019) revealed that female entrepreneurs possess good marketing, record-keeping, business management, critical thinking, planning and research, decision-making, organisation, and oral communication skills.

**4.6.4.3 Question 34: What is the role of social capital/networking in the growth and success of your business?**

The skills acquired from networking platforms are crucial for understanding the role of overall social capital in business success. Various themes emerged from the data analysis and are presented in Table 4.20 below.

**Table 4.20: Emerging themes on the role of social capital in the success of the business**

Theme	Response frequency
Exposure and business opportunities	9
Skills development	6
Business support and guidance and business angels	5
Good business management	4
Good stakeholder relations	3

Table 4.20 indicates that the majority of the participants with a frequency of nine (9) highlighted that social capital has assisted in getting more exposure and business opportunities for the growth and success of the business. A frequency of six (6) directed that it has assisted with skills development. A frequency of five (5) indicated business support and guidance and business angels. A frequency of four (4) indicated that social capital has improved business management and finally, a frequency of three (3) highlighted that it has assisted in stakeholder relations. A few responses are quoted below.

The following quotes support the theme of exposure and business opportunities.

Participant 2 said:

*“Being able to speak professionally has assisted me in getting more business opportunities, because [the] reality is how you speak matters, people pay attention.”*

Participant 4 said:

*“Exposure equals to more opportunities and deals and good communication means you close deals and closing deals is business growth and success.”*

The following quotes support the theme on skills development.

Participant 5 said:

*“Social networks really assisted me with learning new skills like communication, presentation and leadership is what helped me start my business and it has made my business what it is currently.”*

The following quotes support the theme on business support and guidance and business angels.

Participant 1 said:

*“The amount [number] of people (angels) surrounding my business whoever I call if I’m experiencing challenges, that is how I measure my networking benefits. Knowing that I have got people to help me in my business, this assists in the success of the business.”*

Participant 6 said:

*“I think it has provided support and guidance in terms of growing my business and how to overcome challenges within the logistics sector as it is difficult to operate in the sector.”*

Participant 8 said:

*“It has assisted me to seek advice and guidance from other females in the industry and also opportunities are shared in the group.”*

The following quotes support the theme of good business management.

Participant 13 said:

*“Networking can be good and bad, but it really depends on how one uses this social network, I have really gained good business management competencies through some networks, some are really female-dominated platforms.”*

The following quotes support the theme of good stakeholder relations.

Participant 8 said:

*“I would say learning and exposure to new opportunities also it is the quality of relationships and maintaining them, rather than the number of connections.”*

According to the social capital approach, network connections provide people and organisations with access to valuable resources and information (Sallah and Caesar, 2020; Sulistyono and Ayuni, 2020). Networks not only influence the entrepreneurial process but also create new opportunities by internalizing the abilities of other actors (Sallah and Caesar, 2020; Sulistyono and Ayuni, 2020). Business owners recognise that social network concepts can be useful and cost-effective ways to start new companies or expand existing ones (Doh and Zolnik, 2011).

#### **4.6.4.4 Summary of findings for objective 4**

The overall results vividly illustrate the impact of social capital on business success. It was noted that social networking is not gendered in general, but in male-dominated sectors, networking can be limited due to barriers such as sexual favours experienced by females and a lack of understanding of the business environment in male-dominated spaces.

The results also show that skills obtained from different networking platforms have helped female entrepreneurs leverage their businesses in many ways, including improved communication competencies, increased self-confidence, and leadership skills, all of which have a positive effect on business success. Additionally, the role of social capital in the success of female-owned businesses

revealed a positive benefit, with participants noting that social capital provides exposure to new business opportunities and serves as a support function for guidance and mentorship along the business journey. Based on the findings and discussions on social capital, it is evident that social capital enhances business success. The final objective of this study focuses on how work-life balance improves the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.

**4.6.5 SECTION H: OBJECTIVE 5: To assess how work-life balance improves the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector**

The objective of this study was to evaluate the impact of WLB on the success of female entrepreneurs. Work-life balance involves effectively managing personal and professional responsibilities (Sundaresan, 2014). Maintaining a healthy equilibrium between personal and professional life is crucial for overall well-being (Kagenavar and Kallimath, 2021). Academic research has also identified the conflict between work and family as a significant factor affecting business success (Kanapathipillai and Azam, 2019; Tuffour et al., 2021). Fatoki (2018) found that factors such as long working hours, role overload, and job overload negatively affect the WLB of female entrepreneurs. Agarwal and Lenka (2015) further emphasized the importance of WLB for success. Given the numerous duties and responsibilities that females have, the first question addressed in this study was how being a female entrepreneur impacts their WLB. To delve deeper into this objective, three specific questions (35, 36, and 37) were included in the interview guide.

**4.6.5.1 Question 35: How does being a female impact your work-life-balance?**

Female entrepreneurs juggle multiple roles, such as business owner, mother, and spouse, making it challenging for them to achieve a WLB (Aneke, 2015; Mutinta, 2017). This study aims to explore how being a female impacts WLB for entrepreneurs. The following themes emerged from the data analysis, as shown in Table 4.21.

**Table 4.21: Emerging themes on impact of work-life balance**

Theme	Response frequency
Challenging	12
Busy and tiring life	4
Support system	4
Difficult to switch different roles	2
Sacrifice	1
Coping strategies	1

Table 4.21 shows that the majority of the participants with a frequency of twelve (12) directed that trying to achieve a WLB is challenging. A frequency of four (4) indicated that being a female entrepreneur is tiring and they are always busy as they have other responsibilities at work, and they need a support system to balance work and life. A frequency of two (2) indicated that it is difficult to switch roles from being an entrepreneur (boss) and being a nurturing mother at home and finally, a frequency of one (1) directed that it requires so many sacrifices to be a female entrepreneur and one (1) indicated the need for effective coping strategies as a female entrepreneur.

Numerous potential business owners claimed that a lack of social support caused WLB issues, and most female business owners interviewed agree that a support system is very important in achieving WLB.

The following quotes support the theme of WLB being challenging.

Participant 4 said:

*“It is challenging but doable, you just need to know how to behave and where and when, balance things out. One part of your life must not dominate the other. I am a wife, a mother and a business woman and I need to ensure I keep all spheres of my life happy”.*

Participant 6 said:

*“Being a woman is a challenge alone because there are a lot of responsibilities we have as females. I make sure during work time I work and have time for my family. It is a huge challenge; at times it is impossible to achieve a work-life balance.”*

The following quotes support the theme on being busy and tiring for females to handle both work and home duties.

Participant 5 said:

*“I think because I am single mom of one, I take care of my son alone and as a female you never get a break from motherhood. Juggling being a mom and work is draining and it sometimes takes a toll on me because on some days I am really tired and overwhelmed by work and being a mom and I just want to stay in bed.”*

Participant 10 said:

*“It’s overwhelming since I have a number of responsibilities, if it’s not work it’s my kids or things I have to deal with at home but I try to balance [it all], even if it means sleeping late which will really make me tired the next day.”*

The following quotes support the theme of support systems.

Participant 12 said:

*“I have a very strong support structure, so I really do not feel much pressure from running my business. I am grateful and blessed.”*

Participant 15 said:

*“I think this takes us back to the beginning where you asked about marital status and having children. Well, as I mentioned females have lots of different roles to play and each role demands its time, so it is really not as easy as it may seem but I have a very supportive husband and family.”*

The following quotes support the theme of difficulty to switch between different roles.

Participant 8 said:

*“I often forget to switch off “boss mode” at home. I am not a tyrant per se but I have a tendency of being a “my way or the highway” [person], especially outside of the work gates. So, for me it is really difficult to switch to different roles, as a female, to try and balance the different roles that I play as a female.”*

The following quotes support the theme on sacrifice.

Participant 11 said:

*“Well, being a female comes with so many sacrifices and with so many roles and responsibilities alone; you are a daughter, sister an aunty a mother and even a wife without any career or business. However, with discipline I have managed to balance things out”.*

The following quotes support the theme on mastered coping strategies.

Participant 2 said:

*“I have matured – matured mentally and matured in business. Before I use to be drained a lot. You would find, I work and get home, I need to cook and prepare all the house duties, on weekends I am not available I am a pastor so I go to church and get busy in church. However, with experience I have managed everything. I do not sleep and I plan ahead. I make sure on Monday I plan my week and ensure that I balance things, I have a helper at home as well, which ensures that home is clean and ready for me to cook.”*

Participant 3 said:

*“Being a female entrepreneur, I find it easy to balance work-life because I have a domestic worker at home just to get more time for work-life.”*



#### 4.6.5.2 Question 36: What strategies/techniques are important to balance your work and life as a female entrepreneur?

A study conducted by Neneh and Welsh (2022) suggests that high levels of emotional and active support are necessary for female entrepreneurs to achieve good business performance and a balanced life. In addition to emotional and active support, participants were asked about their individual strategies and techniques that help them maintain WLB. These are depicted in Table 4.22, below.

**Table 4.22: Emerging themes on strategies of work-life balance**

Theme	Response frequency
Time management	7
Planning	6
Setting goals	5
Mental health and wellness	5
Good communication	3
Setting boundaries	2

Table 4.22 indicates that the majority of the participants with a frequency of seven (7) highlighted that time management is one of the most essential strategies needed to ensure a balanced life. A frequency of six (6) directed that planning beforehand assists to balance work and life and a frequency of five (5) illustrated that setting goals and having good mental health and wellness also assists one to have a WLB. A frequency of three (3) indicated that one needs to have good communication skills and finally, a frequency of two (2) directed that to balance work and life, one needs to set boundaries and limits. Below are quotes from the participants on strategies regarding WLB.

Participant 4 said:

*“Great communication with your partner. Because if your partner understands what you are doing then it is easier for you to glide because if you have not communicated properly, it affects your work and affects you emotionally. Because if I am good at home, I am going to be good everywhere else. Also putting boundaries between work and family time is important.”*

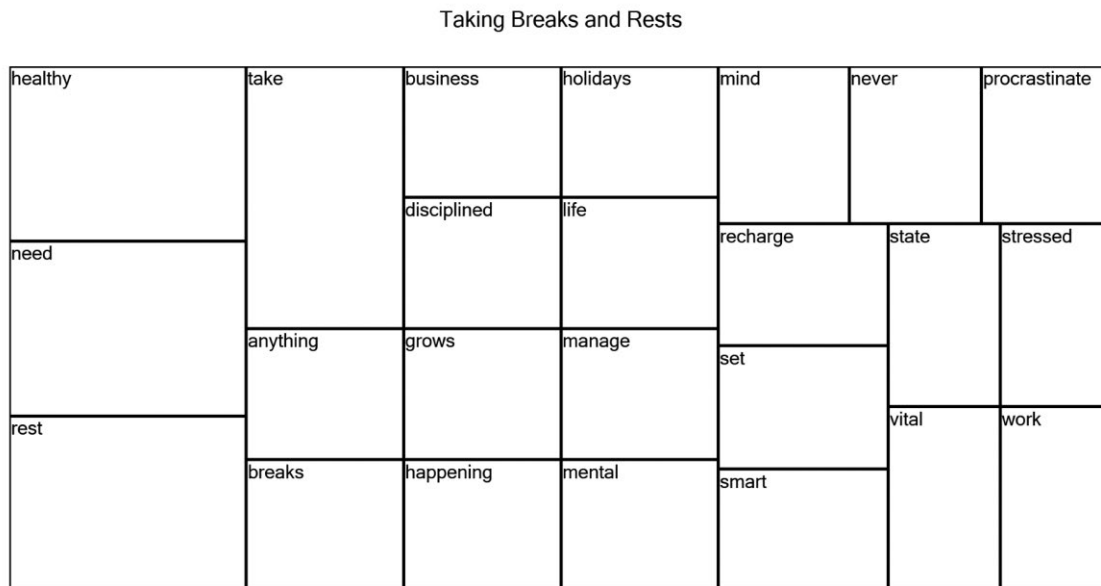
Participant 8 said:

*“I put my mental health first. I think the work-life boundary is crossed when I am not okay mentally, when I am operating from a hustle mentality and not putting my needs first. I think to balance the two, you need to put your mental health first. When I get home, I do not need to hustle.”*

Participant 9 said:

*“Time management! If I’m at home I focus only on home stuff and from 7am–4pm I focus on work. It’s hard though because something requires your attention at that moment/hour, so you sometimes break your own rules and juggle everything.”*

The following tree map illustrates the different strategies participants highlighted to ensure WLB.



**Figure 4.21: Tree map analysing strategies to implement work-life balance**

Figure 4.21 displays the strategies used by participants to achieve a good WLB. The largest three boxes in the first column contain the words: “healthy”, “need”, and “rest”. These words indicate that participants recognize the importance of rest and maintaining their health in their busy lives as business owners and females. The third column's second box contains the word “disciplined”, highlighting the necessity of discipline for female entrepreneurs to maintain stability between work and personal life.

The overall results show different strategies for achieving WLB for female entrepreneurs. The results highlighted the ways in which females implemented strategies to ensure they contribute successfully to their business success and overall life satisfaction. Time management was one of the key strategies, followed by planning and goal setting. Additionally, mental health and wellness, good communication, and setting boundaries were also important factors.

Literature that supports the above results suggests that achieving WLB requires individuals to prioritize their time by making a list of tasks and classifying what needs time and attention through proper planning (Heath, 2012; Sarkis, 2023). It is also important to ensure that daily activities align with these priorities, values, and goals. Coping strategies, such as taking care of one’s mental health and wellness, can encourage a higher quality of life (Heath, 2012; Sarkis, 2023). Sarkis (2023) also suggests creating clear boundaries between work and family life as a main strategy for work-life balance. Additional

strategies include staying organized and efficient, setting boundaries, and improving communication both in the workplace and at home (Heath, 2012; Sarkis, 2023).

**4.6.5.3 Question 37: How does work-life balance improve the growth and success of your business?**

The impact of being a female on work and life has been clearly outlined, along with different strategies to ensure a good balance. This study aims to understand how WLB improves female entrepreneurs' business and success. The following themes emerged, as presented in Table 4.23.

**Table 4.23: Emerging themes on the improvement of business success when gained work-life balance**

Theme	Response frequency
Increased productivity in the business	7
Informed decision making	7
Increased innovation and creativity	5
Good quality of business performance	3
Happy team	2

Table 4.23 indicates that the majority of the participants with a frequency of seven (7) highlighted that a WLB increases productivity in the business; and one makes more informed decisions for the business. A frequency of five (5) illustrated that they increase in innovation, and a frequency of three (3) indicated a good quality of business performance. Finally, a frequency of two (2) directed that a WLB will create a happy team in the workplace. The following are quotes from participants on this topic.

Participant 1 said:

*“It’s okay for me I think if you can manage your life, you can conquer anything in life. Therefore, you need to ensure that your life is well balanced for you to be able to think of innovative ideas and less on [about] problems in your life. Be intentional in growing your business and yourself.”*

Participant 4 said:

*“Trying to balance work and life improves my life and business in a way that I am more structured and structure breeds success. Aaahhhh, once you have a solid structure you can give it your full attention and give it your utmost best and that feeds into all other areas because you are more concise with all the things you are doing. Your quality of output is better and the reward of that is money!”*

Participant 15 said:

*“Work-life management is the word I would use and not balance. When you better manage and plan, the smoother the business operations and your life. A healthy mental state is vital, you can’t manage anything when you are stressed. Business grows with a healthy mindset. You become more focused and innovative when you are at your best self.”*

In addition to the thematic tables, the tree map is utilized to provide a more detailed presentation of the themes related to setting goals. The intention is to gain a better understanding of how to set goals in order to achieve WLB.



**Figure 4. 22: Tree map analysing work-life strategies for the participants**

Figure 4.22 displays keywords that were prominent among the majority of participants when discussing strategies to improve work-life balance. The most emphasized strategy was setting achievable goals. In the first column, the first box contains the word “goals”, and the second box contains the word “achieve”. This reflects the common discussion among participants that setting realistic and achievable goals is essential for maintaining a healthy WLB. The third column, top box, contains the word “measurable”, indicating that in addition to setting achievable goals, they must also be measurable. This allows for tracking progress and performance in both business and personal activities, helping individuals to know when to exert more effort and when to take a break.

#### **4.6.5.4 Summary of findings for objective 5**

The final objective of the study was to assess how WLB improves the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. The findings revealed that maintaining WLB was a challenge, but females are encouraged to find ways to integrate them into equally valuable components of life. This proactive strategy helps integrate WLB by clarifying values and priorities (Heath, 2012; Sarkis, 2023). A study by Egga (2022) revealed a significant association between WLB and the performance of female

entrepreneurs. This indicates that female entrepreneurs who experience greater levels of flexible work arrangements tend to have higher levels of performance (Egga, 2022).

This study supports the results of this research, which notes that WLB increases productivity in the business. A study conducted by Neneh and Welsh (2022) concurs and suggests that high levels of emotional and active support are necessary for female entrepreneurs to achieve high business performance. Further studies indicate that WLB is important for relationships and health, and enhances employee productivity and overall performance (Heath, 2012; Sarkis, 2023). The results of this study coincide with these studies, as it was highlighted that WLB improves decision-making in the business, as one would have clear mental health and wellness, increased creativity, and ultimately, a good quality of life and performance in the business, leading to happy employees in the workplace. With the above findings and literature, it is safe to conclude that there is a clear link between an appropriate WLB, good quality of life, and improved business success.

#### **4.7 CONCLUSION**

The chapter discussed the findings from participant responses and compared them to similar past research. The study's research objectives were achieved and supported by literature in some cases, but contradicted past outcomes in others, providing a basis for future research. The following chapter outlines recommendations and conclusions about the critical success factors of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The study's findings were presented in the previous chapter and subsequently discussed. The present chapter summarises the main topics addressed in the earlier chapters of the thesis. The main discoveries are highlighted again and conclusions are made. Additionally, the study examines the consequences, insights to understanding, and restrictions. In conclusion, suggestions for future research are introduced.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study was to explore the lived experiences of female entrepreneurs in male-dominated sectors with a focus on their critical success factors. Furthermore, the study sought to advance gender equality and diversity and to engage female entrepreneurs in logistics by bringing new perspectives to the table and promoting the success of female entrepreneurs in male-dominated spaces.

The study comprises of five chapters. Chapter One introduced the research, focusing on the significance of female entrepreneurship on economic development. It also focused on the gender segregation in the entrepreneurship space and particularly in male-dominated spaces and provided a brief background on the development of gender equality in entrepreneurship post-apartheid. Further to this, the chapter highlighted the problem statement of the study which is the under-representation of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector and the research objectives. Furthermore, the chapter highlighted the rationale of the study and an overview of the methodology. Finally, it outlined the limitations of the study and a brief structure of the dissertation.

Chapter Two outlined the concept of entrepreneurship, followed by the gender inequality in entrepreneurship with a focus on female entrepreneurship. Feminism theories were briefly discussed which mainly highlighted that males and females are equal (liberal feminism). Further to this, the chapter included an in-depth discussion on female entrepreneurship in male-dominated spaces, motivation factors for female entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial skills of female entrepreneurs and it also provided an overview of female entrepreneurship in the logistics sector. Furthermore, the chapter reviewed challenges of female entrepreneurship, together with entrepreneurial strategies to attempt to address these challenges. Finally, the chapter outlined measures of business success and the critical success factors of female entrepreneurship and gave an overview of the conceptual framework for the study adopted from the RBV theory.

Chapter Three outlined the methodology employed for the study and provided a comprehensive outline of the methods employed in research employing the research onion technique. The study thoroughly examined the research population, sample, and sampling procedures, as well as the data collection

methods and data analysis, with a presentation of the rationale for their selection. Furthermore, concerns about the dependability and accuracy of data, particularly in relation to the preliminary testing of research interviews, as well as ethical concerns for the study were addressed

Chapter Four was devoted in presenting and analysing the data, as well as the deliberating research findings in line with the study objectives, present theories, and literature. The key findings presented in Chapter Four are highlighted in the next section.

### **5.3 KEY FINDINGS**

The summary of findings of the study relating to research objectives are presented below.

#### ***5.3.1 To determine how financial capital enhances the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector***

While the core of this objective was to determine how financial capital enhances the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector, access to financial capital was the foundation building up to the core objective. The findings reveal that a dominating financial factor was access to finances. Most of the female entrepreneurs that participated in the study used personal savings, family support, retirement funds and deposits from clients. Only one participant had benefited from a female empowerment programme by the South African government. Additionally, while access to finances was the key issue, findings also reveal that most participants relied on external consultants and support from their spouses to manage their business finances. Notwithstanding the core findings, the results show that access to finances does enhance the success of the business. The findings reveal that most participants invested business funds back into the business to grow and expand the business, which in turn enhanced the business success. Furthermore, participants used the funds to invest in skills development for their employees and it was indicated that employees are also a priority for the success of the businesses.

#### ***5.3.2 To determine the role of human capital in the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector***

To determine the role of human capital in the success of female entrepreneurs' businesses, one needs to first determine the skills and competencies of female entrepreneurs. The findings reveal that while females work in male-dominated spaces, their skills and capabilities are not gendered. This means that the skills of males and females are not determined by their gender. While skills are not gendered, education, training and prior work experience were found to be the key factors that enhanced female entrepreneurs' skills, which in turn assisted to improve the success of the business. The core of this objective was to determine the role of human capital in the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. The empirical findings reveal that human capital plays a significant role in female-owned businesses. Most participants indicated that with human capital, there is some level of benefits

for their business' success. To elaborate on this point, participants directed that human capital assists with stakeholder relations, improved self-confidence, improved business performance and an improvement in innovation. These are improved due to entrepreneurial skills developed from the different platforms of skills development, including education and training amongst others. Finally, participants emphasised the importance of skills development of the team and teamwork which ensures smooth business operations and in turn enhances the business success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.

### ***5.3.3 To investigate how innovation promotes the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector***

It is noted that there is a link between human capital and enhanced skills which leads to improved innovative abilities. This objective's key aim was to investigate if innovation promotes the success of female entrepreneurs. However, one needs to first determine if female entrepreneurs are indeed innovative. The empirical findings reveal that innovation is not gendered and that females are indeed innovative. Nevertheless, it was noted that due to limited skills and resources, one might not be fully innovative. The findings also show that female entrepreneurs play a role to ensure innovation in their businesses. Most participants directed that they provide leadership in the organisation and further, they ensure that employees are satisfied because happy employees increase productivity, which leads to the success of the business. Furthermore, it was highlighted by most participants that by investing in skills development – which was a finding linked to Objective One – and by facilitating teamwork – which is a finding linked to Objective Two – their employees can provide new strategies and systems to the business development and success. Over and above this, the findings clearly show that innovation promotes business success. The majority of the participants indicated that innovation leads to business expansion, improves efficient and effective strategies and systems in their businesses and this greatly impacts the success of female entrepreneurs' businesses in the logistics sector.

### ***5.3.4 To examine the role of social capital in the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector***

Having the right skills and being innovative can only go so far without social capital. This objective was to examine the role of social capital on the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. First, it was highlighted that networking abilities are not gendered. However, in male-dominated sectors, networking can be limited. This is due to barriers such as the sexual favours expected of females and not being able to grasp the business language in male-dominated spaces. Nevertheless, the majority of the participants indicated that they are in some form of a social network group and these platforms assist female entrepreneurs to enhance their skills in communication and negotiation, self-confidence, and leadership competences. With that being said, the skills mentioned are some of the key entrepreneurial skills for female entrepreneurs. Participants further directed that these skills contributed

to the success of their businesses. Further to this, in results on the role that social capital plays on the success of female-owned businesses, participants claimed that social capital assists with exposure to new business opportunities. Finally, the findings reveal that social network platforms contribute as a support structure for guidance and business angels that are available to guide and mentor them along the business journey.

### ***5.3.5 To assess how work-life balance improves the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector***

Over and above the findings from the four objectives, it is important to assess how WLB improves the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. The findings reveal that a dominating factor was that female entrepreneurs found that it was very challenging to achieve WLB, due to the numerous roles and responsibilities that females are expected to play, alongside running their businesses. The participants further elaborated that one or more support systems are essential for female entrepreneurs to fully thrive in their businesses. This may come in the form of support from one's partner, family and friends who have a shared vision. Additionally, the empirical findings reveal that females find it very difficult to switch between different roles, between being a boss at work and being a nurturing parent at home. This negatively impacts the family, precisely the children. It was observed that female entrepreneurs had developed coping strategies that assisted with promoting WLB. The findings reveal that most participants directed that time management, planning and setting goals, mental health and wellness, good communication and boundary setting as some of the key strategies adopted by female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.

The findings reveal that there is a link between WLB and the performance of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. The majority of the participants revealed that WLB increases productivity in the business. Finally, the findings highlighted that WLB improves decision-making as one would have healthy mental health, which further increases creativity. It was further revealed that WLB also leads to a good quality of life and happy employees in the workplace. This then leads to improved business performance and the success of female entrepreneurs' businesses in the logistics sector.

## **5.4 CONCLUSIONS**

The following conclusions were made built on the findings of the study:

### ***5.4.1 Financial capital and the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector***

Access to finance is one of the major dominating issues for female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. As a result, female entrepreneurs use their personal savings, family support, retirement funds and deposits from clients and very few female entrepreneurs benefit from female empowerment programmes provided by the South African government. Female entrepreneurs are in a way dependent when it comes to financial literacy and financial management. They relied more on external consultants

and the married participants relied on their husbands. However, based on the empirical findings, financial capital improves the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. Finances assist female entrepreneurs with business growth, by investing funds back into the business to expand the business and assist with skills development of their employees.

#### ***5.4.2 Human capital and the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector***

Information and skills are essential factors for the success of a business. Competencies and skills of entrepreneurs are not gendered. This implies that males and females are equal when it comes to skills and capabilities. Irrespective, female entrepreneurs still work extra hard to prove their space in the logistics sector. However, in order to further enhance their human capital, female entrepreneurs need to invest in education and training for themselves and their employees as this will benefit their businesses. Further to this, prior work experience contributes to the business success. This is because female entrepreneurs have developed useful skills from their prior work experiences. In conclusion, human capital plays a crucial role in the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. Human capital assists female entrepreneurs with stakeholder relations, improved self-confidence, improved business performance and improved innovation. Finally, female entrepreneurs placed emphasis on skills development and teamwork in their organisations and this results in improved productivity and business success for female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.

#### ***5.4.3 Innovation and the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector***

Innovative capabilities are found to not be gendered. Both males and females are equally capable when it comes to being innovative. Female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector are innovative and they provide leadership in their organisations to promote innovation. However, limited resources and skills are found to be a barrier for innovation for female entrepreneurs. Female entrepreneurs also prioritise their employees and ensure that their staff members are happy; this leads to increased productivity in the workplace. Furthermore, female entrepreneurs invest in skills development of their staff members and teamwork to enhance creativity. Finally, being creative and innovative leads to business growth and success. Therefore, innovation promotes the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. Innovation improves efficiency, effectiveness and systems in female entrepreneurs' businesses.

#### ***5.4.4 Social capital and the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector***

Female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector highlighted that social networking is not gendered. This means that both males and females have equal social skills. However, in male-dominated sectors networking can be limited and this is due to barriers of sexual favours expected from females and not grasping the business language in male-dominated spaces. Nevertheless, female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector are involved and they engage in social networking platforms. This assists females to enhance their skills in communication and negotiation, self-confidence, and leadership competences. These skills mentioned are some of the key entrepreneurial skills for female entrepreneurs. Social

capital improves the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. The impact includes exposure to new business opportunities, support structures for guidance and business angels that are available to guide them and finally, mentorship on the business journey.

#### ***5.4.5 Work-life balance and the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector***

Female entrepreneurs in logistics sector encounter numerous roles and responsibilities of being a businesswoman, a mother, fulfilling home and wifely duties and this makes it very challenging to achieve WLB. Female entrepreneurs find it difficult to switch different roles when it comes to being a boss at work and being a nurturing parent at home. This negatively impacts the family, specifically the children. Females need strong support systems to try to improve on WLB challenges. Further to this, female entrepreneurs have developed some coping strategies along the years of their entrepreneurial experiences. These coping strategies comprise of time management, planning, setting goals, ensuring mental health and wellness, good communication and setting boundaries. Female entrepreneurs found that with an optimal WLB they are more productive in their businesses which can lead to business success. A proper WLB assists entrepreneurs to improve in their decision-making skills because they claim to have a clear mental state and personal wellness. It also leads to good a quality of life and happy employees in the workplace. Finally, female entrepreneurs highlighted that all these benefits of WLB improve business performance and the success of their businesses.

### **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

#### ***5.5.1 Access to finance, financial literacy and financial management***

- Female entrepreneurs should actively seek out financial support from the South African government as it was noted that female entrepreneurs indicated that they have heard about the support but have not received it.
- Government should reduce the bureaucratic requirement when it comes to requirements for female entrepreneurs' support programmes, as females were previously disadvantaged.
- The private sector should prioritise female entrepreneurs by outsourcing services from them and contributing a portion of their corporate social responsibility towards female entrepreneurship programs.
- Government should improve on sector-specific funding programmes; programmes that will cater to and for the logistics sector. It was noted that some females received funding from programmes from other sectors, i.e. the construction sector.
- Female entrepreneurs should invest in education and training on financial literacy and management.

### ***5.5.2 Sector specific education and training for skills development***

- Female entrepreneurs should invest in education and skills related to the logistics sector as it was observed that female entrepreneurs did not express much about the technical skills of the logistics sector. It was noted that females have different educational backgrounds and not specifically on the logistics sector.
- More accessible skills development programmes specific to the logistics sector should be made available for female entrepreneurs as it was observed that trainings were not sector focused.

### ***5.5.3 Digital/technological innovation and access to resources***

- Female entrepreneurs should expose themselves to more digital innovation as the logistics sector is claimed to be digitising at a rapid rate.
- The government should assist female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector by providing more resources to enhance their growth and success.

### ***5.5.4 Sector specific social networks and programmes***

- Female entrepreneurs should form social networks specifically for females in the logistics sector as it was noted that female entrepreneurs were not very involved in any social networks that assisted in the business space.
- Female entrepreneurs should explore more social networks with mixed genders to gain a holistic view and understanding of the logistics sector as it was noted that females were not involved much in male-dominated networks due to the limitations of the business language males normally use in their networks.

### ***5.5.5. Increase in support structures for promoting work-life balance***

- Female entrepreneurs should get access to more psychological support systems. It was noted that female entrepreneurs get tired and find it difficult to switch roles from being a tough female at work to a more nurturing mother at home.
- There should be more spaces where females can gather and share crucial knowledge and experiences pertaining to how they can navigate the issues of how to plan better, for them to not feel like they are not coping when they have to balance the challenges of both life and work.

## **5.6 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Female entrepreneurship continues to be topical to the researchers and it has been observed that there has been an increase globally, due to difficult and changing economic circumstances. However, females are still not equally represented in all sectors as there are some sectors with female over- or underrepresentation (Mroczek-Dąbrowska and Gaweł, 2020; Olu-Owolabi, Amoo, Samuel, Oyeyemi and Adejumo, 2020). The gender gap is related not only to lower rates of female than male entrepreneurship (Anambane and Adom, 2018), but also to females' sectoral segregation, and their poorer performance with fewer financial resources, small businesses, and fewer employees (Pisani, 2018; Mroczek-Dąbrowska and Gaweł, 2020). In sectors such as logistics and transport, the gender ratio

is so skewed that it trumps any statistics that might indicate a trend of improvement and development (Contractor, 2021; Escap, 2021). However, as in most other sectors, it is encouraging to see that women in the logistics industry are gradually taking on roles that were traditionally only thought to be suitable for and fulfilled by men. It was observed in this study that although females are slowly penetrating the logistics sector, they are not yet at the core of the sector but are situated at the edge of the sector, mainly offering services in the logistics sector and mainly benefiting on the 'low hanging fruit' in the logistics sector. The government should continue to prioritise and reduce bureaucratic requirements for female entrepreneur support programs, specifically in male-dominated spaces. The government and private sector should prioritise female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector by outsourcing services from them. The corporate sector should also contribute a portion of their corporate social responsibility towards female entrepreneurship programs in male-dominated spaces.

Female entrepreneurs face numerous challenges that hinder their capabilities in the entrepreneurship space. These challenges include lack of adequate training and skills, as well as lack of access to financial capital. A male-owned business is more likely to receive financial support than a female-owned business (Small biz genius, 2020). The study is in support of the above findings as the results of this study clearly showed that 67% of the participants started their businesses using their own savings. Hence, government and policy makers should insist on redressing gender inequalities when it comes to entrepreneurship and revisit the implementation of policies that stipulate that females should be prioritised when it comes to government support.

Despite some challenges, studies show that there are females who successfully penetrate male-dominated sectors, mainly in the construction, production logistics, sales logistics and transportation sectors (Wright, 2016). The mastery of information and skills, known as human capital, is a valuable resource (Schultz, 2010). The findings from the study direct that 42.9% of the female entrepreneurs that participated in the current study hold honours degrees. Participants with a master's degree or a diploma were both 21.4%. This indicates that the importance of education and skills should be re-emphasised and there should be more accessible opportunities for female entrepreneurs to strengthen their capabilities and skills, to increase their chances of success and growth in their businesses. Furthermore, females should be willing to learn and expose themselves to networks and innovation for growth in business.

## **5.7 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE**

The study contributes to the body of knowledge on female entrepreneurship in male-dominated spaces, specifically in the logistics sector. The findings of the study emphasis the need for public and private sector intervention in programmes supporting female entrepreneurship in South Africa to develop female entrepreneurs in male-dominated sectors with financial capital as start-up capital. This investment in female entrepreneurship would imply the development of and contribution to females in

the economic development of South Africa, as females have a record of contributing largely to the GDP of the country. Furthermore, the study promulgates the need for female entrepreneurs to invest in information, education, and skills development that are sector-specific within logistics (human capital). The study also contributes to the importance of digital/technological skills and innovation for female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector. Further to this, the study indicated the significance of access to sector-specific social networks and a balance of both male and female social networks, to ensure a holistic view and experience of the sector. The study also contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals, precisely, Goal 5 which aims to empower females and achieve gender equality (United Nations, 2015).

Finally, the current study contributes to knowledge on the success factors of females in male-dominated sectors by revealing the need for and importance of all the five success factors that government, private and the business support schemes should focus on to enhance the success of female owned businesses. Importantly, female entrepreneurs should ensure that they implement all the five factors to run successful businesses as a linkage was observed between all these factors.

## **5.8 STUDY LIMITATIONS**

Although the study has provided an image of female entrepreneurship in this male-dominated sector, precisely in the logistics sector in the cities of Pietermaritzburg and Durban, in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, it cannot claim to offer an all-inclusive examination of the wide existing pragmatic research on the topic. However, the study laid a foundation for future studies on the subject in South Africa. This is because of the sampling technique used to identify participants. The study employed a non-probability sampling method known as the snowball sampling method. In this procedure, the researcher contacts a small number of people in the target group, who then recommend other individuals, co-workers, or social circles that meet the criteria of the target population. Hence, this sampling technique is regarded as a constraining factor for the referral system, as the outcomes cannot be generalised to the entire female population in the logistics sector of the selected cities. However, the study revives a discussion about the representation of female entrepreneurs in male-dominated spaces, as it provides insights into the success factors of female entrepreneurs in the logistics industry in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

## **5.9 AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

There has been a rise in female entrepreneurship in the world. In male-dominated sectors, females are still underrepresented. Although there has been an increase of female representation in these spaces, more research is needed to understand the nature of their entrepreneurial efforts and the required support. Since the current study utilised a small sample of 15 participants in the cities of Pietermaritzburg and Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, future research studies need to expand the scope of the study to cover other provinces of South Africa. Future research studies should also consider applying different research methods and expanding the data sources to include the views of

the female entrepreneurs and their employees to explore the success factors through different lenses for richer and more comprehensive results. Furthermore, future studies should consider conducting a comparative study of the female entrepreneurs and their male counterparts in the logistics sector to examine the success factors and highlight gender differences, if they exist. A comparative study can also be conducted between female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector and other male-dominated spaces such as construction, engineering and information technology, to determine sectorial differences and draw possible learnings from the different groups for better representation and the advancement of gender equality.

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## APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



08 October 2021

Nompilo Sharon Dladla (215007347)  
School Of Man Info Tech & Gov  
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear NS Dladla,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00003436/2021

Project title: Critical success factors of female entrepreneurs in male-dominated spaces: An exploratory study of the logistics sector in South Africa

Degree: Masters

### Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 06 September 2021 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) 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.

This approval is valid until 08 October 2022.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

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)

/dd

### Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3387 Email: [hssrec@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:hssrec@ukzn.ac.za) Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

## APPENDIX B :ETHICAL CLEARANCE AMENDED



16 April 2024

Nompilo Sharon Dladla (215007347)  
School Of Man Info Tech & Gov  
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear NS Dladla,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00003436/2021

Project title: Critical success factors of female entrepreneurs in male-dominated spaces: An exploratory study of the logistics sector in South Africa

Amended title: Critical success factors of female entrepreneurs in male-dominated spaces: An exploratory study of the logistics sector in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Degree: Masters

### Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 08 April 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.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

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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  
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Feeding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

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## **APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

### **UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)**

#### **APPLICATION FOR ETHICS APPROVAL**

##### **For research with human participants**

##### **Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research**

Date:

Greetings,

My name is Nompilo Dladla, I am an MCOM student in the School of Management, IT and Governance, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on the Critical success factors of female entrepreneurs in male-dominated spaces: An exploratory study of the logistics sector in South Africa. The study is expected to include female entrepreneurs in the logistics operating in Pietermaritzburg and Durban in KwaZulu-Natal province. The interviews will be held virtually using Zoom meetings as we are currently in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. The researcher will ensure that all Covid-19 protocols are observed where necessary.

The duration of your participation if you choose to participate and remain in the study is expected to be 30–45 minutes.

The study will provide no direct benefits to participants. However, the study aims to advance gender equality and diversity, and engage female entrepreneurs in logistics by bringing new perspectives to the table, thus promoting the success of female entrepreneurs in predominantly male-dominated industries.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (*HSSREC/00003436/2021*).

In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at [215007347@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:215007347@stu.ukzn.ac.za) or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION**

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban 4000 KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: [HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za)

Your participation in the study is voluntary and by participating, you are granting the researcher permission to use your responses. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in the study. Your anonymity will be maintained by the researcher and the School of Management, I.T. & Governance and your responses will not be used for any purposes outside of this study.

All data, both electronic and hard copy, will be securely stored during the study and archived for five years. After this time, all data will be destroyed.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in the study, please contact me or my research supervisor at the numbers listed above.

Researcher

Nompilo Dladla

Email [215007347@stu.ukzn.ac.za](mailto:215007347@stu.ukzn.ac.za)

Cell no: [REDACTED]

Supervisor

Dr E. Derera

Email [Dererae@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Dererae@ukzn.ac.za)

Telephone no: 033 260 5781

Sincerely,

Nompilo Dladla



## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE

### Critical success factors of female entrepreneurs in male-dominated spaces: An exploratory study of the logistics sector in South Africa

#### Section A: Demographic Information

1. In which of the following age groups do you fall under (in years)?

20- 30	31-40	41-50	51-60

2. What is your race?

White	Black	Coloured	Indian	Other

3. What is your marital status?

Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed	Separated

4. How does your marital status affect you as an entrepreneur?

5. Do you have children? If yes how many?

0-2	3-5	6-8	9- More

6. How does having a child /children impact you as a female entrepreneur?

7. What is your highest educational qualification?

Secondary level	Matric	Diploma	Bachelor's degree	Honour's degree	Masters degree	Other, please specify

8. What is your career background and how does it relate to your business?

#### Section B: Business /Career profile

9. How best would you describe your type of business?

10. Please explain what motivated you to start a business and specifically a business in the logistics sector.

11. How did you acquire your business?

12. How long have you owned or operated this business (in years)?

1-5	6-10	11-15	Other

**Section C: Measures of business success**

13. How many employees did you have before the Covid-19 pandemic, and how many employees do you currently have?

1-10	11-20	21-30	31-40	41- more

14. What was the annual revenue for your business before the Covid-19 pandemic and how much is your annual revenue now?

R50 000-R100 000	R150 000-R200-000	R250 000-R300 000	R350 000-R400 000	R450 000 -more

15. How do you measure your financial growth and success in your business?

16. How do you measure your entrepreneurial skills for the growth and success of your business?

17. How do you measure your innovation for the growth and success of your business?

18. How do you measure your social capital/networking for the growth and success of your business?

19. How do you measure your level of stability in your work-life balance for the growth and success of your business?

**Section D: Financial capital and success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector**

20. What financial resource(s) did you use to start your business?

21. How does being a female impact your access abilities to financial capital?

22. What are the priority areas of finance in your business that improve the growth and success of your business?

23. How can you use financial capital to improve the growth and success of your business?

**Section E: Role of human capital on the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector**

24. How does being a female impact on the utilisation of human capital in your business?

25. How does human capital development such as training and education contribute to the success of your business?

26. What impact does your prior work experience have on the growth and success of your business?

27. How does human capital enhance the growth and success of your business?

**Section F: Innovation and success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector**

28. How does being a female impact your innovation capabilities?

29. What is your role as a female entrepreneur on innovation for the growth and success of your business?

30. What role does your team play in innovation for the growth and success of your business?

31. How does innovation promote the growth and success of your business?

**Section G: Role of social capital in the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector.**

32. How does being a female impact your networking abilities?

33. What skills have you obtained, if any, in networking platforms that improve the growth and success of your business?

34. What role does social capital/networking play in the growth and success of your business?

**Section H: How work-life balance improves the success of female entrepreneurs in the logistics sector**

35. How does being a female impact your work-life balance?

36. What strategies/techniques are important to balance your work and life as a female entrepreneur?

37. How does work-life balance improve the growth and success of your business?