

**PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND THE NEW WORLD
OF WORK: A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR RESILIENT AND AGILE
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

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Declaration of Authenticity

I declare that the research project, **Private HE Institutions and the New World of Work: A Strategic Framework for Resilient and Agile Business Management**, is my own work and that each source of information used has been acknowledged by means of a complete Harvard Referencing System. This thesis has not been submitted before for any other research project, degree, or examination at any university.



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Dedication

I wish to dedicate this thesis to my late best friend, **Theo Emmanuel Moyo**, who always shared my joys. You were the drive and inspiration to complete this journey. Your memory was with me throughout the process and was a significant motivator to bring this research to completion.

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Abstract

Higher Education (HE) and contemporary commercial enterprises are undergoing significant transformations driven by various disruptions such as technological advancements, socio-political changes, climate change, and economic shifts. These disruptions expose uncertainties, complexity, and the need to deal with changing environments. Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs), such as commercial enterprises in general, face various disruptions to business operations. This study explores the challenges facing PHEIs in today's rapidly changing business environment, driven by technological advancements, socio-political changes, climate change, and economic shifts. This study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the strategies and practices employed by PHEIs to manage their businesses and identify potential areas for improving their resilience and agility. The literature review highlights the current approaches and identifies gaps in the existing literature. It reveals that while some studies have examined disruptions in commercial enterprises, limited research focuses explicitly on PHEIs and their response to the changing business landscape. This thesis aims to address this research gap and contribute to the existing knowledge in the field. An interpretive approach was adopted to achieve the research aims, employing a phenomenological case study methodology within a qualitative framework. Data were collected through interviews conducted with seventeen participants from various PHEIs and contemporary businesses. The interview findings were analysed, identifying six common themes relevant to the research questions. This study's main findings reveal PHEIs' challenges in managing their businesses in a rapidly changing environment. Additionally, a Resilience and Agility-Building Framework (RABF) was developed based on insights from the lived experiences of the PHEI participants interviewed. This framework offers practical guidance for PHEIs seeking to enhance their resilience and agility in the face of disruptions. The conclusions drawn from this research emphasise the importance of adopting innovative business practices to promote agility and resilience in a disruptive environment. PHEIs must embrace digital technologies and tools to enhance their operations, acquire new skills and competencies, and embrace new working methods such as remote and flexible work arrangements. These findings have implications for PHEIs in navigating disruptions and thriving in the rapidly changing business landscape. Overall, this thesis contributes to the existing knowledge by providing insights into the challenges faced by PHEIs and offering practical recommendations for improving their resilience and agility. The research underscores the significance of innovation, adaptability, and leveraging opportunities presented by the 4IR/5IR revolutions for businesses to succeed in the evolving landscape.

Keywords: Private Higher Education Institutions; New World of Work; Strategic Framework; Resilience; Agility; Business Management; Business Innovation; Disruption

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAU	Association of African Universities
AAU	Addis Ababa University
ABE	Alternative Basic Education
ADB	African Development Bank
ANC	African National Congress
AMA	American Management Association
ASSAF	Academy of Science of South Africa
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHET	Centre for High Education Trust
CUE	Commission for University Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EDSP	Education Sector Development Program
ETQAA	Education and Training Quality Assurance Agency
ENQC	Ethiopian National Qualifications Framework
ETP	Education and Training Policy
FMOE	Federal Ministry of Education
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
GENFETQSF	General and Further Education and Training Sub-Framework
GEQDF	General Education Quality Diagnosis Framework
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
FET	Further Education and Training
HE	Higher Education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEP	Higher Education Proclamation
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Council
HERA	Higher Education and Research Act
HERQA	Higher Education Relevance and Quality Agency
HEQSF	Higher Education and Training Sub-Framework
HESC	Higher Education Strategy Centre
HESO	Higher Education System Overhaul
HKUST	Hong Kong University of Science and Technology
IFAE	Integrated Functional Adult Education
LSC	London School of Commerce
LUMS	Lahore University of Management Sciences
NDP	National Development Plan
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NUS	National University of Singapore

NAICS	North American Industry Classification System
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
OFFA	Office for Fair Access
OFS	Office for Students
OQSF	Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework
PHEI	Private Higher Education Institution
QC	Quality Council
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
QLFS	Quarterly Labour Force Survey
RBT	Resource Based Theory
RDI	Resource Development International
ROT	Return on Investment
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Skills Education Training Authorities in South Africa
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SAIIE	Southern African Institute for Industrial Engineering
TESO	Teacher Education System Overhaul
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UK	United Kingdom
TVET	Technical, Vocational Education Training
VCU	Virtual Colleges/Universities
VRIN	Valuable, Rare, Limited, and Non-substitutable
VUCA	Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity
WGU	Western Governors University
WTO	World Trade Organisation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

In the past, South Africa has faced significant challenges in its education system. The country has grappled with issues such as unequal access to education, disparities in educational outcomes between different regions and socioeconomic groups, and a lack of infrastructure and resources in some schools. These challenges have had a negative impact on the overall quality of education in South Africa (Spaull, 2013; Taylor & Vinjevold, 2018). The current state of Higher Education (HE) is facing numerous challenges, including business disruptions, the increasing cost of education, maintaining quality, and enhancing student learning experiences (Rambe & Moeti, 2016). These challenges have sparked discussions on how to revamp HE delivery to meet the needs of diverse students and align teaching methods with the changes brought about by these disruptions (Rambe & Moeti, 2016). These disruptions range from the politicisation of education curricula (Carstens, 2016), the introduction of new technology (Liu, Lee, & Lee, 2020), and the global pandemic resulting in movement restrictions and severe economic damage (Nicola, Alsafi, Sohrabi, Kerwan, Al-Jabir, Iosifidis, Agha & Agha, 2020; Case, 2017a). The impact of these disruptions presents in various studies, such as Africanisation debates on the curriculum (CHE, 2016), the fourth and fifth industrial revolutions (Jansen, 2021), and the effects on businesses which shut down (Le Grange, 2016; Leibowitz, 2016; Lockett, 2016).

PHEIs play a significant role in the global landscape of higher education, offering alternative pathways for students and contributing to the diversity and accessibility of educational opportunities. Across different countries, PHEIs share certain similarities in terms of challenges faced. One common challenge is financial sustainability, as PHEIs often rely on tuition fees and other private funding sources to operate. This can make them vulnerable to economic fluctuations and shifts in student demand, requiring effective financial management and long-term planning to ensure their viability (Marginson, 2016). Another shared challenge is maintaining quality standards and credibility. PHEIs must establish their reputation and differentiate themselves from public institutions, often through rigorous accreditation processes and transparent governance structures. Building and sustaining trust among students, employers, and other stakeholders is essential for the long-term success of PHEIs (Teixeira & Shin, 2020).

The rapid advancements in HE, innovation, and technology require scholars to be up-to-date and imaginative to remain relevant and adaptable. The changes also necessitate curriculum

redesign to align with the evolving disciplines, moving from a traditional discipline-based model to a more skills-based, knowledge-oriented framework (Davis, 2006). However, there needs to be more knowledge of the processes and approaches that the education sector, particularly in Africa, can adopt to incorporate the advancements of the 4IR/5IR industrial revolutions into teaching practices. Despite the potential benefits of technology to student learning, such as through collaborative methods (Ng'ambi, Brown, Bozalek, Gachago & Wood, 2016; Warchauer, 2007; Kreijns, Van Acker, Vermeulen & Van Buuren, 2013), no academic institutions are listed among the world's 50 most innovative organisations, with none being from Africa (Ringel, Zablitz, Grassl, Manly & Moller, 2018).

The challenge for the education sector is to produce talent with innovative ideas and relevant skills for the digital age while improving the efficiency and functioning of the education sector. The focus has shifted from computer technology to the teaching and learning process transformation, with the education sector embracing digitalisation and 4IR/5IR. This shift will not only allow the education sector to benefit from technological innovations. Still, it will also provide an opportunity to address the challenges of the role and effectiveness of technology in education. The ever-growing and rapidly evolving field of HE presents challenges for the public and PHEIs. PHEIs, in particular, face difficulties from both external and internal factors, such as globalisation, economic disruptions, changing student demographics, industry demands, inadequate resources, and a lack of agility and resistance to change (Shurville & Browne, 2007; Howells *et al.*, 2014; Mukerjee, 2014). Moreover, the traditional disciplinary-based structure of HEIs can hinder collaboration and the application of knowledge for organisational change (Masland, 1985; Ghilic-Micu *et al.*, 2011; Veisi, 2010).

PHEIs face specific challenges, including resistance to change, both internally and externally, as well as issues with resource management and cultural differences between departments. However, there are also notable differences in the challenges PHEIs face in different countries. One key challenge in developed nations like the United States is competition from well-established and prestigious public universities. Private institutions must find innovative ways to differentiate themselves, whether through specialised programme, unique learning experiences, or strong industry connections (Clark, 2020). In developing countries, PHEIs often face challenges related to infrastructure and resources. Limited funding, inadequate facilities, and a lack of qualified faculty can hinder the quality of education private institutions provide (Zhang *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, PHEIs in some countries may face regulatory barriers and complex bureaucratic processes, which can impede their growth and development (Lo, 2020). Overall, PHEIs worldwide face similar financial sustainability and credibility challenges. Still, the specific nature of these challenges can vary depending on the country's economic context, educational landscape, and regulatory environment. Adapting to local needs and market demands while maintaining academic rigour and financial stability is crucial for the success of PHEIs in different parts of the globe.

According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), South Africa's ranking in terms of the state of the education system is a matter of concern. The WEF's assessment reveals that South Africa faces significant challenges. The education system in the country has been grappling with issues such as unequal access to quality education, high dropout rates, and a persistent skills gap. These challenges have hindered South Africa's ability to provide its citizens with the necessary knowledge and skills to compete in the global economy. The government and relevant stakeholders must prioritise and address these issues to uplift the education system and empower future generations with the tools they need for success.

Given these challenges, this study aims to explore the current state of strategic management practices for resilience in private HE institutions (PHEIs) in a developing socio-economic context and design a strategic framework to support these institutions in building resilience and agility. The framework aims to promote innovative business practices that enhance agility in a disruptive environment while maintaining the quality of education delivery, ensuring cost-efficiency, meeting quality assurance requirements, complying with governance bodies, and improving the meaningful student learning experience (Rambe & Moeti, 2016). The ultimate goal is to ensure the sustainability and competitiveness of PHEIs in the face of ongoing disruptions. Several factors, including increased access, rising costs, and the need for quality education, have disrupted the HE sector. In response, discussions have been about restructuring education delivery and incorporating innovative technologies into teaching practices, such as 4IR/5IR. This discussion aims to design a strategic framework for PHEIs that promotes resilience, innovation, and cost-efficiency while maintaining quality and complying with governance bodies and quality assurance standards.

1.2 Research Background Information

HE contributes to development (Boni & Walker, 2016; Owens, 2017; McCowan, 2016, 2019). Throughout history, higher learning institutions have educated the elite and produced significant advancements in science and humanities. The expansion of HE beyond the elite has the potential to impact societal development significantly. This study falls within the international education development field and examines HEs role in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) (Campbell & Mawer, 2019; McCowan, 2019; Owens, 2017). In 2015, the SDGs expanded the focus beyond primary and secondary education to include HE, recognising its importance in promoting inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all (SDG4). The United Nations SDG4 (2015) advocated ensuring inclusive and equitable education and promoting life-long learning opportunities for all. Globally, however, the demand for access to HE exceeds the available places, especially in public HE. This results in many students who need help to obtain positions in institutions and their respective programmes of choice, contrary to Goal 4. The Department of HE and Strategic Plan aims to diversify provisions based on open learning principles (DHET, 2015/2016-2019/2020). The National Development Plan (NDP, 2030) reports that advances

are being made in nearly every facet of life to build an inclusive society but needs to be more vocal about the role of PHEIs offering distance learning.

South African societal demands for transformation and inclusive curricula, as demonstrated by the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall movement of 2018/19, show the impact stakeholders can have on institutions. The global pandemic Covid-19, first reported in Wuhan, China, in late December 2019 (WHO, 2020), had a devastating impact on human life and economies worldwide (Xiang, Zhang, Jin, Rao & Zeng, 2020). HE institutions were significantly impacted by the global lockdowns and movement restrictions governments imposed. The pandemic resulted in over 4.3 million confirmed cases and 290,000 deaths worldwide (WHO, 2020). The pandemic also caused fears of an approaching economic catastrophe and recession due to a reduced workforce and loss of employment across all economic sectors. The impact of Covid-19 was felt at all levels of the education system, from preschool to tertiary education, with schools closing. Different countries introduced a range of policies, from complete closure in Germany and Italy (Unterricht & Kultus, 2020), to targeted closure in the United Kingdom, specifically for children of workers in critical industries (UNESCO, 2020).

The PHE landscape in South Africa comprises various factors, including competition intensity, number of students, target market, and the nature of programs (Sarfranz, Sarfranz, Iftikar & Akhund, 2021). The PHEI sector in South Africa experiences competition from both public universities and other private institutions. Competition intensity can vary depending on the institution's location, reputation, and specialisation (Singh, 2020). Established private universities and colleges often face competition for students, faculty, and research funding. PHEIs in South Africa enrol a significant number of students. While the exact figures may vary, private institutions attract students seeking alternatives to public universities or desiring specialised programs not offered by public institutions (Chetty & Luescher-Mamashela, 2021). The number of students enrolled in private higher education institutions has recently increased (De Kadt & Van Schalkwyk, 2020). PHEIs cater to diverse target markets. They attract students who may not have gained admission to public universities due to limited capacity or competitive entry requirements. Private institutions also target working professionals seeking flexible study options, adult learners, international students, and students looking for specific programs, such as specialised vocational training, short programmes or professional degrees (Pillay, 2021).

PHEIs in South Africa offer various programs, including undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, diplomas, certificates, and vocational training courses. These programs span multiple fields of study, such as business, engineering, arts and humanities, sciences, law, health sciences, and information technology (Mashau *et al.*, 2021). Private institutions often aim to provide programs relevant to the job market's needs and may offer more specialised and niche programs than public universities (Goga & Letseka, 2020). Typically provide smaller

class sizes, more flexible schedules, and a more personalised learning experience than public universities (Ndebele & Heleta, 2020). They often emphasise practical skills development, industry partnerships, and employability outcomes (Chetty & Prinsloo, 2021). However, students need to verify the accreditation and quality assurance of private institutions to ensure the legitimacy and recognition of their qualifications (Council on Higher Education, 2021).

The closure of educational institutions due to the COVID-19 pandemic has had significant socio-economic implications, particularly for students from low-income populations who lack access to technology for digital learning. According to UNESCO, more than 100 countries have mandated the closure of educational institutions, affecting approximately 900 million students (UNESCO, n.d.). The future world of work is expected to be characterised by turmoil and emotional business cycles, which requires educators to adapt their curricula to meet the demands of a rapidly changing HE context (Sarfranz, Sarfranz, Iftikar & Akhund, 2021). Disruptive technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI), are expected to develop industrial 4.0 further, characterised by the fusion of physical, digital, and biological spheres. This will require businesses to review their current business models and restructure their processes to remain sustainable and competitive. Additionally, government and state agencies may need to adopt “agile” governance to respond effectively to changing conditions (Sarfranz *et al.*, 2021).

Menon and Castrillon (2019) emphasised that education and training, with the help of advanced learning tools, can play a crucial role in promoting economic and social prosperity. People view improved HE as a way to achieve this prosperity. HE contributes to economic and social development through four important missions: human capital development, knowledge creation and dissemination, and the preservation of expertise. Glenda *et al.* (2015) also emphasised the importance of HE in sustaining economic and social prosperity. Mutisya and Nago (2014) also agreed with the extent of HE by highlighted its role in producing a generation of professionals with critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and leadership qualities, especially in Africa. These qualities are needed to address complex issues such as poverty alleviation and quality of life improvement. Smith (2015) argues that HE plays a crucial role in realising the democratic ideal of a pluralistic society that works.

Sondlo (2013) highlights that socio-economic and political factors are critical to understanding the challenges and solutions in the African context. Considering the legacy of colonialism and apartheid, it is essential to acknowledge that access to HE and culture was exclusively reserved for white people of Western civilisation and geopolitical background (Vandeyar, 2003). The HE system in Africa differs from the European and American systems (Hayward & Ncayiyana, 2014). Africa ranks low on almost every indicator-based ranking in science and HE (Nico *et al.*, 2015). South Africa has 26 public universities with one million students and 700,000 registered at 53 HE training colleges.

An additional 90,000 students are spread across private HE institutions (Tjønneland, 2017). The private sector does not represent over a quarter of Africa's total HE enrolment (Tjønneland, 2017). Despite increased access to HE and participant growth over the past few decades (UNESCO, 2019), African education is still essentially an 'elitist' system. PHEIs in South Africa play various roles in contributing to political, social, and economic prosperity (Menon & Castrillon, 2019). One of the most critical roles is producing a 'highly skilled labour force necessary to run the complex institutions of modern 'society' (Menon & Castrillon, 2019) and creating new knowledge essential for development. Business leaders can achieve this through proactive training, retraining, and up-skilling.

Conversely, skill gaps among students, workers, and senior leadership may significantly hamper modern technology adoption and business growth (Menon & Castrillon, 2019). Business development, new job creation, and the need for augmentation for current roles are all driven by the speed and depth of technology adoption, provided it can fully use the capabilities of a motivated and agile workforce with the skills to take advantage of new opportunities. This will contribute to poverty alleviation and improved economic and social prosperity. The following sections will highlight and shed light on HE worldwide. PHEIs play a critical role in the modern economy by providing students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the workforce. As the world of work continues to evolve and become more disruptive, these institutions need to develop strategic frameworks that can help them adapt to these changes and remain resilient. One key aspect of this is to focus on providing students with the skills and knowledge most relevant to the modern economy. This may involve incorporating new technologies and teaching methods into the curriculum and providing opportunities for students to gain real-world experience through internships and other hands-on learning opportunities.

Additionally, PHEIs can promote entrepreneurship and innovation, which can help drive economic growth and create new job opportunities. This may involve supporting and resources for students interested in starting their businesses and fostering connections with local businesses and other organisations to help facilitate collaboration and knowledge-sharing. Overall, the key to success for private HE institutions in the new world of work will be to remain agile and adaptable and continuously seek new ways to provide value to students and the broader economy. By developing strategic frameworks that can help them navigate the challenges of the modern workplace, these institutions can continue to play a vital role in preparing students for success in the 21st century.

The framework for resilience is a strategic approach emphasising organisations' ability, including PHEIs, to adapt and thrive in facing challenges and uncertainties. It encompasses various dimensions: agility, innovation, sustainability, and responsiveness to change (Smith, 2020). The strategic positioning of PHEIs and competition in the higher education landscape can be directly related to the framework in the following ways: The framework promotes the

importance of agility and adaptability in PHEIs (Naidu & Du Preez, 2021). In the context of strategic positioning and competition, PHEIs need to be agile in responding to market demands, emerging trends, and changing student needs. This includes being flexible in offering new programs, updating curricula, adopting innovative teaching methods, and incorporating emerging technologies (Cheung & Fleming, 2021). PHEIs can position themselves strategically to stand out in the competitive higher education market by demonstrating agility and adaptability (Gosling *et al.*, 2021).

PHEIs prioritising innovation can differentiate themselves from competitors by offering unique programs, incorporating interdisciplinary approaches, creating partnerships with industries, and fostering a culture of research and development (Chetty & Prinsloo, 2021). Innovation can help PHEIs stay ahead of the competition by providing distinctive educational experiences and addressing emerging societal needs (Goga & Letseka, 2020). The framework recognises the importance of sustainability in maintaining long-term viability (Smith, 2020). PHEIs must develop sustainable strategies considering financial stability, efficient resource allocation, and environmental and social responsibility (Naidu & Du Preez, 2021). Strategically positioning themselves as sustainable institutions, PHEIs can attract environmentally conscious students, gain support from stakeholders, and build a reputation for responsible practices, giving them a competitive advantage (Cheung & Fleming, 2021).

The framework encourages PHEIs to be proactive and responsive to changes in the external environment (Naidu & Du Preez, 2021). This includes monitoring market dynamics, demographic shifts, technological advancements, and policy changes that may impact the higher education landscape (Cheung & Fleming, 2021). PHEIs anticipating and adapting to these changes can position themselves strategically, seize opportunities, mitigate risks, and stay competitive in the evolving educational landscape (Smith, 2020). Overall, the framework directly relates to the strategic positioning of PHEIs and competition by guiding them to be agile, innovative, sustainable, and responsive to change (Chetty & Prinsloo, 2021). Embracing these principles, PHEIs can differentiate themselves, attract students, adapt to market demands, and maintain their competitive edge in the dynamic higher education sector (Goga & Letseka, 2020).

1.3 Problem Statement

The researcher aims to address the problem of resilience and agility in South African Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) in disruptive environments. Azionya and Oksitycz (2019) discuss the exponential transformations and disruptions in technology, socio-politics, climate change, and the economy, which expose uncertainties and complexities for PHEIs. Christensen (2021) explains business disruption as an innovation fundamentally altering companies' operations, using examples like Netflix and streaming services disrupting the entertainment industry. Bennett and Lemoine (2014) introduce the concept of VUCA

(Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity) as a popular management acronym describing the challenges of the modern world. The problem negatively impacts people's understanding by creating uncertainties and complexities in the operations of PHEIs. It is evident in South African PHEIs in a developing socio-economic context, where disruptions and uncertainties hinder growth and sustainability.

De Waal and Linthorst (2020) emphasise the need for PHEIs to navigate disruptive environments by incorporating new paradigms like RUPT (Rapid, Unpredictable, Paradoxical, and Tangled) and BANI (Brittle, Anxious, Nonlinear, and Incomprehensible). The current study explored resilient business practices in South African PHEIs and highlights the importance of understanding and evaluating current business strategies to enhance resilience. The study focuses on designing a conceptual, strategic framework to support PHEIs' resilience in a disruptive environment by establishing innovative business practices. The literature outlines that the problem of resilience in PHEIs arises from the disruptions caused by technological advancements, socio-political changes, climate change, and economic factors. PHEIs need to balance financial viability and competitiveness while providing quality education that meets the needs of students and society.

Aziona and Oksiutycz (2019) identify technological advancements and disruptions as factors exposing uncertainties and complexities for PHEIs. De Waal and Linthorst (2020) propose new paradigms like RUPT and BANI to help organisations, including PHEIs, navigate disruptions and uncertainties. The study emphasises the need for resilient business practices in South African PHEIs to address disruptions and enhance adaptability. Based on the above-mentioned, the research gap in the literature is the lack of a conceptual, strategic framework that explicitly addresses resilience and agility in South African PHEIs amid disruptive environments. The researcher aims to fill this gap by designing a strategic framework to support PHEIs' resilience and promote innovative business practices.

1.4 Purpose/Aim and Objectives of Study

1.4.1 Overarching Aim

This study aims to enhance the comprehension of how PHEIs (private HE institutions) in a developing socio-economic context currently manage their businesses and identify gaps or areas for improvement in business resilience. Based on this understanding and evaluation, the study aims to design a strategic framework to help PHEIs build resilience by adopting innovative business practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment. This framework will support PHEIs in adapting to and thriving in a rapidly changing environment and contribute to their local community's overall development and success.

1.4.2 Research Objectives

To accomplish the above-mentioned primary aim of the study, the researcher identified the following objectives:

1. Conduct a comprehensive literature review to understand the current state of strategic business management practices for business resilience in commercial enterprises that PHEIs may repurpose in a developing socio-economic context.
2. Analyse the key challenges and opportunities faced by PHEIs in building business resilience in a rapidly changing environment.
3. Develop a conceptual framework for strategic business management practices that promote agility and resilience in PHEIs.
4. Recommend practical strategies and interventions that PHEIs can implement to enhance their business resilience and agility.
5. Contribute to the existing body of knowledge on strategic business management for PHEIs in developing countries and to provide insights and recommendations for policymakers and practitioners in the field.

1.4.3 Research Questions

Therefore, using a qualitative interpretive approach, the principal research question is:

What specific gaps or areas for improvement in business resilience can be identified in Private HE Institutions (PHEIs) operating in a developing socio-economic context, and how can a strategic framework based on innovative business practices be designed to help them build resilience and thrive in a rapidly changing environment?

To clarify and explore the main research questions, the following sub-questions are proposed:

1. Why do PHEIs in a developing socio-economic context need to adopt innovative business practices to build resilience and thrive in a rapidly changing environment?
2. Which business strategies can PHEIs adopt from successful enterprises outside of education?
3. How does the New World of Work impact the PHEI sector in South Africa?
4. What effective proactive strategies do PHEIs utilise to navigate business disruptions?
5. How do PHEIs maintain their resilience and profitability while delivering an exceptional educational experience?
6. What business strategies and strategic frameworks can PHEIs adopt from successful enterprises outside of education to foster innovation, agility, build resilience, and succeed in a disruptive environment?

These questions established the scope of the study and directed the exploration of literature, related construct, and research data. The specific questions also guided the research regarding the design, methods, and appropriate instruments for collecting relevant data.

1.5 Research Philosophy: Ontology, Epistemology, Axiology

This section explains the ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives related to the research.

1.5.1 Ontology

In the context of this research, according to Graue (2020), ontology refers to the beliefs and assumptions about the nature of knowledge and how it is constructed and understood. The researcher adopted a relativist ontological stance, signifying the absence of absolute truth and enabling multiple interpretations of reality by the researcher (Moon & Blackman, 2014). This approach is reflected in the interpretive and subjective nature of the study, which aims to understand and interpret the business management strategies and practices used for business resilience within PHEIs in a developing socio-economic context. In addition, O'Gorman and MacIntosh (2015), a relativist ontological assumption informs the research questions, methods, and data analysis and shapes the study's conceptual framework. Overall, the ontological stance adopted in this study allows for a deeper understanding and evaluation of business management's complex and dynamic nature in a developing socio-economic context. The researcher will apply an interpretive approach in which the attempt is to interpret or construct reality allowing for multiple interpretations in a social context (O'Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015)—the ontological assumption on which the research is based on the problem statement.

1.5.2 Epistemology

In the context of this research, epistemology is concerned with the nature of knowledge and how it is acquired and validated (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The researcher has adopted an interpretive and subjective approach informed by an inductive reasoning process and a qualitative research methodology. This approach allows the researcher to explore and evaluate the business management strategies and practices used for business resilience within PHEIs in a developing socio-economic context and to interpret and understand the meanings and concepts underlying these practices. The subjective nature of the research means that the researcher's lens and interpretation of the data will play a key role in shaping the findings and conclusions of the study. Overall, the epistemological approach adopted in this study aims to provide a deeper understanding and evaluation of the state of the business management strategies and practices used for business resilience within private HE institutions in South Africa.

1.5.3 Axiology

In the context of this research, axiology is concerned with the values and ethics of the research process and the researcher's relationship with the research participants (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). As the researcher has strong opinions on sustainability and business resilience issues, they must ensure that their values do not influence the research in a biased manner. The researcher can achieve this through careful design of the research methodology and by maintaining objectivity and impartiality throughout the data collection and analysis processes. It is also important for the researcher to consider the potential impact of the findings on the participants and the education landscape in South Africa and to communicate the results transparently and ethically. Overall, axiology plays a crucial role in ensuring the credibility and integrity of the research.

1.6 Research Methodology

The overarching research design falls within a qualitative approach. Qualitative research describes events and interprets meaning (Schunk, 2012). Creswell (20015, 2018) clarifies the nature of qualitative research within an educational context, emphasising that it qualifies as a valid form of research. In other words, Creswell's work supports the notion that qualitative research methods, when applied in an educational setting, meet the criteria of systematic inquiry and investigation. This perspective affirms the significance and credibility of qualitative research as a valuable approach to studying educational phenomena and gaining insights into the complexities of educational processes and outcomes. The researcher relies on the participants' views, asks broad generalised questions, collects word data, and describes and analyses these words for themes. Therefore, such research is conducted within a real-life situation and not in an experimental condition (Nieuwenhuis, 2007) and seeks to treat participants and their contexts (Taylor, DeVault & Bogdan, 2016). The researcher adopted a detailed view of participants through semi-structured interviews and document analysis using a phenomenological case study (discussed in more depth in the Research Design & Methodology chapter). Adopting a case study approach develops an in-depth analysis of the lived experiences of a few individuals about the phenomenon. Marshall (2010) defines such an approach as practice-orientated case study research, which involves inquiry into the methods of professional practice to an aspect of the course. This type of research aims to utilise researched knowledge to enhance the development and implementation of policy and practice.

In addition, Marshall (2010) reports that there have been calls for more practice-based research to address concerns relating to the impact of research for the strategy or as applicable to multiple contexts. This challenge to study can be characterised as a problem of knowledge transfer, where business leaders and executives need to consider how research findings and theories are transferred into current strategies and adopted by business leaders and executives in PHEIs. The negotiation between research, theory, and practice creates a

role for professional development to facilitate this knowledge transfer and changes to practice in a specific course. This study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the strategies and practices used by PHEIs in one particular socio-economic context to manage their businesses and identify potential areas for improvement in business resilience. Based on this understanding and learning from the lived experiences of the PHEIs participants interviewed, the study aims to develop a strategic framework to help PHEIs build resilience by adopting innovative business practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment. After that, to design a strategic framework to support PHEIs building strength by establishing innovative business practices that encourage agility in a disruptive environment. It is important to note that this study is not evaluating the companies themselves but instead gathering data to inform the development of a framework for a strategy.

To clarify and summarise the research methodology and design, the researchers adopted the “research process onion” proposed by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2003). This framework, known as the research process onion, provides a systematic and comprehensive approach to structuring and organising various components of the research process. By utilising this model, the researchers aimed to enhance clarity and coherence in their study, ensuring that all relevant aspects of the research, such as research questions, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques, were adequately addressed and integrated within a cohesive framework. This onion illustrates the range of choices, paradigms, strategies, and steps researchers follow during the research process (to be discussed in the Research Design and Research Methodology chapter). The different layers of the onion serve as a basis to consider the following: the philosophical orientation of the researcher; the research approach adopted; appropriate research strategies; the research timelines under review; and the data collection techniques employed.

1.7 Preliminary Literature Review

The literature review provides a comprehensive overview of the current knowledge and research on business management strategies in a developing socio-economic context, specifically in the South African context. It highlights the need for this research and the potential contribution of the findings to existing knowledge and understanding of this topic. By exploring related research and identifying gaps in the current literature, the literature review helps to contextualise the research question and provides a theoretical framework for the study. This, in turn, supports the interpretation of the empirical data and enhances the credibility of the research findings. Overall, the literature review plays a critical role in the research process by providing a foundation for the study and guiding the research direction.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

1.8.1 Contextual Limitations

Geographically, the researcher restricted the research to South Africa.

1.8.2 Procedural Limitations

This investigation collected data through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The researcher used purposive sampling to recruit participants from either PHEIs in South Africa or modern business enterprises. This was based on geographical proximity to the researcher and the participant's willingness and financial capacity to participate.

1.8.3 Phenomenological Case Study Limitations

Limitations of phenomenological case studies include that they are often based on small sample participants, which can reduce the generalisability of the findings to the broader population. Another limitation is the subjectivity of the research process, as the researcher's interpretation of the data may be influenced by their own biases and perspectives.

Additionally, the reliance on qualitative data, such as interviews and observations, can make it challenging to analyse the findings and compare them to other studies quantitatively. The inherent complexity of the research design and data analysis can also make it difficult for researchers to capture the essence of the participants' lived experiences accurately and effectively.

1.9 Assumptions

1.9.1 Contextual Assumptions

Contextual assumptions refer to the broader social, cultural, political, and economic factors that may influence the research question, the study design, and the interpretation of the findings. These assumptions may include assumptions about the relevance of the research topic, the availability and reliability of data sources, the potential biases of the research participants, and the potential implications of the research for policy or practice. For instance, in a study examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on institutions' operations, some contextual assumptions may include assumptions about the potential effects of the pandemic on institutions' financial and operational strategies, as well as assumptions about the possible changes in public attitudes and behaviours related to the pandemic. These assumptions inform the research question and study design and provide a framework for interpreting and discussing the findings.

1.9.2 Procedural Assumptions

Procedural assumptions refer to the specific research methods and techniques used to collect and analyse data, as well as the assumptions about the validity and reliability of these methods. Some procedural assumptions may include the accuracy and reliability of measurement tools, the sample's representativeness, the validity of the data analysis techniques, and the generalisability of the findings to the broader population. For instance, in this study using interviews as the primary data collection method, some procedural assumptions may include assumptions about the willingness and ability of the participants to respond to the interview questions accurately and honestly. The assumptions about the ability of the interviewer to ask unbiased and non-leading questions. These assumptions can ensure that the research process is carried out validly and reliably and can also provide a basis for evaluating the trustworthiness of the research findings.

1.9.3 Phenomenological Assumptions

Phenomenological assumptions refer to the philosophical and theoretical assumptions underpinning the phenomenological research approach. This approach is based on the idea that people's subjective experiences and perceptions are the primary sources of knowledge about the world. These experiences can be studied and understood through careful and systematic examination. Some examples of phenomenological assumptions may include assumptions about the nature of human experience, the role of consciousness in shaping our understanding of the world, and the validity of using qualitative methods to study subjective experiences. In a study using a phenomenological approach, these assumptions would guide the research process and inform the interpretation of the findings.

1.10 Overview of Thesis Chapters

Chapter One provided an overview of the problem being investigated and presented the research question(s) the study aims to answer. It included a brief overview of the broader field of study in which the research is situated and any relevant theories or previous research that have been conducted on the topic. It focused on the aims and objectives of the study and outlined the specific goals that the researcher hopes to achieve through the research. The chapter also discussed the research design and methodology used in the study. This includes details about the participants or subjects of the study, the data collection methods that the researcher used, and the specific data analysis techniques employed. The concluding section of Chapter 1 discussed the epistemological position of the study, which refers to the researcher's assumptions and beliefs about the nature of knowledge and how it is generated.

Chapter Two of the research study reviewed the existing literature on the investigated topic. This chapter served as a foundation for the research, providing a broad overview of the current state of knowledge on the subject and highlighting any gaps in the existing research

that the study aims to fill. The researcher presented a historical overview of the development of the field and discussed how the current state of knowledge has evolved. This chapter focused on the literature on business leadership, management strategies, and the challenges facing HE institutions. The chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the current knowledge in these areas. It discussed how the research being conducted in this study fits into the broader context of the field. By summarising and synthesising the existing literature, Chapter 2 helps the reader understand the wider context in which the research was being conducted and provides a basis for the subsequent analysis and discussion in the rest of the study.

Chapter Three of the research study was dedicated to a detailed discussion of the research design and methodology used. This chapter provided a clear and thorough explanation of the methods employed to collect and analyse data and presented the research results in a clear and organised manner. The researcher provided an overview of the research design and methodology used in the study. This included discussing the research questions, the data collection methods, and the data analysis techniques used to generate and interpret the study results. After providing an overview of the research design and methodology, the researcher discussed the specific methods used to collect and analyse data. This included a discussion of the participants or subjects of the study, the instruments or tools used to collect data (interviews), and the specific procedures followed to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. The concluding section of Chapter 3 addressed the ethical considerations during the study and discussed the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings. This section discussed the limitations or challenges encountered during the research process. How the researcher addressed these. By thoroughly explaining the methods employed in the study, Chapter 3 helps the reader understand the rationale behind the research and provides the basis for the subsequent analysis and discussion in the rest of the study.

Chapter Four of the research study was dedicated to presenting the findings. This chapter included a detailed analysis of the data collected during the research and presented the results in a clear and organised manner, highlighting the most significant results. This section includes tables, figures, and other visual aids to help readers understand the study's key findings. After summarising the key findings, the researcher typically discusses the results in more detail, thoroughly analysing the data and drawing out key themes or patterns that emerged during the analysis. This section included a discussion of unexpected or surprising results and how these findings relate to the broader context of the research. By presenting the research results transparently and concisely, Chapter 4 helps the reader understand the study's key findings and provides the basis for the subsequent discussion and conclusion in the rest of the study.

Chapter Five of the research study was dedicated to discussing the research findings and how they relate to the broader context of the study. This chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the results and considers the implications of the findings for the research question(s) being addressed and for the broader field of study. The researcher summarised the study's key findings and discussed how these results relate to the research question(s) being addressed. This section discussed unexpected or surprising results and how these findings contribute to the broader understanding of the topic being investigated. Overall, Chapter 5 provides an in-depth analysis of the research findings and considers the implications of the results for the research question(s) being addressed and the broader field of study. By providing a thorough and thoughtful discussion of the findings, Chapter 5 helps the reader understand the significance of the research and provides the basis for the subsequent conclusion in the final chapter of the study.

Chapter Six is the final chapter of the research study and includes a conclusion and recommendations for future research. The researcher summarised the essential findings and implications of the study and discussed how these results relate to the research question(s) being addressed. This section discussed the significance of the findings for the broader field of study and any implications for future research or practice. The researcher presented the strategic framework developed from the study and provided recommendations for the effective and efficient transferability of the insights to other business contexts. This section discussed the critical lessons learned during the study and how the researchers can apply these lessons to improve future research or practice. Overall, the purpose was to summarise the essential findings and implications of the study and offer recommendations for future research or practice.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter provided an introduction and orientation to the study. The researcher explained the study's background and context, discussed the research aim and objectives, and outlined the research design and methodology. The researcher also briefly introduced the theoretical framework and outlined the remaining chapters.

The next chapter served as a foundation for the research, providing a broad overview of the current state of knowledge on the topic and highlighting any gaps in the existing research that the study aimed to fill.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

As a result of the disruptions in the business world, many business leaders and executives have developed, redesigned, and adapted various management strategies, leadership ideas, and models that have been designed, redesigned, and adapted to meet the new disruptive environment, which includes current concepts. Historically speaking, business leaders were seen as straightforward people who always did the right thing leading from the top without cooperation and collaboration. The transition from an industrial market economy to a more connected, creative, and sustainable economy required, among other things, more collaborative employees with more initiative, innovation, creativity, and passion (Jarche, 2013; 2015). Much research can conclude that managing HE as a business needs new governance strategies to become more successful, sustainable, and resilient in this era of disruption they are currently living and facing. Viscomi (2017) notes that in aligning new business innovation strategies and leadership, thinking creatively, and including areas not previously considered necessary in older theories will be helpful.

It is widely acknowledged that HE institutions (HEIs) play a significant role in developing the political, social, and economic spheres (Luescher-Mamashela, Ssembatya, Brooks, Lange, Mugume & Richmond, 2015). The most prominent role of HEI is producing a highly skilled labour force necessary to run the complex institutions of modern society (Luescher-Mamashela *et al.*, 2015) and creating new knowledge essential for development. The demand for HEIs worldwide is growing phenomenally, and as a result, HEI markets have expanded exponentially (Komljenovic & Robertson, 2017). As early as 2000, the number of enrolled students was 97 million, predicted to reach over 262 million by 2025 (Bjarnason, 2009). As the demand for HE has grown, the public sector's lack of financial resources and inability to rapidly expand its provision to meet demand has become even more apparent. Authors such as Bezuidenhout (2020); Field and Shah (2016) suggest that the increase in HEIs, especially in developing countries, is seemingly driven by demand absorption. The global massification of HE has led to needs that governments cannot meet. Mohamedbhai (20018) defines massification as the unavoidable experience by HE institutions (HEIs) of a quick upsurge in student enrolments. Public and private institutions have experienced a rise in student admissions without an accompanying surge in diverse resources.

HE Institutions (HEIs) are classified as either public or private. An HEI is classified as public if controlled and managed by a general education authority, government agency, or a governing body appointed by a public authority or elected by a public franchise (UNESCO, 2020). On the

other hand, an HEI is classified as private if controlled and managed by a non-governmental organisation (e.g., a church, trade union or business enterprise). Its governing board consists mainly of members not selected by a public agency. Generally, the ultimate management controls over an institution determine its available activity and appoint the managing officers (UNESCO, 2020). The benefits of HE includes the private benefits enjoyed directly by the individual, such as personal development and higher earnings, and the public or 'society-wide' benefits. A critical mass of persons who are well-informed and comprehend and work for democratic processes, a more excellent pool of qualified businesspeople who can operate more efficient enterprises and enlarge the economic pie, and political leaders who can appreciate the confluence of local conditions are all public benefits (Bloom & Sevilla, 2015). With these benefits in mind, Ó Maoláin (2013) advocates for post-secondary education as a 'public good, a public responsibility, and an inalienable human right'.

The quality of business leaders and executives in PHEIs and their impact on business is undeniable. From a global to a local perspective, it is considered one of the fundamental factors affecting the survival of humanity (Bennis, 1998). They are addressing the disruptive challenges of today, such as a pan-African perspective on education, a perspective on politicised curriculum, and Africanisation debates on the curriculum. A clear research plan is required, including the emergence of the 4IR/5IR, modern technologies, and the most recent COVID-19 pandemic. The results will be enhancing business performance depends to a large extent on the quality of the strategies employed and the leaders of the global economy to be successful and sustainable (Liu, Lee, & Lee, 2020; Nicola, Alsafi, Sohrabi, Kerwan, Al-Jabir, Iosifidis, Agha, & Agha, 2020; Carstens, 2016; Case, 2017a; CHE, 2016; Jansen, 2015; Le Grange, 2016; Leibowitz, 2016; Luckett, 2016). Similarly, the most successful and sustainable PHEIs are determined by their leaders' qualities and the best innovative business strategies. Numerous examples of a company's success or decline are attributed to a particular leader's actions (Brewis, Vrba, De Klerk & Smit, 1999).

According to Zohar and Thembekwayo (2021), today's leaders must remain relevant by leading from the edge of chaos. Successful and sustainable PHEIs today focus on fast, not significant. Leaders must understand and manage complexity by continuously challenging thinking and engaging with employees, sharing leadership, and creating a sense of purpose. PHEIs are becoming decentralised, and interconnectedness is more crucial than ever (Ensley, Hmieleski & Pearce, 2006; Pretorius, Steyn & Bond-Barnard, 2018). With that being mentioned, the primary aim of this study is to explore the business management status quo or overall strategies used for business resilience within a PHEI context. The focus will be on PHEIs in a developing socio-economic context to inform or suggest effective, resilient business practices for South African private institutions within the education landscape. To achieve the aim of the study, the researcher identified the following objectives:

1. Conduct a comprehensive literature review to understand the current state of strategic business management practices for business resilience in commercial enterprises that PHEIs may repurpose in a developing socio-economic context.
2. Analyse the key challenges and opportunities faced by PHEIs in building business resilience in a rapidly changing environment.
3. Develop a conceptual framework for strategic business management practices that promote agility and resilience in PHEIs.
4. Recommend practical strategies and interventions that PHEIs can implement to enhance their business resilience and agility.
5. Contribute to the existing body of knowledge on strategic business management for PHEIs in developing countries and to provide insights and recommendations for policymakers and practitioners in the field.

The literature review commenced with a discussion of a conceptual framework that aligned the transition of HEI as a business. The researcher did this by linking the conceptual exploration of research elements within the context of the study. The PHEI comes first, then the company; business innovation is a primary strategy to address disruptions.

2.2 Effective Business Strategies to Embrace Disruption and Drive Innovation

The researcher is currently examining the essential components, new developments, and optimal approaches for effectively manoeuvring through dynamic markets, focusing on business strategies for disruption. Prominent authors such as (Kotter 1992; Collins 2002, Underwood 2004; Miller & Le Breton Miller 2005; De Waal 2012) and numerous independent researchers in the field agree with the widely held sentiment expressed by the American Management Association (2007) that today's businesses face unprecedented challenges. Business leaders are confronted not only by the rapid changes in technology, the growing demand for expanded social responsibilities, intensified competition, and the massive effect brought about through globalisation but also by the necessity to think and act more strategically. These must be effectively managed to keep up with many challenges to ensure business success and sustainability, especially in the management of PHEIs. In the face of the above, every business leader has the enormous task of realising the goals of their organisations by achieving outstanding performance in their line of business. These business leaders are under immense pressure to deal effectively with the increasing complexity of ever-changing trends and shifting developments. It is, therefore, not surprising that there has been this awakening of landmark books in search of excellence, success, and sustainability. The best sellers in the field, to name a few, are *Built to Last* by Jim Collins and Jerry Porras (1994), *Good to Great* by Collins (2005), *In Search of Excellence* by Peters and Waterman (1982) and *Survival of the Smartest* by Mendelson and Ziegler (1999).

This keen interest among business leaders in identifying the characteristics of successful and sustainable businesses has resulted in widely researched initiatives from academics, popular management literature and consulting houses over the recent years. From this widely documented literature base, there seems to be no consensus on what constitutes a successful and sustainable business, as each of these studies often finds new ones (De Waal, 2012) despite the intensive search for a mutual understanding of the constructs which attracted the best minds (practitioners, consultants, and academics) to successful and sustainable organisations, a generally accepted definition still needs to be developed (Kirkman *et al.*, 1999). Research has indicated that the real world, including HE, is complex and will always be a plurality of approaches to understanding such complexity. A framework in service of action to help practitioners (business leaders' leaders) in the real world still needs to be included (Kirkman *et al.*, 1999).

2.2.1 A Historical Overview of Business

The following sections situate this search for a collective understanding. Firstly, by exploring a brief history of business strategies for disruptions, that is, success and sustainable organisations, to provide some context and background on the various approaches to find some consensus on this subject. This historical overview applies to all business sectors, including PHEIs.

2.2.1.1 Tracking Successful and Sustainable Business Theories Over Time

Although the concept and measurement of successful and sustainable organisations are relatively new to management theory, the genesis of these ideas and practices can be found at the start of the industrial revolution. This section captures a summarised version of the extensive work conducted by the American Management Association (2007) and other researchers from a historical perspective. Figure 1 visualises the researchers' timeline for developing successful and sustainable organisations.

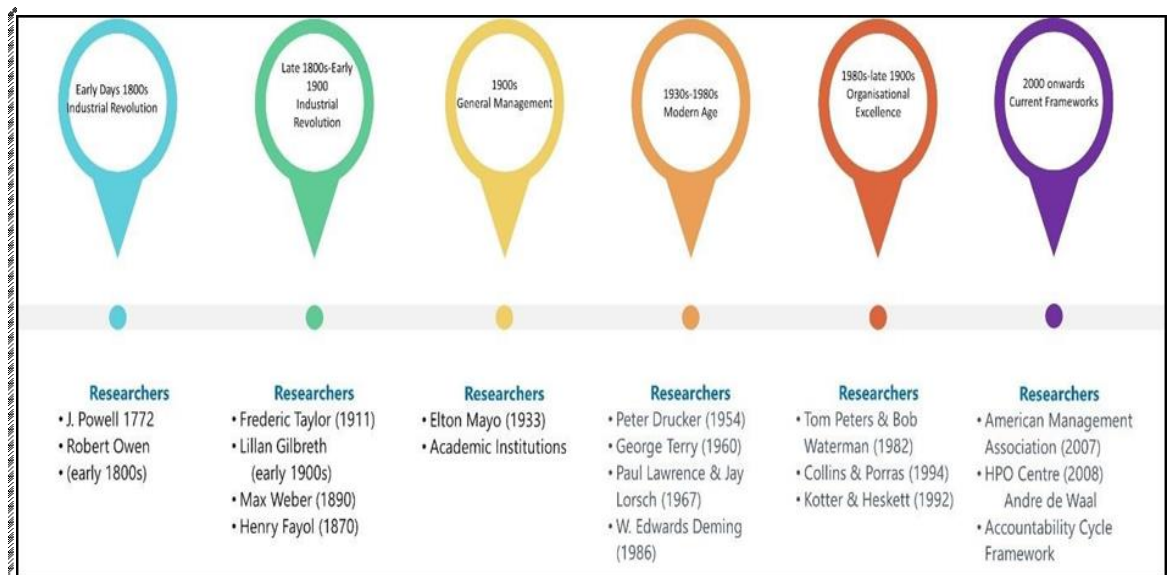


Figure 1: Timeline of researchers contributing to successful and sustainable organisations (Source: Author)

2.2.1.2 The Emergence of Work Ethic: Tracing its Origins in the Early 1800s

During the industrial revolution, employers had to invest time and money into training their workers. The major shift for the working class was the transition they had to make from being previously independent artisans and farmers to now adapting to factory work. This shift from an agricultural or craft tradition orientation to an industrial orientation brought new challenges. Workers had to learn various new habits and disciplines such as punctuality, attending work regularly, and a much more standardised and efficient approach to measuring the type, amount, and employment rate. Initial compilation of historical documents, for example, Professor Briggs (1969) echoed the findings of Powell (1772). Powell described a very gloomy view of the prevailing work ethic of the time. The author argued that "if a person can get sufficient (income) in four days to support himself for seven days, he will keep holiday the other three that is, he will live riot and debauchery" (Powell, 1972, quoted by Briggs, 1969). This worldview reinforced the idea of controlling workers through policy, structure, and organisation.

During the early 1800s, a different approach was advocated by Robert Owen, a cotton manufacturer in England. In these early years, the primary focus of work was to increase productivity. The methods to achieving success often absolved organisations of the need to think about the central value of the worker as a human being. Owen was mindful of this and criticised his colleagues for neglecting to prioritise the human dimension in organisations. Owen believed that managers spent too much time improving machines, specialising labour, and cutting costs and made no investments in the workers. Owen strongly believed that spending money on enhancing work would yield at least a 50% return on capital, often up to 50% and, in many cases, 100% (Butt, 1971). These early observations by industrialists and

businesspeople provided the roots for developing a successful and sustainable organisation. In time and as the industry grew, so did the theories of management sustainable performance. The dichotomy between focusing on people versus concentrating on tasks and structures continued to evolve for at least 100 years (American Management Association, 2007).

2.2.1.3 Scientific Management: Origins and Impacts - Late 1800s to Early 1900s

The next set of theories surfaced as late as the 1800s and extended to the early 1900s, focusing on improving productivity and efficiency. One of the ideas of the time was – Scientific Management – which Taylor postulated (1911). According to Taylor (1903), the principal object of management should be to secure the maximum prosperity for the employer and the total prosperity for each employee. Taylor's concept of "maximum prosperity" was interpreted as a precursor for success and sustainability in an organisation. Taylor's scientific management started a century-long search to find the balance between "the things of production" and "the humanity of production" (Kiechel, 2012). Lillian Gilbreth's contribution to this search perpetuated the tension between people versus task while aiming to identify the conditions for business success and sustainability that were also happening (AMA, 2007). While this was happening in the USA, efforts to identify the requirements for successful business and sustainable organisations were happening in Europe at the beginning of the 20th Century, with Max Weber's sociologist in Germany.

Weber introduced the idea of authority, hierarchical structures, and efficient functioning in bureaucracy as the optimal approach for organisations to function efficiently (McNamara, 2009). Henry Fayol, in France, was also introducing the vital importance of managerial ability as the best way to achieve sustainable organisational performance. Fayol's 14 principles introduced innovative concepts that are still essential to laying the groundwork for today's successful and sustainable organisation. These principles included elements such as: encouraging employee initiatives and the importance of esprit de corps- (a French phrase meaning the collective spirit existing in the members of a group and inspiring enthusiasm, devotion, unity of purpose and healthy regard for the honour of the group - Vliet, 2014).

2.2.1.4 General Management's Birth: Evolution in the 1900s

The emergence of pioneers in the education and training movement moved ideas beyond factory management to a general direction. This movement became an essential topic in 1881 when the University of Pennsylvania opened the Wharton School of Finance and Economy, the first undergraduate business school. This shift from factory management to general management theories was pivotal because many other universities established open business and management faculties in the next few decades. One such university was Harvard in 1908, where the emphasis was on creating a business curriculum to teach managers how to optimise organisational productivity (American Management Association, 2007). The focus

was, however, still on productivity. By 1933, Elton Mayo, a Wharton School of Finance and Commerce faculty member, highlighted workers' social needs and underscored the need to focus on human relations as a core element in improving productivity (Mayo, 1933). Mayo is the founder of the Human Relations Movement in management. The movement emphasised the importance of, amongst other factors, meaningful and satisfying work, the role of relationships in the workplace and wholesome communication in organisations (Lawler III & Porter, 1967). Many of the Human Relations Movement's fundamental principles, still relevant today, were rooted in Mayo's thinking. In short, Mayo stressed the importance of balancing the worker's needs with the need for profit in business organisations.

In addition, from the discussion above, it is clear that the early efforts to define and identify ways to achieve business success and sustainability emphasised increasing productivity and efficiencies in factories. It was not long after that some researchers recognised prioritised workers' welfare while others' efforts were directed towards improving performance. Workers' welfare and well-being were paramount to organisational improvement from 1930 through Mayo's work. The evolution in mindset was evident in two ways: from the shift from factory management to general management. At the same time, universities were choosing to train business leaders to improve sustainable organisation performance through excellent leadership. Both these trends lead to a growing interest from academia in management research.

2.2.1.5 Business Success Strategies: Modernisation from the 1930s to 1980s

The influence of the Human Relations Movement had its most direct effect on management backing, dating to the period between 1930 to 1950 (American Management Association, 2007). According to Wren (2005), many new imperatives emerged. These included theories and practices related to group dynamics, enabling meaningful participation in decision-making, and understanding what motivated group members and what shaped leadership. Other topics of interest led to the increased exploration of theories and models that could explain organisations' formal and informal interactions (Wren 2005). One of the most influential figures in management theory, Drucker (1954), emerged during this period (Kiechel, 2012). Drucker (1954), a management practice guru, studied other successful and sustainable business factors. Productivity and profitability remain areas of interest, while newer topics have appeared, such as managing managers' development, optimising managers' performance, and concern about workers' attitudes and social responsibility. Drucker did not use the term "strategy" for his ideas in his book. However, he considered setting the foundation for the pioneering work on business strategy (Kiechel, 2012), with strategic capabilities being a common factor of modern theories (High-Performance Organisation Centre, 2017a; Keller & Price, 2011).

There was rapid growth in economies worldwide after World War II. Increasing interest saw this shift from managing the shop floor to general management theory. This shift brought about the emergence of other theorists and researchers. Terry (1960), for example, agreed with Drucker's assumptions - those managers must shape organisations by directing and coordinating; and need to become leaders of people for organisations to achieve their goals. Not all theorists agreed with Drucker and Terry. For instance, Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) identified the organisational structure as a critical factor in achieving business success and sustainability. In their view, organisational adaptability to changing environments was essential in outperforming their competitors. This statement suits the current study as it explores and evaluates the business management status quo and overall strategies used for business resilience within a PHEI context.

A plethora saw the period of the 1970s of theories on achieving and expanding organisational success. This sudden spurt of approaches needed to be clarified for business leaders; there needed to be more contradictory information on how organisations could succeed. A close examination of these approaches realised that theorists still generally fall into two categories: organisational behaviour focusing on human elements such as motivation and leadership (the people aspect). Then the other focused on measurement and business processes such as strategy and policy (Pearce, 2003). There were advances in both camps over the ensuing years. Other theorists, like Deming (1988), emerged during this period, focusing more on tasks and processes. Deming (1988) focused on understanding systems. Of the mistakes in an organisation, 95% are attributed to how people work rather than to a plan. However, this led to the emergence of the Quality Movement in the U.S. during the 1980s. This emergence of quality management gave rise to a host of tools used by many organisations today, e.g., Six Sigma and "just-in-time" inventory management systems, to name but a few. In this period, the sentiments expressed by Stogdill (1974) are very apt. The author stated that although a wealth of data emerged and a bewildering mass of findings on leadership was made available, this endless amount of data has yet to make a comprehensive understanding of leadership (American Management Association, 2007).

2.2.1.6 Organisational Success Strategies: Evolution from the 1980s to the Present

The 1980s saw the birth of the formal search for organisational excellence and success. Researchers started to focus more on measuring, analysing, and comparing organisations to identify which factors enabled some organisations to be successful and sustainable and others not (Kirby, 2005). It is evident from the literature that during the 1980s, a rift started showing between business management strategy theories and general management theories. Yet, they were still developing in parallel with each other. Peters and Waterman's (1982) book *"In Search of Excellence"* coined a comparison approach. According to Kirby (2005), Peters and Waterman were instrumental in popularising the practice of comparing and contrasting the best-performing organisations. Peters and Waterman (1982) examined

top-performing companies around the globe. They concluded that factors previously considered "soft", such as people and customers, drove organisational performance. Peters and Waterman identified eight attributes they argued successful and sustainable businesses had in common: having a bias for action; fostering innovation; staying close to the customer, gaining productivity through people, and staying with the known business (Chapman, 2014).

Furthermore, Peters and Waterman's book became a best-seller, probably because it was the first work to challenge business leaders and researchers. Their assertion that managerial abilities were core to organisational success was ground-breaking. Moreover, they insisted that isolating the critical factors of success and sustainability was a doable task (Kirby, 2005). Their work came under scrutiny and was questioned on methodological grounds regarding their criteria to identify high performers (Kirby, 2005). Peters later confessed to faking some of the research data (Peters, 2001), resulting in a rising focus on scientific contributions in the domain. Those who followed tried to make amends. For instance, Collins and Porras (1994), in *Built to Last*, compared their top performers (companies that had achieved and maintained high performance for decades) to other companies in the same industries that were once performing but later did not. Collins and Porras described several characteristics which they believed were central to enabling successful and sustainable organisations. These included: core values and a clear purpose, flexibility, adaptability, and building a resilient company capable of long-term prospering rather than depending on a single visionary leader or compelling idea (Kirby, 2005; Collins & Porras, 1994).

The search to determine the "right" method of identifying and measuring the success and sustainability of an organisation has not surfaced. About half of the companies over the last decade, whose success stories were recorded in "Built to Last" and "In Search of Excellence", have struggled and have not maintained the same levels of sustainable performance. Kotter and Heskett (1992) identified company culture as the driving force of performance, stating that influential company culture was a critical factor in enabling adaptability to the rapid changes in the world. Also, business leaders who showed excellent leadership skills indicated a strong association with outstanding financial results (Kotter, 2011). Such sentiments about company culture are shared and valued by many when it comes to performance. In a two 200-participant survey, more than 80% of the respondents cited company culture as extremely important for success. Some respondents further stated that leaders' crucial focus was building, shaping and managing company culture (Sayle, 2015).

Keeping in line with the publications mentioned above, the work of Barrett, as posted in his book *"The Corporate Soul"* (1998), describes ways in which business leaders can create compassionate and viable future businesses need on this planet. The author presents the rationale for ethical and socially responsible behaviour, which he calls the best foundation for building high-performance successful and sustainable organisations (Barrett, 1998). There are, however, several other studies and approaches to achieving business success and

sustainability. This brief historical overview shows that the fundamental characteristics of business success and sustainability have increasingly developed over the years. Reflecting on the above historical overview, the central fundamentals of recent theories bear many similarities to some of the work done in the not-too-distant past. Similar characteristics are quality management, employee well-being, having a clear strategy and sticking to fundamental core values. Most emphasise the centrality of clear intentions about what needs to be achieved, and such factors are frequently cited within the different theories and frameworks. While it may be considered common sense, the results of multiple studies that show similarities validate the importance of these elements for PHEIs wanting to achieve success and sustainability amidst business disruptions.

More than achieving successful high-performance and sustainable status is required; maintaining and sustaining high-performance success and sustainability is far more challenging than obtaining it in the first place, especially in managing PHEIs amidst a disruptive environment. Some of the PHEIs considered successful by certain theorists have struggled to maintain their position and, in some cases, had to shut their doors (went bankrupt) (Chapman, 2014; Willcoxson, 2000). The company closures led to much skepticism and speculation regarding the legitimacy of business management theories and frameworks and whether they can only use to explain the status of PHEIs without having the power to predict what will make future PHEIs great (Hurst, 2010). Other commentators have questioned the tendency of these theorists to generalise their findings without taking technical and societal changes into account, arguing that various times may call for different strategies and actions regarding achieving successful business high-performance and sustainability (Kirby, 2005).

2.3 Analysis of Popular Business Strategy Approaches: A Contemporary Perspective

Meyer, Brooks, & Goes, 1990, p93 argued that "from time to time, organisational environments undergo cataclysmic upheavals – sudden and extensive changes that alter the trajectories of entire industries, overwhelm the adaptive capacities of resilient organisations and surpass the comprehension of seasoned managers". This quote describes the disruptive environment in which the current world exists today PHEI is therefore not excluded from this trajectory. Hitt, Arregle, and Homles (2021) further contend that with the recent disruption, such as the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic 2020/2022, PHEIs must devise strategies to deal with short-term discontinuities and significant uncertainty to survive and be resilient, successful, and sustainable in a disruptive environment. After a disruption, many require longer-term strategic changes to navigate the 'New Normal' competitive landscape resulting from technological, socio-political, and institutional changes (Ahlstrom, Arregle, Hitt, Qian, Ma, & Faems, 2020). The authors further asserted that this New Normal is unlikely to be a static equilibrium because the pandemic shock has triggered another unexpected dynamic. Hence, this unique environment begs the question of how strategic management theories assist

PHEIs in navigating the future world of work to ensure long-term business resilience, success, and sustainability.

The researcher has identified a few general approaches organisations use to achieve success and remain sustainable amidst business disruptions: the American Management Framework (AMA, 2007) and the Corporate Accountability Cycle Framework (Epstein, 2008). In addition, the researcher also identified the leading strategic management theories that apply to the current study that will enhance business resilience and add a competitive advantage for many organisations. These theories are resource-based, organisation identity dynamics theory, stakeholder theory and value proposition theory. There is no reason for this decision other than a well-known theory in a literature search for business resilience, successful high-performance, and long-lasting, sustainable organisational approaches. There is another framework that was proposed by Peters and Waterman (1982), which perceives organisational success in terms of discrete elements, for instance, those comprising the 7S model - structure, strategy, systems, skills, shared values, style, and staff (Peters & Waterman, 1982). The researcher chose not to elaborate on this theory since the author's work was scrutinised and was chastised for the methodology used to select successful, high-performing, sustainable businesses (Kirby, 2005). Peters contended years later that faking some research data (Peters, 2001) created much scientism. The following section highlights the key features of these frameworks and their contributions to the search for organisational success and sustainability.

2.3.1 The American Management Framework

Over a decade ago, the American Management Association (2007) developed a framework based on previous literature and theories on successful high-performance and sustainable organisations. A study of 1369 respondents investigated the framework and saw what elements contributed the most to outperforming low performers in a disruptive environment. This framework confirms that there is no single secret to high-performing and thriving organisations. The AMA framework has five central characteristics: a strategic approach, customer approach, leadership approach, process and structure approach, values, and beliefs. It postulates that successful organisations are dynamic systems with interacting and interdependent parts. The AMA framework has five central characteristics, which are diagrammatically illustrated in Figure 2 below:

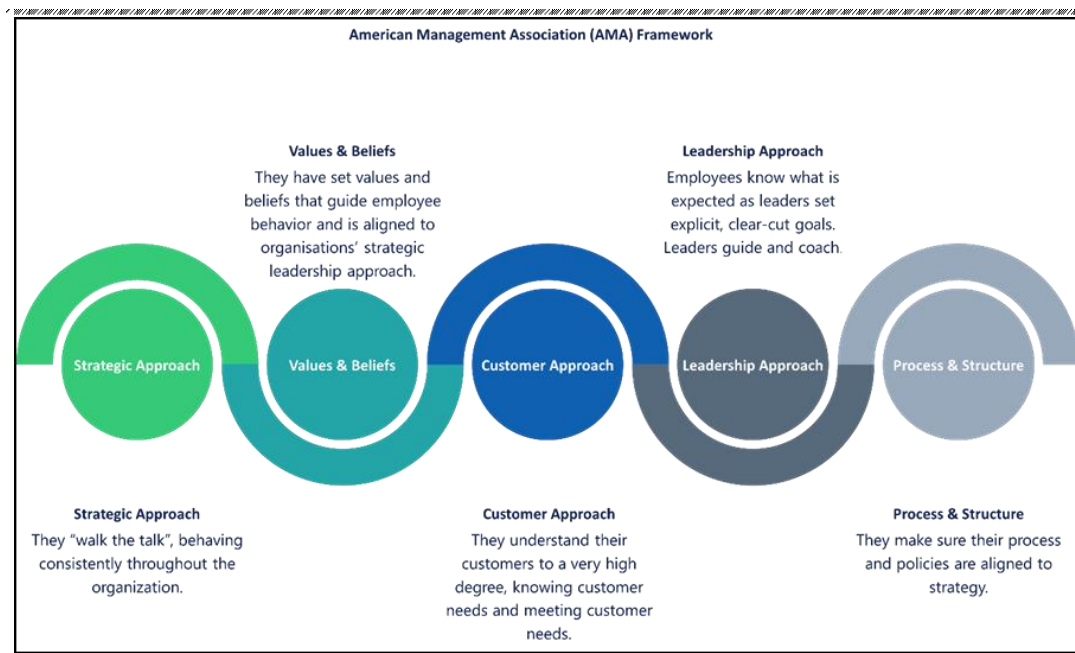


Figure 2: Adapted American Management Association Framework (Source: AMA, 2007)

According to this framework, organisations adopting these characteristics have a better chance of success and sustainability. The AMA research (2007) concludes that business leaders must adapt to new theories and understandings of high performance and stay abreast of research in the field. The AMA believes that today's favoured strategies and prevalent practices can quickly become tomorrow's failures of imagination. The current study is critical because it aims to determine what business leaders are thinking about methods that might be used to assist PHEIs in staying resilient in a disruptive environment. The researchers seek to understand and evaluate the current prevalent state of business strategies in the PHEIs environment and make some recommendations for the survival and growth of PHEIs in a disruptive business.

The discussion now turns back to Epstein, an early contributor to this field.

2.3.2 The Corporate Accountability Cycle Framework

Epstein (2004) has developed an approach to corporate performance that focuses on the elements that drive success, particularly management control and performance measurement aspects in a disruptive environment. The four components are governance, measurement, reporting, and management systems. The corporate accountability cycle is a framework that outlines the steps and processes involved in ensuring a corporation's accountability for its actions and decisions. Control consists of the leadership and management of the corporation by its senior managers and board of directors. This includes setting the company's strategic direction, making critical decisions, and ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulatory bodies. Measurement involves using financial, operational, and social measures to assess the company's performance, including revenue, profitability,

customer satisfaction and retention, and environmental and social impacts. Reporting involves sharing information about the company’s performance and activities with internal and external stakeholders, including financial reporting to shareholders and regulatory bodies and other forms of communication such as sustainability reports and corporate social responsibility initiatives. Management systems involve implementing control systems and processes to ensure the effective execution of the company’s strategy, including budgeting, planning, risk management, and quality control.

These four features of the corporate accountability cycle help ensure that a corporation is transparent, responsible, and accountable for its actions and decisions. Figure 3 below illustrates the accountability cycle as described by Epstein.

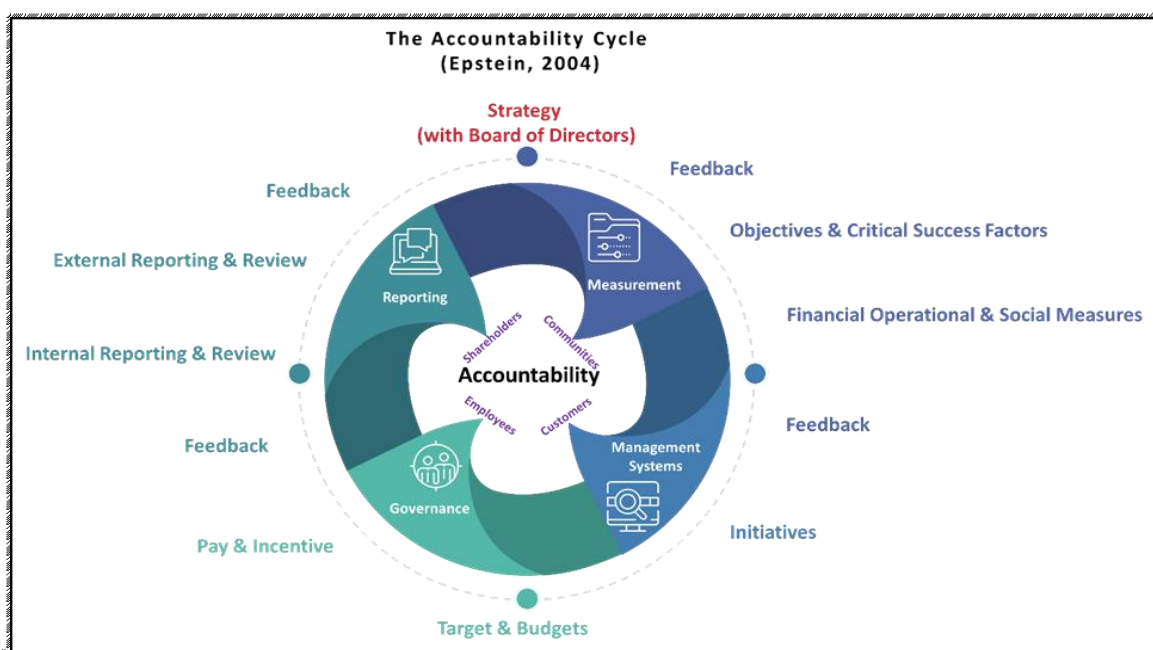


Figure 3: Adapted Accountability Cycle (Source: Epstein, 2004)

Over the decades, researchers have attempted to develop new models for implementing business strategies to improve sustainable organisational performance to enhance their success and ensure sustainability (Epstein, 2004). Unfortunately, not enough progress has been made, and more work is needed to adequately answer issues about designing organisations to be superior performers, resilient, successful, and sustainable. Epstein (2004) highlighted several crucial questions that business leaders must consider ensuring the success and sustainability of their companies. The first question focuses on business leaders’ actions to drive success and sustainability, such as setting clear goals, utilising effective management systems, and engaging stakeholders to understand their needs and concerns. The second question pertains to the systems that business leaders can implement, such as sustainability reporting frameworks, environmentally and socially responsible practices, and robust risk management processes. Finally, Epstein raises the question of what measures of success and

sustainability are appropriate in the face of business disruptions. He suggests that businesses consider multiple metrics, including financial performance, customer satisfaction, and environmental and social impact, to assess their overall performance and identify areas for improvement.

Overall, Epstein (2004) emphasised the need for business leaders to take a proactive and strategic approach to drive success and sustainability in their organisations. By considering the above questions and implementing effective systems and processes, business leaders can help ensure their companies' long-term success and sustainability. The current research study aligns with Epstein's (2004) call for more research on the specific actions and systems business leaders can implement to drive success and sustainability in their organisations. Epstein (2007) also emphasised the need for more research on the drivers and success factors contributing to organisational performance and resilience, particularly within PHEIs. The current study seeks to explore the business management strategies used for business resilience within a PHEI context and identify the factors contributing to organisational success and sustainability. By conducting extensive empirical research and fieldwork, the study aims to provide specific recommendations and guidance for PHEIs on achieving and maintaining resilience in the face of business disruptions. Overall, the current study aligns with Epstein's requests for more research on the actions, systems, and factors contributing to organisational performance and resilience and seeks to develop a deeper understanding of causal relationships in this context.

Several strategic management theories are relevant to the current study and can provide insight into how PHEIs can achieve and maintain business agility and resilient competitive advantage amid business disruptions. Some of the leading theories in this area include the following:

The resource-based view of the firm: This theory suggests that a company's competitive advantage is based on its unique resources and capabilities, which are difficult for competitors to imitate or replicate. To achieve and maintain a resilient competitive advantage, PHEIs must identify and develop unique resources and abilities that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable.

Theory of organisational identity dynamics: This theory emphasises the need for companies to continuously adapt and learn to respond to changing market conditions and maintain their competitive advantage in the new world of work. PHEIs must develop dynamic capabilities that allow them to sense, seize new opportunities, and reconfigure their resources and capabilities in response to external shocks and disruptions.

Stakeholder theory is a perspective on business management that considers the interests of all stakeholders - not just shareholders - as necessary in decision-making. This includes

customers, employees, suppliers, local communities, and the environment. In the context of PHEIs, building business resilience in a disruptive environment can be challenging due to these organisations' complex and multifaceted nature. Stakeholder theory can provide a framework for managing these challenges by considering the needs and interests of all stakeholders in the decision-making process. For example, in a disruptive environment, PHEIs may need to adapt their operations to meet changing demands, such as moving to online delivery or diversifying their revenue streams. By considering the needs and interests of all stakeholders, PHEIs can identify strategies that are not only financially viable but also socially responsible and sustainable. In addition to building business agility and resilience, stakeholder theory can help PHEIs build trust and credibility with their stakeholders, which can be especially important during disruption. By engaging with stakeholders and considering their needs and interests, PHEIs can demonstrate their commitment to being socially responsible and responsive to the community's needs.

Value proposition theory is a framework for understanding a company or product and service's value to its customers. It is based on the idea that customers are more likely to choose a product or service that provides them with the most outstanding value for their money. The value proposition should be based on a thorough understanding of the target market and what they value. It should also be specific and measurable so that it is clear to the customer how the product or service will improve their lives. Business leaders should communicate a value proposition clearly and consistently to the target market to be effective. Leaders can do this through marketing materials, such as advertisements and product packaging, and customer interactions, such as sales presentations and customer service. Overall, value proposition theory helps companies understand their customer's value and clearly and compellingly communicate the benefits of their products or services. This can help PHEIs to differentiate themselves from competitors and to build strong relationships with their customers.

These strategic management theories can provide insight into how PHEIs can achieve and maintain business agility and a resilient competitive advantage amid business disruptions by identifying and developing unique resources and capabilities, fostering dynamic capabilities, and building resilience in their organisational systems and processes.

2.3.3 Resource-Based Theory

This section aims for the researcher to understand the principles, practical implementation, and constraints of attaining long-term competitive superiority by examining the resource-based theory. According to Thoralf (2016), the "Resource-Based" (RBT) idea is linked to "Marx's value" theory, which is an endeavour within organisation theory targeted at a study of production and economic variables due to elements of the business. The author argues that the approach guides how a firm creates and upholds competitive advantage. It is

advisable that the firm protects customer demands and works harder towards satisfying customers' needs better than the competitor's efforts. Making use of this theory, the firm can distinguish forms of resources that are tangible. The RBT recognises that competitive advantage is associated with value creation (Thoralf, 2016). According to Barney (2007), a company can only differentiate itself from competitors and gain a competitive edge if its tangible and intangible resources are valuable, unique, and cannot be imitated. Morris, Kuratko, Allen, Ireland and Schindehutte (2010) state that RBT theory conceptualises the organisation as a collection of resources wherein quality and the number of possessions in this collection are significant factors of organisations' performance. Morris *et al.* (2010) suggests that an entrepreneur's success or failure in gaining a sustainable competitive advantage is dictated by their resource management strategy, which is constrained by resource pools, product lines, and a niche consumer base. This is intriguing, for instance, given that the owner of the entrepreneurial enterprise is responsible for part, if not all, of the essential human resources.

This debate is based on Hayton's (2015) definition of entrepreneurial abilities. The ability to recognise and create opportunities, as well as the ability to capitalise on them and ensure that they are realised, is defined by the author. According to Hayton (2015), there is a link between entrepreneurial qualities and business success and sustainability. The researcher will focus on how PHEIs use their resources to attract and retain clients (students) more effectively than their competitors while providing the leading service and quality education in South Africa, the continent and around the globe while adhering to government regulations using the RBT theory. The business leaders' abilities to acquire a sustainable competitive advantage will decide the reputational management tactics picked and employed. Hitt, Arregle, and Homles (2021) argued that the disruption has been worse for some organisations. PHEIs resources are essential for surviving the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting socio-economic difficulties. Public organisations/institutions get subsidising, or a lift from the public authority (government) to manage such PHEIs fund themselves. In this manner, temporarily, financial resources are required for endurance and survival. Hitt, Arregle, and Homles (2021) contended that because of the lockdowns, limitations or restrictions forced by the government and severe worldwide recessions, numerous PHEIs experienced a severe decrease in income experienced critical income issues. Subsequently, they must exhaust cash holds or access cash from diverse sources (e.g., influence and the offer of resources) to remain solvent or dissolvable.

The researchers further contended that for some organisations, endurance, that is, the existing competitive advantage and its value appropriation, has become a more pressing concern than the long-term sustainable competitive advantage from valuable, rare, limited, and non-substitutable (VRIN) resources. The hazard inflexibility impact claims that organisations respond to difficulties by limiting development and narrowing their focus to what has worked in the past has exacerbated this transitory shift in needs (Staw, Sandelands,

& Dutton, 1981). Accordingly, numerous organisations have abridged danger-taking and decreased their attention on vital long-term responsibilities for momentary destinations, principally zeroing in on endurance. Hitt, Arregle, and Homles (2021) contended that organisations likewise should plan for the new world of work that will result in the post-disruption period. Besides, numerous organisations (OECD, 2020; McCoy, 2020; Basset, 2020; Brandy, 2020) have shown a capacity to adjust to the pandemic temporarily, yet they will require various resources and better approaches to utilise them the long term.

Consequently, resource organisation takes on added significance. Organisations might require more adaptable resources and new capacities to contend in the new climate, incorporating a quickly changing cutthroat scene. To achieve the flexible effectiveness anticipated by North, organisations may need to focus less on resource attributes (VRIN) and more on routines and procedures that allow them to reconfigure resources and capacities to perform well in the new climate (1999). Typically, routine advances as organisations become aware of their expectations. Even with environmental jolts and disruptions, routines should change rapidly to permit organisations to obtain/foster novel resources and pack them to quickly make new capacities (Sirmon, Hitt & Ireland 2007; Sirmon, Hitt, Ireland & Gilbert 2011). Consequently, organisations should have or quickly foster unique capabilities to deal with their resources more deftly and viably (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000; Teece, 2007). Fixed resources, particularly area-bound ones, have been seen as a wellspring of the upper hand.

In any case, these resources take much work to redeploy for elective employment. A few organisations might have to get more fluid and versatile resources to uphold the reconfiguration of different resources as representatives and clients become increasingly willing and ready to perform activities (such as work and make purchases) remotely. The supply of expensive office space, stores, or market-chasing resources that organisations have built over many years may become less essential or an obligation in pandemic and post-pandemic environments. Since intangible resources regularly are more adaptable, they will take on added significance. Innovation and human resources are essential resources on which redeployment and reconfiguration endeavours depend. Hence, they might be fundamental for new abilities to manage the average vulnerability in the new typical environment. For instance, Rindova and Courtney (2020) contended that organisations could foster versatile procedures or moulding systems to manage exposure. Though universal methodologies assist organisations with recognising qualities of unsure business sectors and conditions and planning approaches to react, forming systems helps organisations distinguish openings made by the vulnerabilities and take advantage of them proactively (Eisenhardt, in press). Surprisingly, while an organisation seeks to compete in new work, the financial downturn or economic recession and a decline in human resource collocation have made development more difficult. Although moulding systems may be more significant in the more drawn-out term, they likewise are challenging and less secure.

2.3.3.1 Limitations of the Resource-Based Theory

Since its inception in the 1980s, various authors have utilised the RBT and adopted many. Even though it has been lauded for directing investment in tangible and intangible resources to achieve a long-term competitive advantage, several authors have criticised the theory, which will be examined briefly. When other authors were refining the RBT, McWilliams and Smart (1995) commenced with a critical evaluation of the idea. In their argument, the authors argued that the approach tends to be based on static concepts that are descriptive rather than predictive. Thus, it does not allow an organisation to predict gains from changes emanating from environmental disruptions. They further argued that the RBT needs more feasibility for heavily regulated, dynamically changing industries, such as PHEIs. Its strength is describing and understanding industries where demand is known.

Another argument McWilliams and Smart (1995) presents is that the RBT is appropriate for capturing opportunities and handling threats; however, if there is a sudden change in threats and opportunities in an unpredictable pattern. Barney (2007) supports this by stating that the RBT is appropriate in assisting managers in identifying resources and creating strategies that create sustainable competitive advantage. However, the RBT can only do so after the industry changes. Barney (2007) further mentioned another limitation of the RBT linked to its unit of analysis. The author promulgates that the theory perceives an organisation as a bundle of resources. However, the author cautions that accessing such Intra organisational data may be challenging, especially in complex organisations like PHEIs.

For this reason, Barney (2007) states that there may be a need to assess these Intra organisational resources or phenomena to understand how these could be managed internally to complete the identification of these resources. Another limitation of the RBT expressed by Priem and Butler (2001) is that the theory fails to answer the "how" questions. They argue that the idea needs to respond to when, where and how the identified resources can be of strategic value, thus becoming the source of competitive advantage. Using this theory does not enable one to answer how one can obtain the help, how and in which context it contributes to sustainability, and compare the identified to other resources to determine strength (Priem & Butler, 2001). The views expressed by Priem and Butler (2001) are further supported by Sheehan and Foss (2017), who argue that the theory has no prescriptive power due to its inability to answer the "how" questions, which they term the "process black box". They state that it could be helpful if the theory could assist the user in determining why one firm outperforms the competition and which resources are more valuable than others to ensure that the firms obtain more success and sustainability over another.

Gkantsidis and Rodriguez (2005) opine that there should be a concerted effort to broaden the RBT from merely identifying the strategic nature and uniqueness of resources to evaluating the relationship between resources and other similar variables that lead to the creation of competitive advantage. They further argue that doing this will ensure that the theory users

can use resources that have been identified while nurturing others that have the potential to be strategic resources in the future. Fahy (2004) believes that the theory does not consider time, asset inefficiencies, interconnectedness, and existing uncertainties. Due to these weaknesses, some researchers have considered the theory inconsistent and not futuristic, rendering it relatively static and unable to predict the future, thus preparing the organisation for future challenges.

2.3.3.2 Relevance of the Resource-Based Theory to the Study

The literature provided a detailed description of the Resource-Based theory above. The Resource-Based approach is about identifying tangible and intangible organisational competencies that could be used to create a sustainable competitive advantage and ultimately improve business resilience, success, and sustainability. The theory advocates that an organisation has a package of resources and capabilities that, when put together, become the competencies unique to organisational success and sustainability. These resources, capabilities and competencies are tangible or intangible, linking sustainable competitive advantage and value creation. Hence, the theory has further been used to describe organisation performance and describe the organisation's sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, the primary aim of this study is to explore the business management status quo or overall strategies used for business resilience within a PHEI context.

The focus will be PHEIs in a developing socio-economic context. The reputation of the PHEIs impacts the overall organisation's reputation. For these reasons, the theory was deemed relevant, as it is assumed that it has the potential to assist the PHEIs in identifying competencies that they can use to create a sustainable competitive advantage to address business disruption. This theory is even more attractive for the study because it acknowledges tangible and intangible capabilities. One can argue that reputation is supernatural, and being recognised as a competitive builder will assist the PHEIs. The question that arises then is *how* business leaders can do this. The researcher will explore the overall business strategies and how business leaders could nurture these to benefit the organisation through the study. These become business performance enhancement tools and innovation as the primary strategy to address business disruption.

2.3.4 Theory of Organisational Identity Dynamics

The researcher's focus now shifts towards comprehending the meaning, practical use, and consequences of developing powerful and enduring brands through a study of the theory of organisational identity dynamics. The idea of organisational identity dynamics will be discussed, providing other factors that may be assets and how business leaders could nurture them to ensure that they provide the organisation with business strategies that will add to sustainable competitive advantage. Before attempting to delve deeper into the theory of organisational dynamics, an explanation of "organisational identity" must be provided. This

concept is defined by Cilliers and Greyvenstein (2012) as the dominant lasting qualities of a firm that differentiates it from other firms. The authors further state that this is conscious organisational behaviour that the organisation deliberately portrays. Schoemaker (2006) believes that executive members view corporate identity as central to the organisation. It makes the organisation different from others, and members perceive it by linking its present to the past. As part of determining the organisational identity, specific questions should be asked, as argued by Schoemaker (2006), and these are: who are we as an organisation, and what do we stand for? This ensures that the correct answers are obtained, and the organisational identity is entrenched in values and norms. A further argument presented by Schoemaker (2006) is that corporate identity has many benefits for the organisation, including providing a sense of belonging, which, in turn, drives the culture and reputation of the organisation. It is dynamic and enables the organisation to adapt to different situations when required, provided there is a willingness to do so.

According to Allcorn (2015), the issue of organisational identity speaks to the learned and manipulated corporate culture and unconscious factors of organisational life that tell a story of who we are and who I am at work. Therefore, creating an organisational identity includes the conscious and unconscious aspects of the organisation's life. Diamond (In Allcorn & Stein, 2015) defines organisation identified as "the totality of repetitive patterns of individual behaviour and interpersonal relationships that, when taken together, comprise the unacknowledged meaning of organisational life. Organisation identity is influenced by conscious thought; however, its relational patterns among individuals at work are primarily motivated by unconscious thoughts and feelings. Its foundation rests with the transference of motions beneath the organisational structure." Allcorn (2015) states that organisational identity outlines whom we are as a group and organisation translated into a vision, mission, and value statement to further elaborate on this definition. The author further notes that corporate identity is displayed by acts of management within the organisation and their approach to tackling and relating to employees and stakeholders. Hence, the importance of differentiating between organisational culture as well as identity.

Schein (2010:18) defines organisational culture as a pattern of basic assumptions invented, discovered, or developed by a given group. It learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that have proven valid and, as a result, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel about those problems. The author posits that leaders create, manage, and change organisational culture by responding to workplace dynamism and external settings. This is learned behaviour, which, if appropriately implemented, instils stability. Still, business leaders need help to use it to understand the workplace, causing it to be not a necessity for organisational functioning. Allcorn (2015) states that organisational identity is an unconscious element of corporate life that tell us who we are, whereas organisational culture is consciously learned and easy to manipulate practices. The author further argues that organisational identity differs from

corporate culture because it emphasises the unconscious individual, interpersonal and group dynamics that enable people to split their make-up, including shared defensive responses to anxiety and stress. In further providing a clear distinction between organisation culture and organisation identity, Allcorn (2015) argues the following points as provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Differences between Organisational Culture and Identity (source: Allcorn, 2015)

Organisational Culture	Organisational Identity
Provides insights into long-term stable organisations	Provides insights into dysfunctional aspects of organisational life
Less insightful in organisations that change often	Based on human nature, thus it applies to all types of organisations
Does not speak to leadership behaviour	Informs understanding on why organisational change is difficult and stressful due to member reliance on psychological defences
Leaders create and manipulate cultural elements	Leadership requires self-awareness and the ability to reflect on unconscious organisational dynamics to avoid reliance on psychological defence mechanisms.
Dependent on rationality and cognition in terms of what works, what to retain and what to teach	

Organisational culture has its merits; however, it may be challenging to apply these in practice as it is only relevant to some organisations. Organisation culture emphasises the things that are not discussed in the workplace, perceived as created and manipulated by leaders. In contrast, organisation identity reflects the unconscious individual, interpersonal, group and organisational dynamics, which are not intentionally created by leaders and are not managed by them either. These terms are called "organisation dynamics" (Allcorn, 2015). Organisation identity consists of unconscious elements of organisational behaviour, whereas corporate culture consists of conscious aspects of organisational behaviour. It is essential to discuss the organisational image, which is one of the critical aspects of the theory of organisational identity dynamics. According to Dutton and Dukerich (1991), corporate image is what the organisation's members trust others to understand as distinctive. In further reviewing this, the authors renamed it "construed organisational image," where the images created and revered by the organisation are not explained by what insiders believe they should be but by what outsiders perceive.

An argument presented by Martenson (2007) is that an image is a notion that an individual holds with another individual or organisation. Considering this, the author argues that an organisational image comprises all sorts of impressions stakeholders make about the

organisation. This should be valuable and tangible but also exceedingly difficult to imitate as it can assist the organisation in obtaining superior and sustainable financial performance. Furthermore, the author believes that the organisational image should, in essence, assist in creating a clear, accurate understanding of the firm. Since it is emotionally based, it varies from person to person (Martenson, 2007). Eryilmaz (2008) believes that the corporate image answers what people think of the organisation. The author emphasises that the image is created with deliberate efforts by the organisation. In some instances, the organisation's actions determine what impression it will have. This differs from a reputation as this is built over time, whereas the idea is the last memory outsiders will have related to the organisation (Eryilmaz, 2008).

According to Boyd, Bergh, and Ketchen (2010), organisational image is the association held in customer memory, one of the most important strategic resources that provide the organisation with grounds to build a long-term significant competitive advantage over its competitors disruptions. Therefore, it is essential to position a financial organisation's positive image as part of business strategies, leading to customer loyalty (Greve, 2014). This perfectly ushers in the following discussion, which will delve into the specifics of the theory of organisational identity dynamics. Hatch and Schultz (2000) posit that corporate identity must be theorised about culture and image to understand how internal and external definitions of organisations interact. The authors designed the theory of organisational identity dynamics, which models processes that link identity, culture, and image. This showcases how the corporate identity continuously converses between organisational culture and vision. All three of these notions have been defined previously, highlighting their link. Nevertheless, this hypothesis (as seen in Figure 4 below) expands on that relationship.

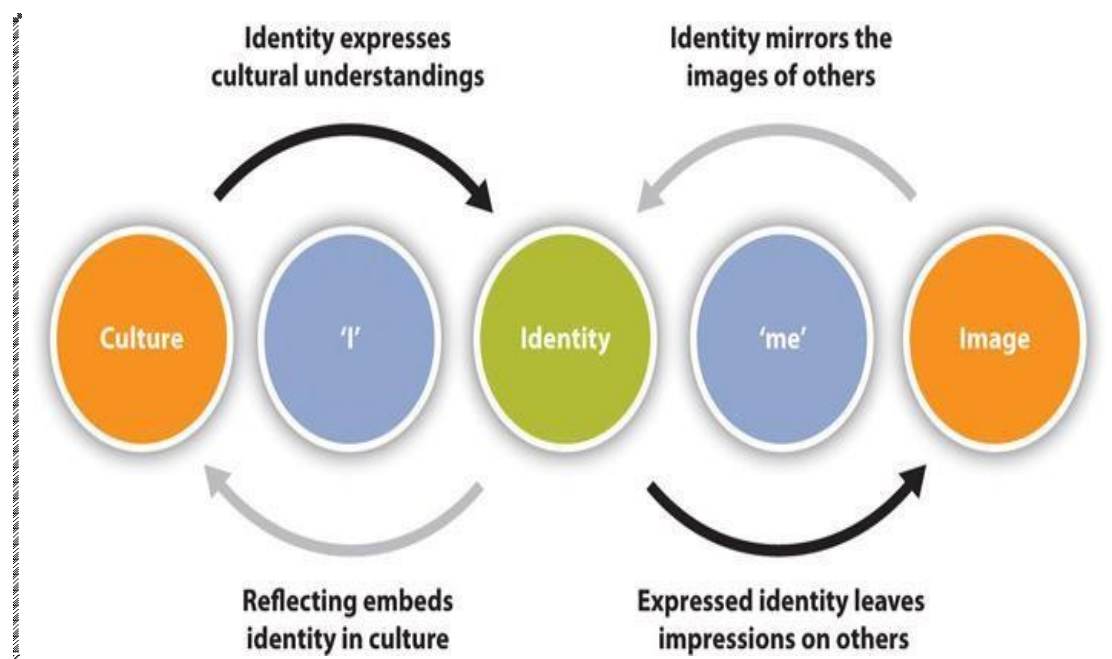


Figure 4: Organisational Identity theory (source: Hatch & Schultz, 2002)

Hatch and Schultz (2002) state that within the Organisational Identity Model, a relationship exists between culture, identity and image for circular processes of mutual dependence. They further argue that knowing how organisations work assists the latter in avoiding organisational dysfunction, leading to ineffectiveness. Therefore, it becomes critically important for organisations to support and nurture all initiatives aimed at corporate culture, identity, and image. On the other hand, comprehending organisational culture and vision is required to promote an adaptable, stable identity that allows people to associate easily. In the review of the "social identity theory," which is what the organisational identity theory is based on, Brickson (2000) is of the view that "self-concepts" are because of social and personal characters. In providing clarity on the concept of self-concept, Gioia, Schultz, and Corley (2000:65) provided a general view of the notion of self-concept for the organisation by stating that it is a "sense of continuous formulation and preservation of the self through interaction as an essential notion of individual identity. This is an important recognition for individuals and organisations because organisational identity is constructed via similar interaction processes with outsiders, that is, the media, customers, competitors, and regulatory institutions." Therefore, through the identity dynamics model, organisational identity occurs in procedures that continuously rotate between cultural self-understanding and images created in other people's eyes (Gioia *et al.*, 2000).

2.3.4.1 Limitations of the Organisation Identity Dynamics Theory

This section outlines the dangers and the blind spots that business leaders should be aware of when using this theory. In their work, Hatch and Schultz (2002) argue that a strong organisational identity is created when organisational identity dynamics allow free relationships. They also warn that the organisation's identity dynamics sometimes become dysfunctional. This usually occurs when culture and image lose connectedness. When this happens, the organisation becomes vulnerable and therefore does not benefit from the interconnectedness of these elements. There is an observation various authors have made; Christensen (1997) claims that people who tend to pay attention to the organisation's messages are the organisation's members. The author posits that this results in the organisation talking to itself through messages supposed to reach out to external parties. This is termed by Brown and Starkey (2000) as "organisational narcissism", which they briefly describe as the psychological response to manage self-esteem.

Brown and Starkey (2000) elaborate on this argument by stating that narcissism is a psychological complex of denial, rationalisation, egotism, a sense of entitlement, and anxiety. This may be positive in some instances; however, often, this is regarded as dysfunctional when taken to the extremes, and they caution against this. According to Christensen and Cheney (2000), the state of narcissism often occurs when organisations get to be so highly preoccupied with carefully crafted and elaborate expressions to the point of overlooking pertinent issues relating to stakeholder roles and involvement. Another caution Brown and

Starkey (2000) provided is what seems to be the opposite of narcissism. This occurs when the organisation gives the stakeholders way too much power to a point where self-definition and cultural heritage needs to be addressed and sometimes abandoned. This makes it impossible for the organisation to reflect on their beliefs and values, making it vulnerable to changing environmental forces driven by the stakeholders.

As previously stated, the theory of organisational identity dynamics aids individuals in answering questions such as, what does this organisation stand for? And by implication, what do I stand for as an individual in the organisation? This is important as employees and potential consumers (students/clients) should always seek congruence between their beliefs and those espoused by the organisation. And any misalignment between one's belief and that of the organisation could cause the highest level of dissatisfaction (Dukerich, Golden & Shortell, 2002). It is also argued that several inconsistencies characterise the organisational identity dynamics theory. Whetten (2006) states that this theory is the personal property of observers, and for others, it is the verifiable property of the organisation. Creating a balance between the two is the job of people who use this theory to obtain a competitive advantage.

2.3.4.2 Relevance of Theory of Organisational Identity Dynamics to the Study

The theory of organisational identity dynamics pertains to the relationship between culture and image. Culture is concerned with the organisation's internal workings, whereas vision is affected by what people outside the organisation perceive. This theory examines the interplay between cultural image and identity and how they merge to create organisational identity, which is what the organisation becomes recognised for what the organisation is known for becomes essential to a point where the competitors will fail to copy this. Thus, it becomes the organisation's strength and is interpreted as its sustainable competitive advantage.

With the focus of the study being on PHEIs in South Africa, the theory assists us in getting to understanding how one can use reputation management, if possible, to create a specific organisation identity. Once this is completed, one will have to establish how business leaders could use it to develop business strategies that improve business performance, hence the success and sustainability of the institution. It is imperative to be aware that PHEIs are perceived to deliver programmes of questionable quality in search of profit maximisation. Therefore, the business leaders become the driver of culture, and the image created is also linked to the owners. These owners must be aware of this and therefore have a duty to ensure their actions do not jeopardise the organisation's reputation, rendering reputation strategies irrelevant for creating a sustainable competitive advantage.

2.3.5 Stakeholder Theory

The researcher intends to analyse the stakeholder theory's meaning, practical implementation, and restrictions related to contemporary business and management. The

stakeholder theory is discussed, and the researcher also chose to be part of the study. As cited by Aaltonen and Kujala (2016), the basic idea of stakeholder theory is that organisations have many groups they can create and maintain support from by considering their various relevant interests. The authors argue that stakeholder relationships are perceptions, uncertainty, complexity, and institutional context. In breaking this down further, the authors describe complexity as the number and variety of stakeholder relationships. Uncertainty refers to the ambiguity of information received from stakeholders; dynamism is the change in position between various stakeholders, and institutionalised context refers to the procedures and constructions that the stakeholders operate within. Freeman (1984) developed this theory in response to the fact that the traditional strategy framework was not assisting leaders in developing innovative strategic guidelines. As a result, it could not assist managers in comprehending new ways to create opportunities in a changing environment.

The theories needed consistency with the amount and type of change in the business environment. Freeman developed this theory to focus on the relationship with the people with a "stake" in the organisation's running. The author did this to avert the risk associated with the expectations of these parties with the "stake." Freeman (1984) defined a stakeholder as individuals who can impact and be impacted by attaining the organisation's goals. The author developed this theory, and authors like Mainardes, Alves and Raposo (2011) believed it was more than a theory. But a way of studying groups that the organisation needs to recognise and relate to. It further provides language and concepts that business leaders can use to describe the organisation in inclusive terms, thus determining whom to relate to and how business leaders should manage such relationships.

A stakeholder is defined by Sutterfield, Friday-Stroud and Shivers-Blackwell (2006) as individuals who are impacted directly or indirectly by the tasks undertaken by the entity. These are people who can influence and get affected by attaining organisational goals. Stakeholders could be both internal and external. Either way, they will have expectations of the organisation, which involve the form and manner of its objectives are achieved. According to Bryson (2004), stakeholders are individuals who have the control to impact the company and whoever else does not have such control to influence the organisation cannot be regarded as a stakeholder. The author posits that stakeholders are a more comprehensive range of people to whom specific responsibility is owed. Kaler (2002) argues that stakeholders can be classified as claimants and influencers. They have a claim on the organisation's service, and they influence the way the organisation operates to achieve and or/not to achieve its objectives.

According to the World Bank (1996), stakeholders are interested and are impacted by the result of the proposed developmental activity. This definition is designed in the context of developmental projects. McAdam, Hazlett and Casey (2005) argue that the people who choose to be involved in the organisation's dealings should automatically be stakeholders.

Ignoring them will not automatically make them disappear. If they have been identified as having an interest, it makes sense that business leaders should hear them. McAdam *et al.* (2005) emphasise the legitimacy aspect of stakeholders. They believe that defining stakeholder based on legitimacy emphasises the moral obligation of the organisation's responsibility to respond to the stakeholder's needs. The argument presented by these authors is that if the definition is narrowed, it could be dangerous, as this may exclude some major players leading to a point where the people who have influence are entirely ignored. The authors caution that broad definitions could also pose a challenge, especially when stakeholders are identified in a specific context. Therefore, a balance must be struck when determining the list of stakeholders, as there should be no deliberate exclusion. Attempts to widen the term, on the other hand, should be avoided (McAdam *et al.*, 2005).

Stakeholder management is described by Benson and Davidson (2010) as the task given to managers to manage the relations between the organisation and the stakeholders. The managers ask questions about the company's purpose and what account management has towards stakeholders. Stakeholder management becomes essential in enhancing the company's success and sustainability. Stakeholder management should be done to achieve economic objectives and should also be done because it is morally required (Benson & Davidson, 2010). According to Benson and Davidson (2010), stakeholder management and shareholder value should have a positive relationship. Stakeholder management is viewed to achieve improved financial performance and shareholder value maximisation.

Stakeholder management is regarded as a role player in advancing the organisation's competence relating to knowledge generation. As a result, it has become critical for businesses to be able to adapt to a variety of situations and ways. This is to ensure the achievement of strategic goals in complex environments. Organisations must recognise the importance of diverse stakeholders and collaborate with them to create value that benefits them and the stakeholders (Lavie, 2006). Recent studies have connected stakeholder management to creating a sustainable competitive advantage (agility) by reducing transaction costs (Harrison, Bosse & Phillips, 2020). These authors believe that companies that apportion their worth to their stakeholders and include them in their strategic decision-making could benefit through increased demand, efficiency, innovation, and capacity, which could become a source of sustainability. Figure 5 below depicts a wide range of stakeholders.

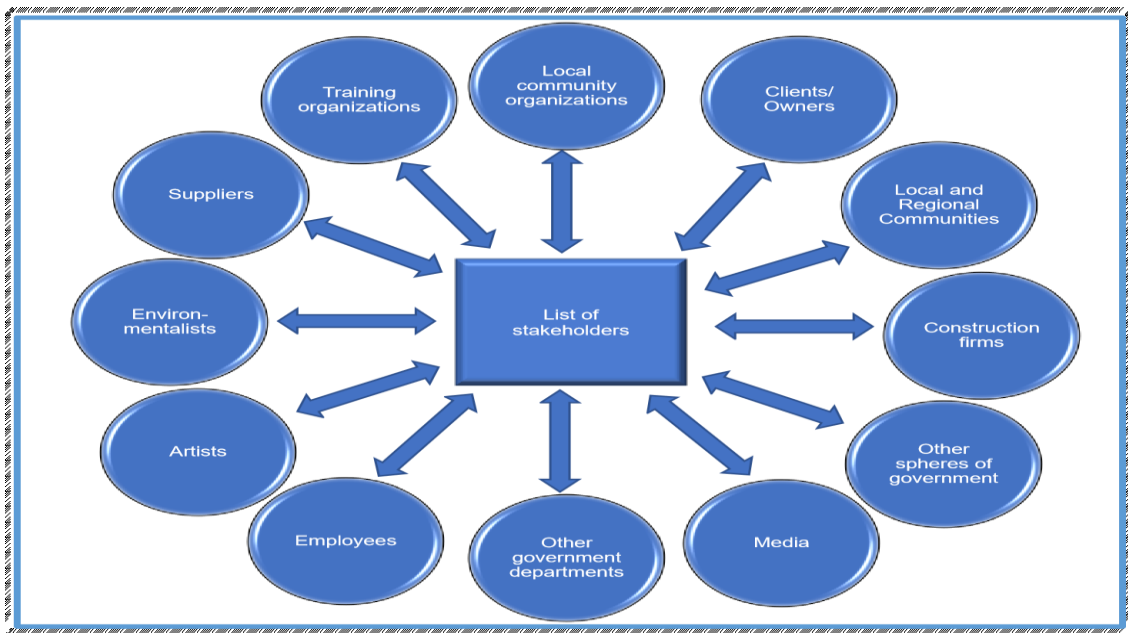


Figure 5: Stakeholder Theory (source: Freeman 1984)

There have been some changes in the stakeholder theory over the years. Concerning Figure 5, Friedman and Miles (2016) maintain that an amazingly straightforward way of differentiating various stakeholders is to consider diverse groups of people and then classify them according to their relationship with the organisation. The list in Figure 5 needs to be completed. However, this list is based on categorisation to provide some sense of grouping without mentioning each group individually. Friedman and Miles (2016) argue that any company must be viewed as a collection of stakeholders, thus altering the company's purpose to becoming that of managing interests, viewpoints and needs. In further developing the stakeholder concept, Freeman (2004) added a new principle to the stakeholder theory, "stakeholder resource". He argues that stakeholders' opinions and perspectives are heard and taken seriously in companies. Failure to do so may result in stakeholders bringing action against the company's directors due to their inability to exercise the duty of care.

2.3.5.1 Limitations of the Stakeholder Theory

Narbel and Muff (2017) strongly advocate that stakeholder theory has two main limitations. First, this theory is anchored in the traditional view of the firm, defining it as an entity whose sole role is to generate revenue for itself and the owners. The second limitation is that firms rely on regulation as a compensation mechanism for externalities it generates. These authors then conclude that in its current form, the stakeholder theory is confined to economic value maximisation, which ultimately causes it to steer away from creating societal value. They advocated that the firm's mission be redefined to be guided by societal interests rather than profit maximisation.

Younkins and Friedman (2006) believe that the stakeholder definition needs to be narrower, thus rendering implementation almost impossible. They think business leaders need more time and resources and are forced to focus only on stakeholders who hold attention and can yield quicker organisation benefits. According to Charron (2007), the stakeholder notion is defined as "anyone who consciously and consequently engages in the organisation by being affected by corporate actions that are too broad and nullify the scope of responsibility."

Moreover, the fact that managers are expected to respond to the concerns of such broad population groups assumes that they have the skills, knowledge, control, and power over what can be expected. This is hope for the impossible from managers (Charron, 2007). The argument presented by the stakeholder theory is that stakeholders should be differentiated into distinct categories or segments. However, many things could be improved with this approach. Winn (2001) argues that group members are not homogenous; they have multiple interests and roles that must be acknowledged. Besides the heterogeneous nature of the stakeholders, there are instances where stakeholders could represent more than one interest at a time. According to Jansson (2005), in some cases, stakeholders simultaneously occupy several roles, which may cut across various groupings.

2.3.5.2 Relevance of Stakeholder Theory to the Study

The stakeholder theory is ultimately about acknowledging that organisations operate in an environment influenced by diverse groups. These groups could either be internal or external. The influence should not be viewed as unfavourable and putting pressure on the organisation. However, there should be an effort to understand these different groupings, to understand their demands and the opportunities they offer; and, after that, devise ways to meet these. It is also worth mentioning that meeting these expectations and needs and how they are completed determines whether an organisation can use this as a strength that eventually could be developed into a sustainable competitive advantage that will ensure organisational success and sustainability. This study's primary aim is to explore the business management status quo or overall strategies for business resilience within a PHEI context. In the case of most PHEIs, the owner is responsible for stakeholder management and engagement. Therefore, they must understand all the stakeholders in their institutions. This puts significant accountability on the owner, and thus the owner needs to be more balanced by entertaining the stakeholder they identify as important. In all engagements, the organisational interest should be prevalent.

2.3.6 Value Proposition Theory

The researcher aims to comprehend the principles, practical use, and repercussions of constructing prosperous and competitive enterprises by examining the value proposition theory. The value proposition has been used widely in previous studies but has yet to have a specific definition. This argument is presented by Haseki (2013), who further states that an

organisation has varying methods of value creation, including creating value through price, location, and quality. For this reason, Capon and Hulbert (2007) posit that a compelling and clear value proposition should be the basis of the firm's "functional, psychological and economic value" that shows how to acquire customers and fight competition. The value proposition explicitly promises its customer base to deliver a specific bundle of value-creating benefits (Bhat, 2009). According to Fifield (2007), the value proposition is a written statement that focuses on all company activities that create a differential within the customer's decision-making process, luring the customers to prefer purchasing the organisation's goods compared to those of the competitors. The author further argues that a tested and proven value proposition is essential to differentiate business successfully. This is because the value proposition has the strength to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of processes resulting in retaining customers and cost reduction leading to customer satisfaction (Fifield, 2007). For this reason, Kar (2006) believes that the ability of the organisation to provide superior value for its customers is regarded as the most successful competitive strategy in that it leads to the attainment of competitive advantage.

Haseki (2013) defines the value proposition as a set of experiences, including value for money, brought by the organisation to customers. This leaves the consumer with a choice of whether this set of experiences is superior or inferior value compared to alternatives. Steven (2009) argues that the purpose of a value proposition is to focus on the client's benefits. However, these benefits are difficult to measure intuitively by the client, making them difficult to measure and understand. This is because the value is linked to pricing, and secondly, the term value has different meanings for different people, making it difficult to define and quantify. According to Truong, Simmons, and Palmer (2014), the value proposition is a scheme that communicates the value delivered by an offering to customers. These tend to take the form of statements of the benefits of a particular product or service. Anderson, Narus and van Rossum (2006) suggest three ways of developing a customer value proposition: identifying all benefits, identifying benefits that exceed the best alternative, and finally, identifying the value of the key benefits derived from a particular product or service. The authors further argue that the value proposition must always be distinctive – superior to the competition and measurable – based on tangible points of difference quantifiable in monetary terms and sustainable. This should also be able to execute the value for some time.

There are four diverse types of customer value dimensions, as highlighted by Kuusela (2007), which are defined in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Customer Value Identity (source: Kuusela 2007)

Customer value dimension	Description
Functional value	These are the functional, performance, and physical aspects of the product that give the product's user value to fulfil needs.
Economic value	This is the comparison of the quality and price by the consumer.
Emotional value	Perceived benefits of the product making use of the consumer's feelings.
Symbolic value	Refers to the positive things about the product that organisations can communicate to others.

All these dimensions combined lead to the intention to purchase. Fifield (2007) recommends asking the following questions when an organisation creates and delivers a value statement.

These are described in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Value Statement Creation (source: Fifield 2007)

Questions	Description
Question 1	What are the target markets and customer groups?
Question 2	What are their needs and the problems they are facing?
Question 3	What organisations can bring products or services to the customers' attention to satisfy their needs?
Question 4	How will that product and service be designed to satisfy consumers' needs?
Question 5	What benefits are offered by the product different from those competitors are offering?
Question 6	What is the best way to convey the product or service benefits to the customer?

Capon and Hulbert (2007) view the firm's success based on value. On this premise, Capon and Hulbert introduce the concept of customer value based on customer insights and driven by marketing activities. It will be essential to ask the questions recommended above by Fifield (2007) to determine the value an organisation provides and, therefore, further establish ways to use this to obtain a sustainable competitive advantage for the firm. The author states that if these questions are carefully answered, they will determine the purchase intention, which will also have to be understood by the organisation. As a review of the theory in existence,

Fifield (2009) developed an equation to identify how customers view value in terms of four elements. These are illustrated below:

Value = Benefits – Efforts – Risk – Price

Value = what customers perceive

Benefits = gained from the usage of the product and added value

Efforts = innovative things introduced to make the customer's life easy

Risk = refers to the burden on the customer, which organisations should reduce

Price = perception of a downside which is price and opportunity costs

Another remarkable development in the evolution of the value proposition theory is the introduction of the three-step approach to identifying value. Firstly, it involves the identification of critical dimensions to customer value; secondly, the development of the value proposition; and thirdly, the evaluation of the value proposition and its ability to create agility in an organisation (Rintamäki, Kuusela & Mitronen, 2007). In support of this, Fifield (2009) stated that an organisation should ask WHY, HOW, and WHAT to establish the value proposition for the consumers. This forms part of what he calls the Golden Circle. This provides a more accessible and straightforward tool to determine the value proposition. This is illustrated in Figure 6 below.

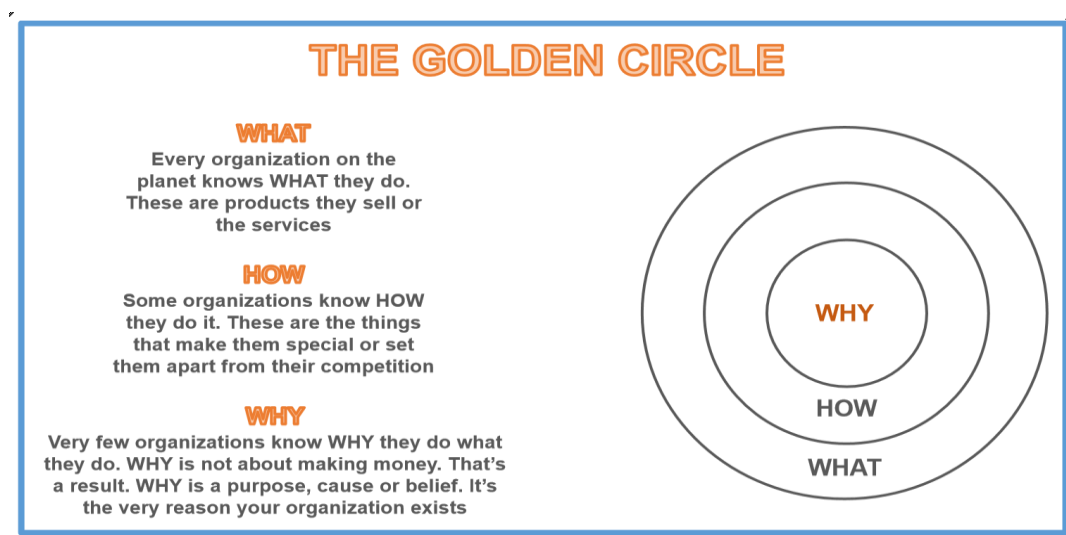


Figure 6: The Golden Circle (source: Bhat 2009)

2.3.6.1 Limitations of the Value Proposition Theory

Many improvements to the value proposition theory have been made over the years, and the researcher will address some of these proposed improvements below. Kelly (2014) believes that doing business in a modernised and digitally savvy environment requires an entirely

different approach, as one must constantly be in touch with what happens externally. Organisations are required to address and manage external forces all the time. Therefore, value creation becomes a full-time job rather than a once-off activity not monitored continuously. This needs to be emphasised in theory. According to Blocker, Flint, Myers, and Slater (2021), creating value for customers requires a proactive customer orientation, particularly considering technological advancements that have increased consumer channels and choices. Therefore, as part of creating value for the customers, there should be an emphasis on customer relationship management. Proper relationship management guarantees that the company places the right product in the right channel for the right customer at the right time.

It is widely accepted that focusing on developing a value proposition ensures a distinction between the organisation's products and those of competitors. However, Steven (2009), in describing value proposition, also highlights that the challenge with the value proposition model is that the term "value" means different things to different people. This then brings the element of subjectivity to determining value. Therefore, applying the theory requires a thorough understanding of customers to align the value created with customer expectations. One of the most recognisable limitations of the value proposition model is that, in most cases, customers receive the offer they wish to receive but not as it should, which creates conflict and dissatisfaction (Haseki, 2013). The author asserts that the organisation must structure marketing elements according to customer feedback. These must be communicated to all customers to know about the complete offer.

2.3.6.2 Relevance of Value Proposition Theory to the Study

Value proposition theory is a promise by companies to their clients to provide a bouquet of valuable services with benefits. This is a step further in most organisations. It is captured in a written statement focusing on the company's activities being highlighted as a delivery mechanism for the differentiated offering. Business leaders must differentiate this bouquet of services. It will eventually become the organisation's strength, improving efficiency and image, reducing costs, improving customer satisfaction, and ultimately contributing positively to profitability. Providing superior value by the organisation to its customers could be phenomenally successful, leading to the development of a competitive strategy, which can assist the organisation in obtaining a sustainable competitive advantage.

The relevance of the theory to the research is due to the importance of value creation in the PHEIs. All students need the best quality education and customer service when registering with a specific institution. PHEIs charge enormous tuition fees; therefore, every student intends to receive better value. This is seeing people they interact with as suppliers of products going the extra mile to ensure they have the best experience ever. The PHEIs in South Africa are run by institutions/business leaders who must ensure they are trained in

customer service. Moreover, they should continuously look for frills they could add to their product to make their interaction with the students remarkable. The business leaders and staff reputation created by the best interaction with students can become the organisation's strength, leading to a referral, more business, and ultimately increased profitability.

2.3.7 Addressing Shortfalls in Current Business Approaches

The researcher's next area of exploration involves strategies for surmounting constraints and accomplishing lasting prosperity. In a post-disruptive environment such as Covid, 19 future worlds of work will continue to create significant complexity and uncertainty for many businesses in the world at large. It may reveal boundary conditions for RBT, stakeholder theory, and other approaches (such as those emanating from industrial organisation economics; Porter, 1980) that help understand and explain organisational behaviours and sustainable performance. Moreso, to address the substantial changes occurring, according to Hitt, Arregle, and Homles (2021), organisations must adapt to or shape their environments by identifying, creating, and exploiting opportunities. The expansion to and heavier accentuation on resource coordination, as opposed to explicit resource credits, outlines a result of these limited conditions. In like manner, the intricacy and vulnerability might decrease the worth of single-reason theories, like stakeholder theory, and uplift the value of more fundamental speculations, like stakeholder theory. Like this, Harrison (2020) contended that understanding the worth of creation in this new world of work requires the incorporation of beliefs that clarify systems, resources, and stakeholders. Furthermore, Hitt *et al.*, (2020) discovered that organisations in unusual, risky situations were more able to participate in riskier innovative methodologies (like moulding) versus more gradual benefit-based procedures (like adjusting) when they had built substantial social capital with crucial partners/stakeholders.

To effectively manage resources and stakeholders in a post-disruptive world, authoritative hybridity may necessitate a combination of tactics, rationales, and underlying structures (such as primary adaptability). Also, organisations need the agility to plan and conduct essential changes, which require ease, speed, and mentalities that energise creative reasoning and strength. The detecting, seizing, and changing parts of dynamic capacities (Teece, 2007) are overwhelming in this New Normal environment. These endeavours rely significantly upon the abilities of organisations' supervisors (emotional administrative capabilities – Adner and Helfat, 2003). While top leaders have comparable intellectual capacities (Hitt & Tyler, 1991), creating and utilising new powerful abilities likewise requires saddling the intelligent and enthusiastic skills of the top supervisory group and other essential partners inside and outside the firm (Hodgkinson & Healey, 2011). The growing emphasis on stakeholders as directors necessitates supra-dynamic administrative capacities to create hierarchical hybridity and deal with the accumulating complex asset. Authoritative ability improvement measures are

resource arrangements expected to nimbly plan and execute inventive vital changes in the New Normal non-ergodic world.

2.4 Dealing with Business Complicators

The researcher will investigate tactics for overcoming challenges and accomplishing success in an intricate and multifaceted world. In the current epoch in which many businesses currently find themselves, there have been multiple realities they have had to deal with. The global pandemic and the ensuing socio-economic crises have disrupted the entire ecosystem's micro, meso, macro, and Exo systems. In some instances, individuals and organisations face many challenges that threaten their survival, and many businesses are still experiencing additional stress and even threats to their livelihoods (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2021). A microsystem is a set of activities, roles, and interpersonal connections a child meets as they grow up. Examples include family contexts, personal relationships, and job designations. A mesosystem comprises the interactions between two or more settings in which the developing individual is involved. Examples include social and workplace interactions. Ecosystems are sites where events affect the developing person's context but where the developing person is not an active participant. Examples include management decisions, the demographic contexts of colleagues at work and external networks of influence. The macrosystem refers to consistencies in the form and content of lower order systems (micro, meso and Exo) that exist, or could exist, at the level of the sub-culture or the culture, along with the belief systems or ideologies underlying such consistencies. Examples include mutual values and beliefs, socio-economic ideologies or a mutually agreed cultural plan.

2.4.1 Navigating Complexity in Business

The researcher will explore strategies for effectively managing uncertainty and propelling growth in a rapidly evolving world. Given the historical development of the search for high-performing successful organisations, it becomes evident that the need for relevant frameworks and theories is particularly apparent within a developing socio-economic context such as South Africa. This historical overview shows a shift in management literature over the last 20 years. A notable change emphasises the importance of people in ensuring business success and sustainability and even creating an environment for competitive advantage (Fabrizio *et al.*, 2021). It is also evident from these authors a historical overview of a successful organisation that can attain success and sustainability in two ways: the humanistic perspective and the logical process perspective. When researchers or practitioners view organisational success through a humanistic framework and theory, the concepts such as learning organisation (Fabrizio *et al.*, 2021; Robertson, 2021; Sigalas, 2015) or moral organisation (Sarkar & Kotler, 2019) will be exemplified.

Business success is credited to organisations that value, trust, and empower their employees, collaborate successfully, and connect effectively with the larger community, for example,

through the involvement of external stakeholders. However, the importance of financial and productivity returns is recognised. What is likely to be underscored are organisational effectiveness goals, the effectiveness of the organisation as a social system located within the wider community, or the reconciliation and effective use of competing values (Robbins & Barnwell 1994), leading to workplace harmony. When successful and sustainable organisations are viewed through the lens of a rational process framework, discussions of successful organisations (Hanna 1988; Neusch & Siebenaler 1993), visionary companies (Collins & Porras 1994) and excellent companies (Peters & Waterman 1982) gets exemplified.

The ability to interpret the business environment, foresee and act on new business opportunities, and the flexibility required to maintain "core values while adjusting output to meet new market demands or conditions". The willingness to implement employee remuneration strategies, such as stock ownership schemes that increase productivity and financial returns, will be credited with success. Despite the various perspectives on success and sustainability outlined earlier, it is essential to acknowledge that researchers and practitioners within the humanistic framework still recognise the significance of achieving viable technical and financial outcomes.

Similarly, those operating within the rational process framework prioritise effectively engaging and utilising human resources. However, the existing literature on success and sustainability tends to focus more on technical, financial, or human outcomes without fully integrating insights from systems theory into performance criteria. This theory views an organisation as a social and technological system operating within a larger ecosystem (Willcoxson, 2000). Each framework and approach mentioned above has identified elements and factors contributing to building a successful and sustainable organisation. While the terminology describing these building blocks may vary, similarities and overlapping features could be broadly classified into a humanistic or rational process perspective.

Unfortunately, several business-related scandals in South Africa have highlighted a lack of ethics and rampant fraud in supposedly thriving and sustainable organisations. Business Insider SA (2020) has documented some of the most notable cases of business wrongdoing in Table 4, which have shocked the country in recent years.

Table 4: Corporate Scandals in South Africa (source: Business Insider SA, 2020)

Name of company and year	Misconduct
Steinhoff 2017	The company inflated its profits and assets by R250 billion.
Tongaat Hulett 2018	According to the company, equity (the value of the business after liabilities) was overestimated by R3.5 billion to R4.5 billion in the company's 2018 financial results.
Gupta owned companies 2017	The Gupta Leaks, and numerous key South African state officials, reveals the family's influence on the state's operations and manipulated authorities and critical appointments to achieve its plan in 2017.
VBS Bank 2018	In 2018, an investigative report on fraud and corruption at a certain bank was authored by advocate Terry Motau. According to the report, the bank had suffered a loss of nearly R2 billion due to illicit activities.
KPMG 2017	KPMG struggled for survival over the past three years amid an exodus of clients. This departure of clients was in reaction to the revelations about its association with Gupta companies, its involvement in a discredited report into a so-called rogue unit at the SA Revenue Service and the allegations of corruption at VBS bank.

The following is a list of notable corporate scandals in recent times, as compiled by IG Group in 2018. It should be noted that for this research study, only the names of the companies will be mentioned, without delving into the details of each scandal, as they are already widely known to the public. Without going into any details, the researcher can also add the following South African companies to the above list of companies that engaged in practices that brought them into disrepute, and these are McKinsey & Company, SAP, Eskom, Sharemax, EOH, Bosasa, Gold Fields and Sasol (Business Insider SA, 2020). These companies are as follows: Enron, Volkswagen, Lehman Brothers, BP, Uber, Apple, Facebook, Valeant Pharmaceuticals, Kobe Steel and Equifax. The organisations mentioned above were severe players in the business and were considered successful and sustainable. Due to the nature of the scandals, these companies do not represent successful and sustainable organisations.

The following section defines successful, high-performing, sustainable organisations from a literature review perspective.

2.4.2 Building a Sustainable and Successful Organisation: Key Elements to Consider

Many publications have described these organisations' achievements and attributes to define a successful and sustainable organisation. Epstein (2004) states that when thinking about successful and sustainable organisations, one thinks of having solid financial results, satisfied customers and employees, elevated individual initiative, productivity, innovation, aligned performance measurement, reward systems and strong leadership. According to the author, only a tiny percentage of these claims have been proven (Epstein, 2004). There has been a significant discussion on what sits at the core of performance measurement and management control. The literature focuses on better understanding the drivers and measures of organisational success (Epstein, 2004). There are also ongoing arguments among corporations regarding how to gauge corporate performance.

For instance, are total assets or return on investments (ROI) the best measures of performance/success in an age when so much market value seems to stem from "intangibles"? These debates will continue among economists, consultants, and business leaders. "How can an organisation convert intangible assets such as human expertise, internal structures, ways of working, reputation, and commercial relationships into negotiable forms of value?" is one of the most crucial and challenging challenges in working with intangibles (Allee 2008). The intellectual capital field has raised awareness about the importance of intangible assets. Intangible assets include relationships, employee knowledge and competency, the organisation's workgroups and structure, the efficiency of the organisation's production and service processes and the level of trust between the people or organisations forming the relationships (Allee, 2008). Like other assets, the value of intangibles is now gaining widespread acceptance. Corporate reputation increasingly extends beyond brand recognition to support social responsibility and environmental stewardship, evidenced by sustainable corporate beliefs and practices (Allee, 2000; Henderson, 2006).

As the researcher stated earlier, there is a clear distinction between the humanistic and rational processes perspectives. The implications of these divides emerge more clearly, as evidenced in the literature review. For example, the research conducted by De Waal (2008) mentions factors that do not play a role in achieving success and sustainability. According to the study's findings, factors researchers have previously considered necessary, such as improved employee autonomy and organisational strategy, are relatively insignificant for organisations that aspire to succeed. De Waal (2008) argues that without dismissing the importance of a system, it does not seem to matter what kind of strategy companies adopt, but what counts is how unique they can implement the chosen strategy. Besides, De Waal (2008) claims that management quality is far more important than strategy. The author believes that "a team of good people can achieve anything it wants, while an organisation with a clear and well-defined strategy but without the right people to execute is bound to go nowhere (De Waal, 2008:6)."

2.5 The Emerging Factors in Business Strategies for Disruption

This segment consolidates a conversation of the different pertinent speculations relevant to the extent of the review to work towards a reasonable structure. Du Preez and Simmonds (2014) contend that hypothetical ambiguities in the field of business as business leaders and executives (procedures) in a creating financial setting have brought about applied disarray inside this influential field. Explaining these perspectives and the examination setting is relevant, which has educated the exploration questions. Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005) defined a theory as "a complete sound and inside predictable arrangement of thoughts regarding many marvels". This forms from Gagne's remarks that he does not think the board procedures are a marvel that primary hypotheses can clarify, despite the allure of such speculations [1965: v] in Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005). To understand a writer's reasoning, a reader must first embrace the writer's definitions - a constructivist approach (ibid.).

While instructive exploration has frequently been criticised as either excessively hypothetical or too practice-based, the writing audit leans towards the perspectives on John Dewey's work as viewed as original inside the training field. It is in this way alluded to broadly inside administration hypotheses. Current authors apply centre ideas from his work; thus, the pertinence of his work is yet appropriate. It is noticed that Dewey was impacted by and based on crafted by William James (Dewey, 1910; Friedman, 2016; Reck, 1984; Schunck, 2012). As James' chief work was, *The Principles of Psychology* (1890, 1892), this is past the extent of the review and has yet to be inspected exhaustively. William James shows the capacity of hypothesis to direct canny practice and critical thinking, eliminating the division between theory and practice (Phillips & Siegel, 2015). Given this inclination, the business executives' hypothesis educates the exploration plan, strategies, and examination. Significant administration speculations are investigated beneath systems portraying how information is assimilated, measured, and held.

2.5.1 Current and Emerging Factors Shaping Business

Businesses are encouraged to engage in both the foreground and background in this period of profound contemplation to be successful and sustainable, reflecting multiple realities to be comprehensive. Organisation and management research has become more global, addressing an over-broader set of issues in an ever-increasing diversity of settings and more deeply embedded in its disciplinary traditions, such as psychology, sociology, and economics. General organisational and management theories are still relevant in this research setting. In the face of these changes, the author can argue that an approach is more critical than ever. It is a theory that gives meaning to empirical results (Cortina, 2016; Van de Ven, 2007). Theory guides us to what questions to ask and why they are essential. An approach provides discipline in logic, reasoning, methodologies, and data analytics (Van Maasen, Sorensen, & Mitchell, 2007). Theory forces us to dig into the explanation and use logical reasoning. Without an

approach, empirical research can devolve into running numerous models and experiments and reporting statistically significant results (Shrout & Rodgers, 2018; Simmons, Nelson, & Simonsohn, 2011) and because theory allows generalisation from specific examples, it can also influence teaching. Indeed, academics lacking an appreciation of view are not likely to reach their full potential as teachers of managers and managers-to-be (Georgiadia & Pitelis, 2016). The following section will explain the theories underpinning this study.

2.5.1.1 Systems Thinking for Business Innovation and Problem-Solving

To understand the science of systems thinking, a business leader needs to make sense of multiple business options and uncertainties. These uncertainties include the impact of advanced technology, globalisation, educational legislation, stakeholder interests, skills shortages, and cultural changes in a socio-economic context. Russel Ackoff calls for a mess where various problems result in interrelated issues (Gharajedaghi, 2011). As a result, dealing with difficulties and opportunities in the corporate sector may be conceivable, such as in PHEIs (Snowden & Boone, 2007). Furst-Bowe (2011) argues that systems thinking is based on the concept that all critical organisational processes are dynamically interrelated. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and one cannot understand its characteristics in isolation from the total (Geldenhuy, 2006). Instead, understanding the relationships between the various components is critical to organisational effectiveness and achievement (Furst-Bowe, 2011). This comprehensive, integrated approach enables a better understanding of many interactions and non-linear causality (Cabrera *et al.*, 2015), critical for establishing synergies and increasing organisational efficiency and profitability (Almeida *et al.*, 2014). Kast and Rosenzweig's model of organisational subsystems is a framework for understanding how organisations function and how their various parts interact. According to this model, organisations have five main subsystems: the goals and values subsystem, the technical subsystem, the structural subsystem, the psychosocial subsystem, and the managerial subsystem.

The goals and values subsystem refers to the shared goals and values that guide an organisation's actions and decisions. These goals and values shape the organisation's culture and provide a sense of purpose and direction. The technical subsystem refers to the organisation's processes, methods, and technologies to produce goods or services. This subsystem includes the tools, equipment, and expertise necessary for the organisation's work. The structural subsystem refers to an organisation's organisation, including its hierarchy, decision-making processes, and communication channels. The structural subsystem determines how power is distributed and information flows within the organisation. The psychosocial subsystem refers to organisational life's emotional and social aspects, including how people interact and relate to the organisation. This subsystem includes factors such as morale, teamwork, and job satisfaction. The managerial subsystem refers to the systems and processes to manage and coordinate the organisation's activities. This

subsystem includes the organisation's leaders and managers' roles, responsibilities, and authority. Together, these five subsystems make up an organisation's complex system. They interact with and influence each other and must be managed and coordinated for the organisation to function effectively.

Each of these subsystems constitutes the mutually interdependent parts of the more extensive system, interacting with each other to create new patterns of behaviour. According to Kast and Rosenzweig (1985), the managerial subsystem links the organisation to its environment by setting goals and values, designing the structure, establishing a functional technical system, and managing the psychosocial subsystem. In addition, Barton *et al.* (2004) distinguishes five central interconnections in business: the interconnection between tangible and intangible resources, organisational responsibility/power boundaries (which create barriers to processes), information feedback (which makes strategies work), policy, and time factors (which create complex behaviours in organisations). Banathy's four characteristics of systems thinking are vital principles that provide insight into the workings of systems and how they can be understood and managed. Systems have a clear goal or purpose, and their behaviour aims to achieve that goal, which may be explicitly defined, consciously identified or emerge from the system's behaviour. Systems receive inputs from their environment, impacting their behaviour and output. The information can be physical such as raw materials or energy, or informational such as data or signals. The systems produce work towards achieving their goals, tangible goods or services or intangible such as decisions or actions. Feedback from the environment helps systems adjust their behaviour and improve their performance, which can come from various sources, including other systems, customers or regulators.

Together, these characteristics help to explain how systems interact with their environment, respond to changes, and adapt to new challenges. They also highlight the importance of feedback loops and non-linear relationships, which can create dynamic complexity in systems. Systems thinking is a valuable paradigm for this research because it provides a transdisciplinary and integrative lens that looks beyond the perspectives of certain areas (Koskinen, 2013). According to Arnold and Wade (2015), a system thinking method entails a collection of synergistic analytic skills organisations can utilise to improve the ability to recognise and understand systems, forecast their behaviour, and develop alterations to produce desired results. This aligns with the purpose of this study.

Ackoff (1999) noted a fundamental shift from the orthodox view that systems are linear (input, process, and output). To solve problems and propose long-lasting solutions, one must consider the context and environment in which the problem occurs. Systems thinking considers the organisation a complex whole of interdependent and interrelated components. Aronson (1996) succinctly states that systems thinking is the ability to view the entire system, including the parts and all the interactions and interrelations between the components and

the whole system, primarily if the system resides in a dynamic and complex environment. In his theory on techniques and what different organisations do to build their learning capacity, Senge (1990) introduced 'learning organisation'. The learning organisation empowers employees and strengthens their abilities or competencies by constantly creating new learning patterns (Senge & Sterman, 1992; Garvin, 1993). Such an organisation allows individuals to work together and continuously identify and modify errors. The notion is that an organisation's wisdom, expertise, and insights comprise all its personnel's knowledge, competence, and insights (Senge, 1990). According to Almeida, Domingues, and Sampaio (2014), a mature organisation will recognise and address employees' commitment and capacity to learn at all levels, making them more effective and sustainable.

In contrast with Senge's theory, Schein (1999) critiques the organisation's empowerment of employees to become fully competitive and productive as coercive persuasion to make the employees do what the company wants. In the same sense, Mishra and Bhaskar (2010) reason that some business leaders might perceive empowerment as the company losing control while all employees might not associate authorisation with their responsibility. However, Mishra and Bhaskar (2010) agree that constant learning must occur in a learning organisation. In agreement with Senge (1990), Choi, Kim, and Yoo (2016) investigated the impact of employees' readiness to commit to quality in a learning organisation. They based their research on Senge's (1990) five disciplines of a learning organisation that contribute towards a commitment to quality. These disciplines include sharing a vision, having a mental model, personal proficiency, team learning, and systems thinking. Their research findings indicated that information exchange between business leaders and members, that is, employees strengthen the impact of team learning and systems thinking and the consequent readiness of the learning organisation to commit to quality (Choi *et al.*, 2016).

Systems thinking in a learning organisation is thus a higher-order method required from an individual in decision-making (Saaty & Vargas, 2012). It combines learning and balance depending on feedback loops to identify the various parts, causalities, and the persistent flow of information (Claesson & Svanström, 2015). Any delay in systems interaction because of too little or unavailable information could cause mistakes and miscalculations with perceived 'randomness' from inherent uncertainty or a lack of knowledge (Stroock, 2001). The consequences are damage and loss to the organisation (Carlisle & McMillan, 2017). Significant responsibility is placed on the decision-makers to realise that the learning organisation must cultivate new and explorative thinking patterns. All tacit and explicit knowledge and experiences should be shared toward the organisation's desired goals (Almeida *et al.*, 2014). A more successful and sustainable organisation will encourage its employees' commitment and learning capacity (Almeida *et al.*, 2014). The role of individuals will need to adapt randomly in line with the environmental modifications (Carlisle & McMillan, 2017).

The constant response to the pace of change in the environment results in work processes and product delivery progressively becoming more unstable in response to systems starting to act dynamically and unpredictably (Dawidowicz, 2010). As all critical functions in an organisation are dynamically interrelated, individuals need to understand these relationships to obtain the desired results (Furst-Bowe, 2011). People must be trained to apply their knowledge and be flexible when decision-making and actions are required (Dawidowicz, 2010). Veruz (2015) reckons that projects enable people and organisations to adapt to changing conditions and reach their objectives. Byrne and Callaghan (2013) argue that complexity is a substantial property of systems and that organisms and the societal world are typically complex. These properties are especially relevant in the project space (Baccarini, 1996; Archibald, 2004; Brockmann & Girmscheid, 2007; Ireland, 2007). However, systems have other characteristics and degrees of openness: hierarchy, homeostasis, and purposiveness. The following traits are discussed in greater depth:

2.5.1.1.1 Rethinking Hierarchy

The main objective of this section is to investigate novel models for organisational structure and effectiveness that involve reevaluating the traditional hierarchical framework. The number of levels inside a system is referred to as its hierarchy. Each higher level of the order incorporates all activities at each lower level, and as the number of elements and their relationships grows, the order becomes increasingly complex. The number of connections grows exponentially as the number of components or subsystems grows linearly. Each system can only provide some information about an organisation's needs. Figure 7 is an example that illustrates one way to depict the kinds of systems found in a successful and sustainable organisation. The organisation is organised into strategic, management, and operational levels and functional areas like sales and marketing, manufacturing and production, finance and accounting, and human resources, as shown in Figure 7.

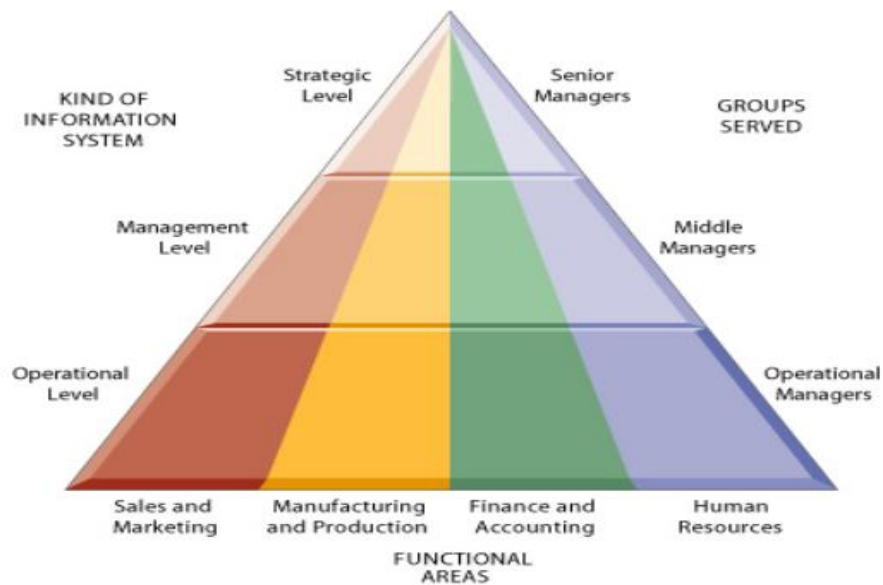


Figure 7: Systems serve organisational interests (Source: Anthony, 1965)

The energy required to maintain relationships is increasing even faster, which is critical from a systems perspective. Natural hierarchies exist, such as birth order in a family and arbitrary scales. Such as in schools or businesses, birth order in families, and arbitrary rankings. Arbitrary scales consume more energy than natural hierarchies to sustain, and they typically redirect energy away from achieving goals. For example, keeping the age-grade scale in schools can be counterproductive.

2.5.1.1.2 The Importance of Homeostasis

This aims to demonstrate how an organisation can attain equilibrium and durability in a constantly shifting business environment by highlighting the significance of homeostasis. A second important characteristic of the system is homeostasis, which refers to self-regulation through feedback mechanisms. Machines are simple systems with few variables that function predictably. Mechanical systems only require a little environmental feedback to work. On the other hand, organic approaches could be more complex, with many variables and require much feedback. The more complex the system, the more energy is needed in feedback to keep the constituents in a dynamic equilibrium.

2.5.1.1.3 Embracing Purposiveness

This aims to illustrate how to design a purpose-oriented business strategy, providing value and making a significant impact by embracing purposiveness. Purposiveness is the final property of a system. Banathy (1991, p. 35) characterises some designs as "unitary" systems because they have a single, apparent aim. Other methods, known as "pluralistic" systems, have many, sometimes opposing aims. Many scholars have sought to examine education as a unified system, yet it is a highly pluralistic system with many competing drives. This is

evident in private HE institutions, which try to provide education as a service while also generating profit. The concessions we have achieved by applying old paradigms to new situations could be better, but paradigm paralysis keeps us from understanding what is needed.

We can better distinguish between systems by situating a descriptive continuum for each quality. Improving quality in education involves designing a system that optimises the relationship among the elements and between the educational system and its environment. Implemented strategies in any business can be viewed as subsystems containing links between the various components of a strategy to enable business leaders to understand multi-dimensional issues (Gregory & Miller, 2014). This entails designing a system that is more organic and pluralistic. Often, complex systems are dominated by non-additive or non-linear interactions between components (Angoma, 2011). A system thinking approach seems appropriate, as it focuses on the arrangement of, and relationships between, the various parts that connect them into a whole. Therefore, systems thinking theory plays a significant role in researching business management, service and product delivery, education and innovation and is applicable in many complex organisations. Hence, this aligns well with the research question, methodology, and analysis.

The following discussion on complexity theory will serve as a broad platform for investigating complex interdisciplinary systems and situations in a business environment (Byrne & Callaghan, 2013; Weaver, 2007).

2.5.1.2 Unpacking Complexity Theory

Complexity theory originates from chaos theory or the study of a system's 'unpredictable' unordered processes under pressure that affect a leader's decision-making while the leader tries to make sense of the patterns in the pattern-less environment (Lewin, 1992; Haynes, 2014). These chaotic notions contain elements of surprise in the form of seeming randomly evolutionary events (Nicolis & Nicolis, 2012). Complexity theory refers to the study of how order and patterns can arise from ostensibly chaotic systems and, equally, how complex behaviour and structures can emerge from simple underlying rules (Weaver, 2007; Cooke-Davies *et al.*, 2007). Complex systems are self-organising because they develop through their constituent parts' dynamic, non-linear interaction, otherwise described as a decentralised process (Heylighen, Cilliers & Gershenson, 2006; Ladyman, Lambert & Wiesner, 2013). The uncertainty and unpredictability of complex systems; and business leaders' need to take responsibility for their actions are reasons why some businesses fail to work, even when logic is applied. Complex systems need the development of decision-making frameworks that explain the characteristics of a situation and possible predetermined actions (Canney & Bielefeldt, 2015).

System thinking was discussed as a higher-order method required from an individual to the organisation in decision-making. This process placed a tremendous responsibility on PHEI as a business to cultivate new explorative thinking patterns during disruptive periods. Much research has argued that one of the solutions is to share knowledge and experiences toward a collective and desired goal. Organisations can adapt to changing conditions and guide business leaders in strategically managing their businesses using available tools and techniques. Due to the ever-changing work circumstances and requirements, complexity becomes a substantial factor. Therefore, it explored complexity, chaos theory, and fractal science for their uncertainty and unpredictability and how complex behaviours and structures can randomly emerge from simple underlying rules. This is discussed fully below.

Cited above sources were to introduce the Cynefin framework.

2.5.1.2.1 Understanding the Cynefin Framework

The researcher opted to adopt the Cynefin framework, a conceptual framework used to aid decision-making in a different type of environment. 'Cynefin' is a Welsh word for 'habitat' or 'multiple places of belonging.' It, therefore, signifies the multiple factors in a person's or business's environment and experiences that influence them in ways they can fully understand. The framework was constructed in 1999 by Dave Snowden when he worked for IBM Global Services, and it has been described as a "sense-making device". A critical insight from the Cynefin Framework is that many businesses adopting a leadership approach that works well in one context will likely fall short.

People assume that a certain level of predictability and certainty exists and that the same process will apply in multiple contexts. This assumption encourages simplification (also called best practice) that works well in ordered circumstances; however, simplification is likely to fail (Snowden & Boone, 2007). Thus, businesses are encouraged to consider all five sense-making domains when reflecting, namely, the simple, the complicated, the complex, the chaotic and the disorder, to embrace the light and shadows of being true. Company leaders and executives must consider their actions' impact on society and the environment. Asking themselves the above questions can help them assess and improve their sustainability and social responsibility approach. By considering how their actions align with their values and goals and engaging stakeholders meaningfully, leaders can work to create a positive, lasting impact on society. This can help their companies improve their performance and reputation and contribute to the overall well-being of the community and the planet.

After that, they can set the best management strategies and push the limits to unearth innovative ways of remaining and growing as a responsible world citizen. To survive and succeed in the new world of work, business leaders cannot rely on outdated 20th-century methods of management. Covid-19 shook the world, and in a few months, organisations were

forced to shift their practices to accommodate hybrid work, remote teams, and increased flexibility. Innovation, agility, and fast decision-making are now more critical than ever for organisations to grow and enhance performance. Old management models are not fit for purpose in today's environment, and a new way of managing and leading teams is required.

Today's organisations are complex, living, networked systems. The Cynefin framework helps business executives understand the world and act in it. The Cynefin framework offers five decision-making contexts or "domains": simple, complicated, complex, chaotic, and disordered. These domains enable business leaders to identify how they perceive situations and make sense of their own and other people's behaviour. Businesses often use the Cynefin framework in various conditions to categorise a problem or decision and respond accordingly. For instance, it is helpful in product development, marketing, and organisational strategy. It can also help make better decisions in a disruptive environment, crisis, or emergency. It often helps business leaders in the organisation to refrain from using the same management style or decision-making approach in different situations. By encouraging business leaders to be flexible and adaptable when making judgments and to change, a mistake that can be costly to a team or organisation can be avoided. Figure 8 illustrates the Cynefin framework, a leader's decision-making framework.

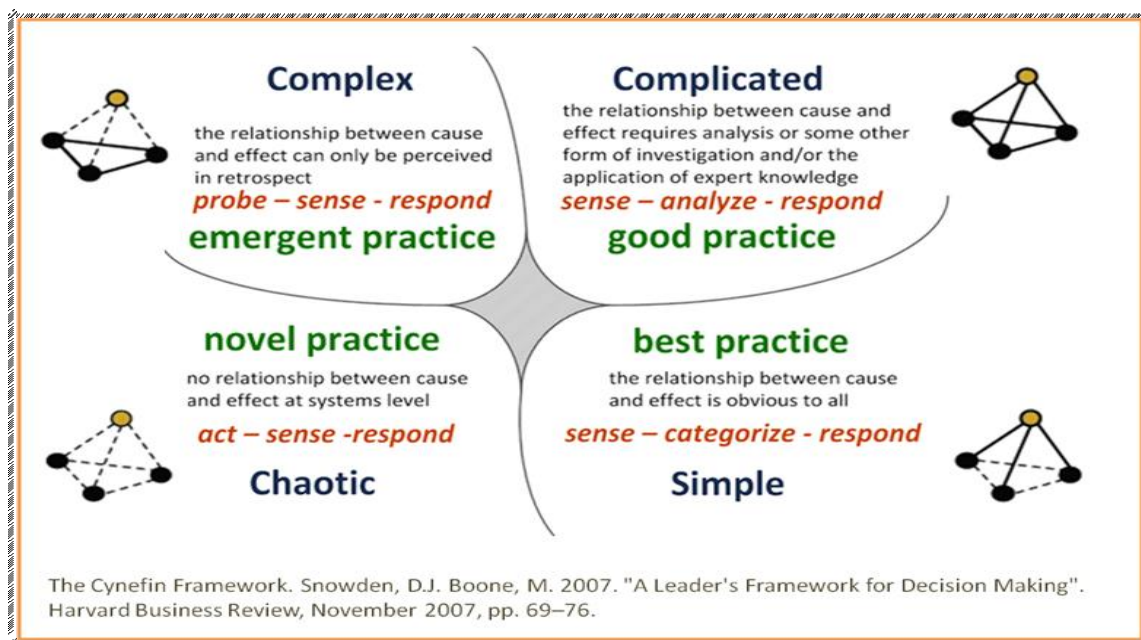


Figure 8: The Cynefin Framework (source: Snowden & Boone 2007)

Snowden (2005) proposes that leaders understand the context of their organisation based on cause and effect and improve their decision-making, communication, and strategy planning. Snowden and Boon (2007) posit that good management depends on adapting to changing contexts. Whether individuals work in a simple or complex environment, practical decision-making needs continuous sensing and responding through iteration and adjustment (Strauch, 2017). Though Snowden and Boon (2007) opine those complex systems are more difficult for

leaders to manage because they behave in unexpected ways, Sargut and McGrath (2011) maintain that the degree of complexity may be unintended and may lie beyond the human's cognitive limits. As the complex area of managing a successful and sustainable business in a different environment, a discussion on all four contexts is provided below.

2.5.1.2.1.1 Navigating Simple Context

The cause-and-effect interactions are known and are observed by everyone in the simple context of an organisation or project (Dettmer, 2011). All parties have a shared appreciation of an issue where the appropriate solution is apparent and unquestionable. This occurs in a familiar environment where challenges can be managed by sensing and evaluating details. Snowden and Boon (2007) suggest a command-and-control style in businesses operating in the simple domain because managers already have the required information to manage situations. Decision-making can be easily delegated as clear instructions align with mostly automated functions. There is little need for considerable communication between management and employees because everyone knows what to do, and disagreements about what must be done are uncommon (Dettmer, 2011).

In the Cynefin framework, the simple and chaotic domains are positioned next. This implies that businesses may frequently collapse into chaos because success has bred complacency (Snowden & Boon, 2007). It can happen when operations perform smoothly, and companies become too content. Businesses are at risk of developing entrained thinking because they rely on brief reporting and limited communication regularly, regardless of the complexity of the problem. Entrained thought also arises if individuals are not exposed to innovative reasoning and problem-solving. If business leaders feel too comfortable and need to be made aware of changes to the business context, there is a good chance that their reactions may be ineffective or too late (Snowden & Boon, 2007).

2.5.1.2.1.2 Navigating Complicated Context

Multiple correct answers could exist in a complicated domain (Boston, 2010). Although there is commonly a clear relationship between cause and effect, managers do not easily detect the "known unknowns" that need an act of sensing, analysing, and responding to the problem (Snowden & Boon, 2007, p.3). Business environments are continuously evolving (Boston, 2010). These complicated business contexts need experts to investigate multiple options and adopt those that may have solved problems in other similar situations (Kurtz & Snowden, 2003; Snowden & Boon, 2007; Dettmer, 2011). Kumar and Meenakshi (2009) agree with Snowden and Boon (2007) that, as in the simple context, entrained thinking by expert consultants rather than the managers on the job may endanger the complicated context. The reason is that innovative suggestions by non-experts at various levels in the organisation should be noticed or addressed, which results in lost opportunities. Working in an unfamiliar environment could help individuals approach decision-making more creatively. It may take

time and effort to decide on the complicated domain. We must weigh the cost of finding the correct answer against the benefit of determining short notice (Kumar and Meenakshi, 2009).

2.5.1.2.1.3 Navigating Complex Context

The complex domain emerges from a complicated environment when decisions get made on incomplete data (Snowden & Boon, 2007). Dettmer (2011, p. 13) concludes that "the key difference between a complex system and one that is merely complicated is the inclusion of the concept of adaptation". His assumption is based on the characteristics of complex systems described by Cilliers (1998). These systems are characterised by non-linear interactions, meaning small causes can have significant consequences. The system's elements are unaware of the entire system's behaviour and only respond to their immediate environments.

Additionally, the system's volatility requires a constant energy flow to maintain its function, as there is no equilibrium. Conventional explanations cannot be applied to these systems as they consist of a substantial number of dynamically interacting elements that are constantly evolving. Finally, complex systems are generally open systems without boundaries.

Snowden and Boon (2007) call the complex context the area of "unknown unknowns," the domain to which most businesses have shifted. According to Snowden and Boone (2007, p.72), most events and decisions in organisations are complicated because some meaningful change—a bad quarter, a change in management, a merger or acquisition—introduces uncertainty and flux. It immediately introduces unpredictability and instability. In the complex domain, control may only detect complications after they happen and may only affect change or innovative ideas retrospectively (Kurtz & Snowden, 2003; Snowden & Boon, 2007; Dettmer, 2011). In the Cynefin framework, the complex domain is classified as probe, sense, and respond, demanding a more experimental management mode. If managers continually manage in a complicated domain, they may be inclined to revert to command-and-control management styles that require fail-safe business strategies with defined outcomes (Snowden & Boon, 2007). Informative patterns are not allowed under these circumstances. There is a risk that management may become anxious when the results they were targeting are not achieved, while, on the other hand, the organisation cannot accept failure (Snowden & Boon, 2007).

2.5.1.2.1.4 Navigating Chaotic Context

Dettmer (2011) describes the chaotic domain as turbulence and classifies crises, such as the 9-11 terror attacks and the Fukushima nuclear meltdown, as chaotic contexts. It is the territory of the "unknowable" as there are no correct answers, and relationships between cause and effect constantly alter (Snowden & Boon, 2007, p.5). Snowden (2005, p.45) prefers categorising chaotic and complex contexts under "unorder". Van Wulfen (2012) agrees that leaders' innovative ideas grow from chaotic conditions as communication happens directly

from the top downwards. Most commands and ideas are notifications, with no time to request input. Based on the original suggestion of De Geus (1988), Snowden and Boone (2007) purport that, if in a crisis, the crisis should be managed by a crisis management team. Simultaneously, a different team should be looking at opportunities that will lead to improvement and order. Mandelbrot (2013, p. 1) suggests that the "interconnectedness between fractals and chaotic dynamic systems" must be understood to understand chaos. Chaos or complexity theory is grounded in a fractal framework in which new tools and ways of solving problems are explored (Velasqu ez, 2009).

PHEIs often equip leaders to operate in ordered domains (complicated and straightforward). Still, most leaders must rely on their natural capabilities when working in unordered contexts (complex and chaotic). In today's world, however, intuition, intellect, and charm are no longer sufficient in the face of growing complexity. Leaders require tools and ways to help them navigate their organisations through unfamiliar territory. Leaders will be called upon to act against their impulses in the complex environment of today's commercial world. They must know when to share power, keep it to themselves, seek the group's wisdom, and listen to it. A deep understanding of context, the ability to tolerate complexity and paradox, and the courage to change their leadership style flexibly will be necessary for leaders who wish to make things happen during a more significant uncertainty (Snowden & Boone, 2007).

Further to the discussion above with regards to the four main domains of the Cynefin framework, Fierro and Putino (2018) contended that the current global financial setting is influenced by very testing elements like the full-scale monetary emergency, the globalisation of business sectors, the outstanding development in the intricacy of frameworks, the constant advancement of advances, and the criticality of prerequisites subject to fast and now and again wild rise. Business and scholarly pioneers presently are needed to be engaged with both solid specialised abilities, consistently prepared in the essential reference guidelines, and delicate abilities, valuable for a critical comprehension of the transformative cycles communicated by the business sectors, disturbances, and for the improvement of the proficiency of the mysterious connection with pertinent partners. In a solemn scene where foundations endeavour to turn out to be stronger, Fierro and Putino (2018) further contended that they will be capable, through a comprehensive, methodologically organised, and adaptable methodology, to drive their projects through the execution of the complicated changes which are vital to save the intensity.

Fierro and Putino (2018) further state that in such a context, the Cynefin Framework, an interpretative model of the various levels of complexity of the system, ranging from order to disorder, can provide highly effective support. The framework distinguishes between order (uncomplicated and complicated, and unorder (complexity and chaos) and disruption and uses these distinctions to match problems, and their contexts, with the methods, tools, and techniques that lead to proposed solutions. A review led in Germany on the most proficient

way to conduct advanced learning developments by utilising the Cynefin structure directed by Bilis (2018) argues that while executing actions, one should make choices at a fundamental level. Bilis (2018) further contended that the Cynefin structure spaces of settings are characterised can be portrayed as straightforward (self-evident), confounded, perplexing, turbulent (or in jumble). These settings vary in circumstances, and logical results are identified with one another. Each field of set requires various choices for activities. There is an undeniable relationship in specific locations; specialists' information is needed in convoluted settings. In complex environments, the relations must be perceived from reviews, while in tumultuous scenes, there are no examples by any stretch of the imagination.

Bilis (2018) further verified that it could depict settings at colleges as perplexing; in this way, attempting to conduct prescribed procedures is not a robust system, though testing is promising. For example, at FenUniveritat in Hagen, its board consulted with its learning and educational experts before making decisions by transparently supporting imaginative computerised learning projects through an inward subsidising program. Thoughts have upheld that rise out of the resources, and consequently, a test field is given. Along these lines, conducting computerised learning developments first considers examining before detecting and reacting, which would thoroughly take over everyday activity. The Cynifen framework has inspired research in various fields, not most miniature studies on project complexity or disruptive environment (Bakhshi, Ireland & Gorod, 2016; Mikkelsen, 2020; Mikkelsen, Venable & Aaltonen, 2020; San Cristobal, Carral, Diaz, Fraguera, & Iglesias, 2018). While Ahern, Leavry, and Burne (2014) identified Snowden's knowledge domains with Knight's classic concept of risk as a priority or statistical probability and uncertainty, and Cleden's concept of growing tension from known known known known known known known as known unknowns, unknown unknowns to unknown unknowns. Daniel and Daniel (2018) compare approaches to complexity in management science to Snowden's Cynifen framework. Ahern, Leavry, and Burne (2014) identified Snowden's knowledge domains with Knight Shalbafan, Leigh, Pollack, and Sankaran (2017) applied the Cynifen framework to investigate decision-making in project portfolio management with special consideration of domain shifts during the decision-making process. The conceptual framework draws on systems, complexity, networks, and learning theories.

This section will now examine the global perspectives of PHEIs.

2.6 The Global Perspectives of Private HE Institutions

Levy (1986) describes private HE institutes (PHEIs) as defined by national authorities. The Department determines PHEIs in England for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) as any provider of HE courses that is not in direct receipt of recurrent funding from the HE Funding Council for England (HEFCE) equivalent funding bodies in the Devolved Administrations. They do not receive direct recurrent public funding (for example, from a local authority or the

Secretary of State for Education); and are not Further Educators. The PHEIs expand much faster in many countries than their public sector counterparts. For example, in East Asian countries, such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines, PHEIs dominate more than public universities and even compete in quality with top PHEIs (Goodman & Yonezawa, 2007). More PHEIs have been established in the last few years than state ones in developing and emerging economies worldwide (Agarwal, 2007). For example, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand have all seen rapid growth in PHEIs. India and Pakistan have also experienced remarkable growth: PHEIs in India now account for 64 per cent of the total number of HEIs in the country and 59 per cent of total enrolment, compared to 43 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively, a decade ago (Ernst & Young, 2012). In India, the privatisation of the HE sectors began in the late 1990s on the advice of The World Bank to relieve pressure on public spending (Kumar, 2014).

According to Unirank (2021), a couple of decades ago, there were only a few PHEIs in Pakistan; there are now 69, including a few prominent institutions, such as Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) and Agha Khan University. China and Vietnam have also followed the trend of PHEI. Private HE (HE) is becoming increasingly significant within HE and currently accounts for a third of total global enrolment (Levy, 2018). Therefore, more than 30% of the worldwide population of HE students is enrolled in private HE (Altbach *et al.*, 2009; Levy, 2018). Indeed, the rise and growth of private HE is some of the most remarkable developments in HE in recent decades (Brown, 2010; Duczmal, 2006). This growth has been observed in many parts of the world, including Europe; North America (the USA and Canada); South America (Brazil), Asia (Japan, Indonesia, India, China, and the Philippines); Africa (South Africa and Kenya), and Australia and New Zealand (Gupta, 2008). The US private HE sector is a well-established industry with a long, proud history of attracting global interest (Zumeta, 2011). It includes some of the world's top-ranked universities, such as Harvard, Stanford, Yale, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Canada's private HE sector has also grown since the Post-secondary Education Choice and Excellence Act of 2000.

The Canadian PHEIs have adopted the differentiation strategy and programmatic diversity through specialised graduate-level programmes with institutional differentiation (Buckner & Gong, 2021), becoming increasingly popular. The private HE sector is more dominant than Asia's public education sector. It caters for more than 70% of students in India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, and South Korea. The second-largest segment in Asia is China, with more than 30%, and Thailand and Vietnam, with 15% (Gupta, 2008). The growth of the PHEIs in Australia and New Zealand has also been remarkable: Australia's market share increased from 0.3% in 2000 to more than 5 per cent in 2007. In line with this growth trend, it reached 30% in 2020 (Shah & Brown, 2009). In the case of New Zealand, the private HE sector did not exist before 1989: legal authorisation was granted in that year, and since then, the industry has experienced steady growth, achieving a market share of 9.3% by 2004 (Xiaoying & Abbott, 2008). The private HE sectors experienced impressive growth in the six

years from 1999 to 2004, when international students increased from around 31,000 in 1999 to 113,000 in 2004 (OECD, 2006).

PHEIs are also expanding in the Middle East. According to AlAtiqi and Alharbi (2009), private HE is one of the fastest-developing sectors and is expected to overtake the public sector by 2025. In Europe, PHEIs share 15% of the total HE (PROPHE 2011b); in Western Europe, the market share is 15%. Surprisingly, the sector has also witnessed expansion in France, with a market share of nineteen per cent in 2013 (Casta & Levy, 2016). The number of private HE institutions is expected to grow exponentially. This rapid expansion in France can be illustrated by only one of the top five educational groups being public. The other four, including Laureate (the world's largest for-profit HE group), are private. The remaining three are French and British multinational private equity firms: Apax, Bregal, and Duke Street (Casta & Levy, 2016).

The following section will concentrate on PHEIs in the United Kingdom and Brazil.

2.6.1 Understanding the Nature of Private HE in the United Kingdom

The growth of the private HE sectors in the United Kingdom (UK) is related to the broader processes of privatisation occurring in HE systems (Johnstone & Marcucci 2010). It is also a worldwide trend (Middlehurst & Fielden, 2014). This growth indicates the number of private HE institutions with degree-awarding powers, which increased from only one private university (University of Buckingham) in 1983 to more than ten in less than a decade. In recent years, the UK Government has cemented its commitment to encouraging growth in the PHE sector in a competitive market. In May 2016, the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) delivered a White Paper to Parliament., entitled 'Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility & Student Choice', the government recognised that "if we are to continue as a knowledge economy we must have an open and diverse HE sector which embraces innovation and in which the excellence of the teaching matches the excellence of the research" (p.5). The government's goals are outlined in the White Paper, which include "making it easier and faster for new high-quality competitor institutions to enter the market and award their own degrees" (p.6). Crucially, it also expressed concerns that 'access to HE remains uneven' and pointed to the fact that 'courses are inflexible', resulting in many students being "dissatisfied with the provision they receive" (pp.7-8). To address these concerns, the White Paper argued that: "by introducing more competition and informed choice into HE, we will deliver better outcomes and value for students [and] employers" (p.8).

Following the UK Government's White Paper publication in 2016, the HE and Research Act (HERA) 2017 brought marked changes to the HE sectors. The reforms included significant changes to the structure of HE and expectations to develop a stronger HE, rich with

competition. Deregulation will aid PHE, and it is fair to suggest that more private HE institutions will emerge. The act also empowers students due to its emphasis on the quality of teaching and satisfying students' needs. HERA 2017 established the Office for Students (OfS). With the rapid growth of new types of providers in HE, including alternative (private) providers and further education (FE) colleges, regulation has become fragmented, with responsibilities distributed among several different bodies. The government aimed to create a more straightforward framework that would consolidate many of the activities of the HE Funding Council for England under one body (HEFCE), the Office for Fair Access (OFFA), and the Department for Education and the Privy Council together into a single organisation. OfS is a nascent regulator of the English HE marketplace designed to promote the growth of competitive HE markets that informs student choice and protects the interests of its stakeholders (students, government, and society at large). The Office for Students is called to place students prominently and visibly at the system's heart and ensure that it functions primarily for students.

After a brief introduction to the new HE structures and OfS, the focus will shift back to UK PHE - a relatively small sector compared to the rest of the world. According to Hunt and Boliver (2019), there has been growth in this sector over the last few years. In 2017, the total number of private HE institutions in the UK was 813, compared to 732 in 2014 and 674 in 2011 (Shury *et al.*, 2016; Hughes *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, the government has continued to support the growth of the private HE sector. In contrast, a decade ago, only a private university (University of Buckingham) existed in the country. The main aim of the policy (HERA 2017) is to increase choice and competition in the HE markets (Crosskick, 2010). A positive outcome of this policy is that there are currently more than ten reputable PHEIs in the country (listed below).

Table 5: Reputable PHIs in the United Kingdom (source: Qureshi & Khawaja 2021)

PHEIs in the United Kingdom
Arden University
Ashridge Business School
BPP University
IFS University
New College for the Humanities
Regent's University
London Institute of Banking and Finance
The Richmond University

The University of Law
University of Buckingham
University College of Estate Management
University College of Osteopathy

A decade ago, in July 2010, the Conservative Government created the first private university by conferring university college status upon BPP University. The Resource Development International (RDI), Arden University, was awarded university status on 5th August 2015 (Times HE, 2015). Kaplan and Pearson, two large international companies, have already joined the private sector in the UK. As a result of the UK government's initiatives to develop private HE, The College of Law was the first PHEI sold to a private equity firm in April 2012. In November 2012, the college was granted the title "University of Law". It has since expanded to nineteen campuses - seventeen in the UK and two international campuses in Hong Kong and Berlin. Well-respected campuses include Malta, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and Bangladesh. Another independent HE provider - the London School of Commerce (LSC) - has increased in the UK (with campuses in London and Birmingham), Europe, and Asia.

2.6.2 Understanding the Nature of HE in Brazil

The diversity of Brazilian HE is one of its most defining features. The most recent data for the entire system is from the 2011 census, INEP (2013), which included 2,565 HEIs in metropolitan centres and small towns (Balbachevsky, Sampaio, & Yahn de Andrade 2019). Balbachevsky (2014) states that all these institutions can offer bachelor's degrees and must provide identical undergraduate training under Brazilian legislation. However, there are significant variances in practically every element. Small, family-owned colleges coexist with large, for-profit universities with stock market shares. Similarly, highly competitive public research universities coexist with regional universities solely focused on undergraduate education (Pierson, 2011; Pierson & Skocpol, 2002; Thelen, 2014).

2.6.2.1 The Public Sector in the 21st Century

Many public vocational secondary institutions were upgraded to HE and began offering vocational programs. (Machado, Kuhn, Santos Jr. & Wives, 2018; Stosic, Dermendzhieva & Tomczyk, 2020; CETIC.BR & UIS, 2016). On the other hand, public universities are typically massive, multi-campus comprehensive institutions. The federal, state and even local governments may own them. Still, the public sector generally offers good working conditions for faculty since 81% of its academics have full-time permanent contracts (Balbachevsky *et al.*, 2019). According to Balbachevsky (2014), HE in Brazil is diverse and marked by strong – though informal – hierarchies. This means an institutional commitment to graduate education

within the public sector, particularly doctoral education. Balbachevsky (2014) stated that graduate education is highly concentrated, meaning that only a few institutions, especially at the PhD level, meet the requirements to offer graduate programs. Graduate education in Brazil has been organised around discipline programs since the 1970s, and it is heavily regulated and subject to rigorous peer review (Balbachevsky *et al.*, 2019).

Balbachevsky *et al.*, (2019) state that only a few public universities (21) are firmly committed to graduate education. The federal government owns some, while several states hold others. These public universities have at least 30% enrollments at the graduate level, master's and doctoral programmes, and a substantial proportion of faculty with doctoral degrees. Having graduate education as the leading institutionalised site for research, these institutions serve as fully developed research universities (Almeida & Valente, 2011; CETIC.BR & UIS, 2016; CETIC.BR, 2019; Maciel, Bim, Figueiredo, 2018). On the other hand, 263 public institutions are firmly committed to undergraduate education (Maciel, Bim & Figueiredo, 2018). Graduate education is a smaller enterprise within these institutions and tends to be limited to the master's level. Institutions are essential sources of regional skills and information.

2.6.2.2 The Private Sector in the 21st Century

According to Balbachevsky *et al.*, (2019), PHEIs account for more than 88 per cent of all institutions in Brazil and 73.7% of all undergraduate enrolments. The isolated professional school, which provides programs in a few professional disciplines, is the most popular institutional type in the private sector (Balbachevsky *et al.*, 2019). Much of the private sector operates in a mass market, where the lower cost of schooling is the most crucial difference. They are open-door universities that cater to older students from lower-income families who need access to a good education before enrolling in HE (Balbachevsky *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, according to Balbachevsky (2014), this sub-sector has seen a strong consolidation movement in the previous ten years, with large private universities with more than 500,000 students. As a result, while most private colleges remain tiny, isolated professional schools, a limited number of massive private for-profit universities have yet to emerge. Over 27.5% of all undergraduate enrolments were at 88 major private universities in 2011. (Pierson, 2011; Pierson & Skocpol, 2002; Thelen, 2014). (Pierson, 2011; Pierson & Skocpol, 2002; Thelen, 2014). Balbachevsky *et al.*, (2019) suggested that the private sector has undergone a stratification process in the previous two decades, with the emergence of prestigious, elite private schools catering to students from more affluent and better-educated families. Some of these schools are Catholic and other denominational universities, but several secular institutions have a solid reputation for offering high-quality training that fulfils labour market demands (Pierson, 2011; Pierson & Skocpol, 2002; Thelen, 2014).

2.6.2.3 Navigating the Policy Dynamics in HE

The researcher aims to examine the obstacles, prospects and approaches to attaining lasting positive effects. Balbachevsky *et al.*, (2019) show that the Brazilian HE policy undergoes conflicting pressures. In the 19th century, HE was initially established to modernise the Portuguese colony, which eventually became a nation-state. The researcher will examine the challenges, opportunities, and strategies for achieving this. Balbachevsky *et al.*, (2019) pointed out that this change should result in a group of professional elites trained to have the most up-to-date technical and legal expertise. The instruction should occur in state-run institutions free of traditional religious beliefs.

In addition, Balbachevsky *et al.*, (2019) suggested that to enhance the practical part of the knowledge cultivated inside HE, only some of the institutions built in the early 19th century embraced the university model. Instead, HE provided updated professional training, guiding students to specialised professional institutions such as So Paulo's Polytechnic School of Engineering, Salvador's Medical School, and Rio de Janeiro's Law School (Tomczyk, Martins, Eliseo, Silveira, Amato, & Stoi, 2020). In addition, according to Balbachevsky (2014), founding the first universities in the 1930s enhanced their aristocratic status. A group of new elites backed the founding of these initial colleges as part of a modernisation effort to lay the groundwork for industrialisation and government reform (Balbachevsky, 2014). They established the first universities in Brazil, focusing on meritocratic access to HE, a high degree of professional training, the advancement of science and the humanities, and the preparation of secondary school teachers (Balbachevsky *et al.*, 2019). Access to HE is regulated through competitive entrance tests. They created the curriculum under the rigorous supervision of a powerful new ministry of education.

2.6.2.4 First Comprehensive Reform

The focus is investigating the factors, possibilities, and outcomes of a change that leads to transformation in this section. According to Balbachevsky *et al.*, (2019), in 1968, the first extensive university reform in Brazil was implemented. The chair system replaced departments as part of the reform, established specialised institutes for several fields of study, and established full-time faculty contracts. It also bolstered pre-existing ideas of unitary HE, represented by the country's sole public, tuition-free, and research-oriented universities (Machado, Kuhn, Santos Jr. & Wives, 2018; Stosic, Dermendzhieva & Tomczyk, 2020). These ideas have left an indelible mark on the attitudes that influence public policy in Brazil's HE system—successfully implemented the 1968 reform in the public sector. Brazil was also experiencing the first significant growth in demand for HE. Undergraduate courses enrolled 95,000 students in 1960. Ten years later, the number had risen to 425,000; by 1975, it had surpassed one million (Machado *et al.*, 2018; Stosic *et al.*, 2020). Faced with this situation, the government authorised private initiatives to establish new institutions while maintaining the elite training purpose of public universities. Following the early institutional

model of the 19th century, the private sector grew as the number of for-profit isolated professional schools expanded (Machado *et al.*, 2018; Stosic *et al.*, 2020).

Balbachevsky *et al.*, (2019) argued that while the 1968 reform had brought full-time public sector contracts, new private entities looked for instructors, mainly from the general labour market. As a result, most public stakeholders in Brazil treat private HE with disdain (Balbachevsky *et al.*, 2019). Long-term economic and macro-political variables gradually affected Brazilian society in the last decade of the twentieth century. The former refers to Brazil's 1980s fiscal crisis, while the latter pertains to the country's democratic process. The economic problem was overcome by economic reforms that emphasised HE 's more significant role in the country's development (França & Tedesco, 2015; Souza & Mombach, 2016; Rodrigues *et al.*, 2019). This is linked to policies promoting competitiveness, entrepreneurship, and market relevance in academic research. This initiative-taking policy plan embraced a new public management approach for science, technology, and innovation decisions.

2.6.2.5 The Democratic Pact

Examining the evolution, challenges and prospects of a fundamental concept in modern governance, according to Balbachevsky (2014), the so-called "democratic accord" that gave legitimacy to the new political government in 1984 also included a significant demand for equity and socioeconomic inclusion. HE access has been a top priority for the corporate sector, but it has been a considerable worry for the public sector since the early 2000s (França & Tedesco, 2015; Souza & Mombach, 2016; Rodrigues *et al.*, 2019). The desire for access places significant strains on public colleges. They are high-cost institutions run by full-time academics with a light teaching load and regulated by a representative-based organisational style (França & Tedesco, 2015; Souza & Mombach, 2016; Rodrigues *et al.*, 2019). In this paradigm, institutional authorities are elected by students, professors, and non-academic employees, and decisions are made chiefly due to internal stakeholder pressures. While the representational principle protects university governance from outside influence, financial autonomy is lacking, and universities are vulnerable to immediate political demands from the government (Balbachevsky, 2014). The Brazilian government responds to a new political agenda where access and inclusion are primary concerns. This approach is conducted by boosting access to HE and disrupting the meritocratic logic of HE by enacting measures that benefit minorities and low-income students. Following the lead of many other Latin American countries, universities must expand into mega-universities while keeping the early university model within the public sector to fit the new agenda (Almeida & Valente, 2011; CETIC.BR & UIS, 2016; CETIC.BR, 2019). However, suppose this plan is applied homogeneously through all institutions in the public sector. In that case, it could endanger the prior massive efforts of establishing high-quality graduate education and a robust research environment in some universities.

Furthermore, according to Balbachevsky *et al.* (2019), internal stakeholders are highly opposed to recognising distinction, resulting in an enduring impasse. On the other hand, Brazil's extensive and expanding private sector has challenged the government, particularly a socialist government committed to universal public HE with no tuition fees (Balbachevsky *et al.*, 2019). The government and the public sector must restrain the private sector's expansion to meet the challenge. As a result, measures aimed at the private sector have a consistent theme of stringent control and limitation (Balbachevsky *et al.*, 2019). One of the policies dates back decades and requires teaching-oriented and tuition-dependent institutions to have good academic indicators. As a result, private institutions have increased undergraduate tuition fees to compensate for the additional expenditures incurred due to the government's new challenges. These regulations exacerbate the negative aspects of private education, such as the commodification of instruction. Tomczyk *et al.* (2020) claimed that HE in Brazil confronts significant challenges based on the above picture. The underlying issue is that HE must redefine its core aim by re-establishing the social agreement that underpins the university-society connection. However, Brazil's HE system must prepare to meet these difficulties. There needs to be more clarity between stakeholders' ideals and the country's reality and diverse rationales suggested by different layers of policy (Balbachevsky *et al.*, 2019). Researchers indicated that creating a solid paradigm framework to sustain HE policies would be easier if these tensions were resolved.

As the country's glaring inequities are addressed by public policy, demand for HE is likely to skyrocket in the coming years. Children from middle-class homes will increasingly seek HE. On the other hand, as the country's economy is subjected to global influences, the desire for high-quality teaching and research is becoming a significant concern in the country's development (Tomczyk *et al.*, 2020). The public and private sectors face substantial problems due to these new realities. According to Balbachevsky *et al.*, (2019), the main problem in the public sector is to meet the demand for HE without jeopardising universities' purpose as places to preserve and develop knowledge. The primary difficulty in the private sector is to employ institutions' flexibility and passion for satisfying market logic so that they can supply the new skills and capabilities that the labour market desperately requires.

2.7 Private HE Institutions: The Africa Perspective

Given the nature and challenges of HE in South Africa, as discussed above, it is also imperative to look at the African perspectives and challenges faced by PHEIs around the continent. At the turn of the century, PHEIs is one of Africa's most active and fastest-growing divisions of post-secondary education (Altbach, 1999). The widespread emergence of PHEIs in Africa, as described by Varghese (2014), can be attributed to several factors. One of the main reasons is the increasing demand for HE in Africa, which the public sector still needs to meet fully. As a result, PHEIs have stepped in to provide additional education options for students. Another factor is the changing political view of larger-scale public subsidies for social sectors, which

has reduced investment in the productive sectors of the economy. This has created opportunities for PHEIs to fill the gap and provide education in areas where public universities cannot respond to changing demands. Additionally, in some countries, the shift from state planning to market forces has coincided with the growth of PHEIs, which are often seen as more efficient and responsive to market forces than the public sector. Furthermore, in some cases, the public sector has been criticised for inefficiency, leading to increased support for PHEIs as an alternative education option.

Privatisation of education, especially HE, was an integral part of the reform measures and, at times, the conditionality for receiving external funding support during the transition period. Given the above, the study will seek to understand the current state of PHEI's business strategies when filling the gap because public universities cannot meet the expanding social demand in a disruptive environment. De-regulation policies and advances in information technology have globalised HE as a global operation. Many of those who provide cross-border e-learning facilities are private operators or operate on a total cost basis. Globalisation has shaped twinning and franchising arrangements between universities across the globe. E-learning has brought together new alliances in HE, for instance, the Universitas 21 (a company incorporated in the United Kingdom with a network of 18 leading universities in 10 countries) and the Big Four Alliance (Oxford, Princeton, Stanford, and Yale). Columbia Business and London Business Schools have come together to offer joint degrees. This can be seen as an innovative business strategy by PHEIs to reach a specific market in different countries.

Similarly, HEC, Paris, LSE, London and Stern, New York, have joined hands to offer the Trium Executive MBA Programme. Chicago University has campuses in Barcelona and Singapore. Many Australian universities have twinning arrangements with universities in Malaysia and other African countries. The franchising arrangements among universities in the developing world are gaining currency. The AMA International University of Dhaka is a joint venture between Bangladesh and the Philippines. PHEIs in many countries collaborate with foreign universities and institutions in Europe, the United States of America and Australia. This is a significant shift in how HE is viewed, from a national public entity to a market-based service that can be purchased on-demand and traded with other countries if necessary. This resonates well with the majority of PHEIs in Africa. The workshop on WTO/GATS and HE in Africa (AAU, 2004) shows how market concepts are becoming more entrenched in the provision of HE and how the necessity for compulsory cross-border education is becoming more apparent in Africa. Virtual universities and PHEIs have improved access to privatised services for the increasing number of people living in different areas across the globe. The DeVry Institute of Technology of DeVry Inc., Strayer University of Strayer Education, and the University of Phoenix of the Apollo Group (Ruch, 2001) are examples of PHEIs and online providers. Many business firms establish corporate universities to provide continuing education for their staff. Many organisations such as ABB in Zurich, General Electric and IBM have this arrangement.

While political thinking favouring the application of market principles in, HE was a debatable issue in the 1980s, it became an operational principle guiding developments in HE in the 1990s in Africa. Although private agencies were active in school education in Sub-Saharan Africa (Kitaev, 1999), the legal framework for the operation of PHEIs only existed in many African countries in the 1990s. This was one of the constraints in the emergence of the private sector in HE in Africa. The increasing social demand for HE and the need for a different type of education (James, 1991) led to policy initiatives encouraging the private sector in many countries with a virtual monopoly of public education institutions. For instance, Kenya was one of the few countries in Africa where PHEIs have a more extended history and co-existed with public universities. The *Kamunge Report* (Presidential Working Party on Education, 1988) recommended cost-sharing in education and establishing private and *Harambe* institutions. As early as 1991, in advancing credit assistance, the World Bank prevailed upon the government to restrict the growth of enrollment of public universities to no more than three per cent per annum up to the year 2017. These developments encouraged the establishment of many PHEIs in Kenya. Senegal passed a law in 1991 which enabled the establishment of PHEIs. Another law reinforced this law in 1994.

Consequently, PHEIs were established in response to the social demand for professional and technical education. Legal provision for PHEI was made in Benin in the 1990s. A considerable number of PHEIs were established in the 1990s. As of now, there are more than 27 PHEIs offering courses mostly in different vocations.

PHEIs are registered and recognised by public authorities. Some awarded degrees are accredited by agencies responsible for accreditation. The status of the PHEIs in this regard depends on the legal provisions created by the country. For example, Kenya has laid down steps or stages in registering PHEIs for recognition and accreditation (Abagi & Nzomo, 2021). In South Africa, all private providers must register their institutions and apply for programme certification with the South African Qualification Authority (as discussed previously in the sections above). Zimbabwe has made the conditions for the establishment of PHEI. The United Methodist Church established the first private university in Zimbabwe (Africa University) and was formally inaugurated by then-President Robert Mugabe in 1994. This institution is conceived to be an international university, and hence it stipulates that it will draw nearly 60 per cent of the students and staff from outside the country.

The discussion will focus on Ethiopia and Kenya as these two countries follow the same structure in their education system.

2.7.1 Examining the Nature of Private HE Institutions in Ethiopia

The primary focus of this section is to examine the current trends, opportunities, and challenges faced by PHEIs in Ethiopia. By exploring the latest developments in the HE sector

in Ethiopia, the researcher aims to identify emerging opportunities and potential challenges that may impact the effectiveness and efficiency of PHEIs. Ethiopia is a multilingual country with 90 unique dialects or languages. Its economy is mainly agricultural, with horticultural products dominating its exports. The education system in Ethiopia consists of three years of pre-primary education, two cycles of 8 years of primary education, two cycles of 4 years of secondary education, and 3 to 7 years of HE. The academic year starts in September and ends in July. The country has been working on expanding its HE sectors to address access and labour shortages. In recent years, the government has implemented several policies and programs to improve the quality, accessibility, and relevance of its HE system.

However, the HE system in Ethiopia still needs challenges, such as limited independence, few academic staff with doctorates, and weak research output. In the wake of removing the majestic system in 1974, the Derg system extended the HE frameworks; however, it guided HEIs dependent on socialist/Marxist-Leninist administration. "Government mediation in college issues extended including security observation, suppression of difference, commanded courses of Marxism-Leninism, preclusion of undergraduates' association, the arrangement of senior college officials and control of scholastic advancement" (Bishaw & Melesse 2017, p. 33). The system that designed the destruction of the Derg in 1991 further presented market changes in the (higher) instructive framework. Nevertheless, before the finish of the 20th century, the Ethiopian HE framework had been described by controlled administration, traditionalist scholarly direction, restricted independence, not very many academic staff with doctorates, declining instructive quality, feeble exploration yield, and free association with the advanced worldwide education flows (Bishaw 2006; Saint 2004).

The changes in the HE area were guided by the commencement of the Education and Training Policy (ETP), lined up with the public development and neediness decrease technique (Yizengaw 2003). This arrangement imbued quality, access, importance, and value in the Ethiopian HE framework (FDRE 1994). It was the platform for resulting approaches and drives. The main, the Education Sector Development Program (EDSP), is in its fifth period of execution (ESDPV) and utilises instruction devices to change Ethiopia into a centre pay country. Second, two pastoral arrangements, the Teacher Education System Overhaul (TESO) and HE System Overhaul (HESO), prompted the declaration of the HE Act in 2003 (Eshete 2008). Issue the HE Proclamation (HEP) (351/2003) to guide examination to critical thinking and satisfactory saddling of Ethiopian resources, pertinence, educational opportunity, and responsibility; and to highlight the commitment of PHEIs to Ethiopia's schooling (Bishaw & Melesse 2017).

The 2003 HEP was adjusted in 2009 (No. 650/2009). The HE Relevance and Quality Agency (HERQA) and the HE Strategy Center (HESC) were established under the Proclamation. The HERQA and the HESC are responsible to the Federal Ministry of Education (FMOE). The HESC is accountable for the vision detailing and methodology for the Ethiopian HE framework. It is

ordered by law to facilitate the FMOE and its organisations in the Ethiopian National Qualifications Framework (ENQF) cycle and execution. The HERQA is liable for accreditation, reaccreditation, program, and institutional quality reviews of PHEIs. It authorises PHEIs but directs institutional program reviews for public institutions. In its institutional and program quality reviews, HERQA centres around ten regions on four primary value confirmation spaces: setting, info, cycle, and result (Adamu & Adamu, 2012). In 2010 the HERQA was subsumed under the Education and Training Quality Assurance Agency (ETQAA), framed to have a complete quality confirmation order on every instructive foundation. HERQA was made to return to its old command of explicitly guaranteeing the nature of Ethiopian HEIs (Pinar 2013). With the ESDPV and the new Ethiopian Education Roadmap (2018–2030), the government plans to institutionally separate HEIs dependent on program contributions, the proper concentration, institutional status, undergraduate structure, etc. It created the National TVET Strategy and the National TVET Qualifications Framework in 2006 to improve the acknowledgement, quality, and pertinence of TVET (FMOE 2006a, b).

Public HE originated before PHEIs (Private HE Institutions). Following the consolation of foundations like the World Bank during the 1990s, the replacement of the Derg government changed the HE area by allowing the foundation of PHEIs. Institutions like the Awassa Adventist College, People to People College, and Unity College (presently Unity University) were set up. Until recently, PHEIs were disallowed from operating in the country (Lulat 2005). Ethiopian HEIs have extensively expanded since the 1990s (Saint 2004; Tamrat 2017; Teferra 2005). There are over 130 state-funded colleges and more than 70 PHEIs (Nega 2012), which have grown from one in every 1990 C.E. (Tamrat 2003) to 40 per cent growth between 1999/2000 and 2001/2002 (World Bank 2003) 36 universities of instructor training offer recognition programs (Aweke *et al.*, 2017). Various schools worked under the Ministry of National Defence and Capacity Building (Nega 2012). As far as enrollment, state-funded colleges represent 87% of undergraduate enrollment and 94.4% of postgraduate enrollment, with an improvement in the cooperation rate from 4% in 1999 to 9% in 2014/2015.

PHEIs represent 13% of the complete registration comprising 110 000 undergraduates, with a negligible improvement in undergraduate enrollment from 14% in 1999 to 15.4% in 2014/2015. Female undergraduates represented 34.7% of the complete undergraduate enrollment and 33.1% and 43.7% of public HEIs and PHEIs enrollment individually (Nega 2017). The measurements concerning moves from undergraduate and graduate projects for the 2010/2011 academic year were 81,598, of which 11,053 (14%) moved on from PHEIs. Expert enrollment in open HEIs expanded from 7211 in 2007/2008 to 27,643 in 2013/2014. Doctorate program enrollment grew from 258 in 2007/2008 to 3169 in 2013/2014. The undergraduate educator proportion in 2014 for undergraduates who took regular classes was 1:16 and 1:23 when undergraduates of standard and non-standard courses were taught. The strategy unmistakably explains the 70:30 undergraduate proficiency blended science and innovation over humanities and sociologies (FMOE 2008). Compared with the suggested staff

capability blend of HEI scholarly staff proportion of 0:70:30 Bachelor/Master's/PhD, 27:58:15 balance has been accomplished. Even so, AAU can meet this prerequisite (Kebede *et al.*, 2011; Semela 2011a, b referred to in Van Deuren *et al.*, 2016). In 2013/2014, 19 colleges gave postgraduate preparation, and 48% took a crack at AAU (Akalu 2016).

A critical job Ethiopian HEIs have been playing is the contribution of distance education programs. PHEIs like Alpha, St. Mary's Unity, Admas, and so forth, and public HEIs, such as Bahir Dar University, Mekelle University, Jimma University, and AAU, are instrumental in developing distance training courses in recognition and degree programs. State-funded colleges, for example, AAU, Gondar, and Jimma, have started secluded alum programs (Abiy 2005; Bishaw & Melesse 2017). Tamrat and Teferra (2019), in any case, highlight the dangers PHEIs face and the subjective administrative treatment of PHEIs in Ethiopia. The government prohibited PHEIs from undertaking educator instruction programs in 2010 [(and law programs (Tamrat & Levy 2017))] with no earlier alerts or momentary plans, and the worldly boycott of distance training programs in 2012 influenced the PHEIs. The legislative activities negated choices on program quality dependent on administrative systems. The two projects are significant wellsprings of income for such establishments, and as such, the prohibitive guideline on them influences the endurance and limit of PHEIs.

2.7.1.1 Public vs Private: Comparing and Contrasting Governance, Funding, and Quality

Even with the advantages of public HEIs proposition like access, PHEIs offer courses and projects that set out openwork doors like business organisation, P.C. examinations, data innovation (I.T.), medical services, and instructor schooling. Subsequently, most of them are non-first-class HEIs. They are a "blend of interest engrossing and more compelling position market situated" (Tamrat & Levy 2017, p. 20). Out of the 70 PHEIs, just 4 (Unity, St. Mary's, Admas, and Rift Valley colleges) are completely fledged colleges (Tamrat & Teferra 2019). Solidarity University was the leading PHEI to turn into a wholly-fledged college. Nega (2012) states the divergence in public-private HEI partition as guideline and accreditation, affirmations, undergraduate numbers, financing, and the benefits thought process. Different difficulties looked by PHEIs are transient and unsteady guidelines portrayed by formality and functional rigidities, the significant expense of rented structures in Addis Ababa, deficiency of top-notch H.R., and the expanding centre around benefit intention by most of them to the detriment of value (Tamrat 2008; Teferra 2015).

The FMOE in Addis Ababa manages the HE arrangement in Ethiopia. Its financial oversight is anyway restricted to public HEIs. In 2014/2015, the instructive consumption was 37.1% of the public spending plan, advanced a lot of the intermittent and capital financial plan was 48% (FMOE 2015). One of the features of the advanced education changes was the presentation of cost-sharing. This arrangement was conducted through "an alumni charge", where graduates were needed to pay 10% of their pay as a duty to the Ethiopian government

(Ayalew 2013; Molla 2014). In any case, students' foot 15% of educational expenses, while the government pays the rest. The expense-sharing approach suggested that HEIs must be imaginative to produce their pay inside. Inside-created pay sources from HEIs are consultancy, contract research, short courses, and establishing 20% of the expense. The Ethiopian framework intends to conduct a presentation comprising subsidising recipes based on respect to hinder awards to the public HEIs.

As found in Table 6, the government does not support PHEIs. This shows that many governments around the African continent do not help PHEIs in terms of financial support, and they are overly regulated. As well as financing, the HE framework is loaded with difficulties and issues verging on quality. Specific components compel quality: divergence between student enlistment and showing staff evident in the student-teacher proportion from 1:8 in 1995 and 1:15 in 2011 (Reisberg & Rumbley 2011) to 1:16 in 2014; deficiently qualified staff to fill empty situations in the HEIs; and framework shortage described by restricted talk rooms, P.C. labs, libraries, and their assortments, generators to serve power needs of the HEIs during flighty force cut periods, etc. (Nega 2012; Reisberg & Rumbley 2011; Semela, 2011). The last depends vigorously on educational expenses as wellsprings of financing.

Table 6: Issues/challenges underlying the public-private divide (Source: Nega, 2017)

Public HEIs	Private HEIs
Established by regulation Are not subject to accreditation	Must pass through rigorous accreditation processes by HERQA. They are not allowed to operate without licenses.
Admission – MOE assigns students Best student numbers	Demand absorbing, cater for excess demand from public universities. Compete to admit only a tiny proportion of all students and mostly from low-performing applicants, challenge to get the best students.
Fully funded by the government, including research funding Not-for-profit making	No government funding or subsidy in the form of student loans and student or institutional grants For-profit and non-profit. Their survival heavily depends on students' tuition fee.

Even more along these lines, teaching practices are shown in showing rehearses encapsulated with conventional education and evaluation strategies, unbending plans, negative talk mentalities, and absence of informative materials and authoritative support (Alemu & Schulze 2012) just as an educator focused on instructing with low student interest (Gobena 2013). The nature of teaching and learning needs to be improved by the racket between the needs of the Ethiopian government and universities. The previous spotlights the most significant

possible level of enlistment of students in state-funded universities and their programmes, while the last spotlights quality academic education. This has brought about inordinate state mediation and the absence of independence prompting low yields of universities (Areaya 2010). The unsatisfactory characteristics of universities and, without a doubt, all HEIs have brought the dire requirement for separation to the front. Tamrat (2019) highlights little differentiation regarding the missions, dreams, governance structure, student admission policies, core activities, and the disciplinary blend characterising programs presented among state-funded universities. In this light, the Education Development Roadmap (2018–2030) is zeroing in on separation moored on program contributions, the proper concentration, institutional status, student arrangement, etc. The overwhelming test comparative with this issue concerning public HEIs is the roadmap, not giving the absence of the course of the separation (Tamrat 2019). This can prompt separate public HEIs described by indiscriminate exercises and capacities.

2.7.2 Examining the Nature of Private HE Institutions in Kenya

The primary focus of this section is to examine the current trends, opportunities, and challenges faced by Private HE Institutions (PHEIs) in Kenya. By exploring the latest developments in the HE sector in Kenya, the researcher aims to identify emerging opportunities and potential challenges that may impact the effectiveness and efficiency of PHEIs. If HE is viewed as society's undertaking to 'deliver an undeniable level of teaching and research and to do as such with regards to national development, of nation-building, of leadership, of rigorous, disciplined thinking, creativity, and service of the community (Dubbey 1991), then, at that point, should give an outline of HE should inside the structure of Kenya and its improvement plan, just as the goals and world perspective on its kin. Kenya is located on Africa's east coast, on the equator. It has a populace of 42.7 million. Kenya was a British Colony until 1963 when it acquired freedom and a popular government after a horrendous battle (Bienen, 2015).

The HE area in Kenya is highly youthful, like elsewhere in Africa, contrasted with its European and American partners. In Kenya, the principal HEI was The Royal Technical College of East Africa, opening in Nairobi in 1956. After a few name changes, it became the University of Nairobi in 1970 (Otieno, 2012). The primary Council for HE was set up in 1985. A legitimate empowering system was presented, considering the principal PHEI to be set up, bringing about the accreditation of the leading PHEI in 1992 (Otieno, 2012). The Commission for University Education (CUE), the public authority office liable for managing HE in Kenya, was established under the Universities Act No. 42 of 2012 (CUE, 2016). Per the CUE (2016), there are 23 state-funded universities in Kenya and 17 PHEIs. Otieno (2015) claims that private extension is generally because of the general framework's inability to fulfil the need for HE, like what is clear somewhere else in Africa.

Notwithstanding, the presentation of PHEIs has, as per Otieno (2012), prompted other pioneering conduct from the state-funded universities, prompting 'extension, expansion, advancement, diversification, and innovation'. The three top state-funded universities (Nairobi, Kenyatta, & Moi) overwhelm 74.4% of the public sector enrolment. Around 20% of all Kenyan HE students learn at PHEIs (Otieno, 2012). The Kenyan HE scene is noteworthy because, as per Otieno (2012), it exemplifies the remainder of East Africa and the more extensive African experience. Initially, Kenya led the establishment of PHEIs in Africa. There were soon joined by Benin, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, Ghana, Mozambique, and Cameroon. In general, Francophone African countries lagged behind their Anglophone counterparts in terms of a move toward establishing PHEIs in Africa (Levy, 2013). The Sub-Saharan countries have over 100 private universities, and over half were founded in the 1990s. In fact, between 1991 and 1999, nearly 65 private universities were established in Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2002).

There are also very particular social memes that affect the way people from Africa approach HE. This will be discussed in the next section.

2.7.3 Social Memes Impacting HE in Africa

A social meme is 'an element of a culture or system of behaviour passed from one individual to another by imitation or other non-genetic means' (Oxford Dictionary, 2016). A meme acts as a unit for carrying cultural ideas, symbols, or practices that can be transmitted from one mind to another through writing, speech, gestures, rituals, or other imitable phenomena with a mimicked theme. Supporters of the concept regard memes as cultural analogues to genes in that they self-replicate, mutate, and respond to selective pressures. The general approach seems that 'good education secures good earning', but this may be a Western meme we socially enforced over time. The apparent dissonance between the curriculum, pedagogic practices, and the everyday lived experiences of students (Shizha, 2015) contradicts the quest to bring 'our ways of knowing into closer harmony with our ways of being in the world' (Buttimer, 1976). Therefore, African HE institutions may need a 'more self-conscious theoretical position' about their role to redefine themselves, their purpose, and their identities (Soudien, 2012). In addition, HE institutions (in Africa) will have to change their structures and academic offerings to accommodate the needs of 'an increasingly diverse student population' (Klemencic & Fried, 2015) within their developing societies, considering the forever-changing world of work.

The section below will examine the South African HE perspective and its challenges.

2.8 Transformation of HE Institutions as a Business

The disruptions experienced worldwide in the HE landscapes affect HE in South Africa. The researcher will examine the comparison between public and private HE institutions to

highlight the uniqueness and differences of the approaches adopted by PHEIs to knowledge creation during major disruptions to cover the void in different industries. This section will also examine the historical context of the South African HE systems, the purpose of HE and the emergence of PHEIs, and measures put in place by the South African government to eradicate poverty and ensure inequality among the South African people.

According to Kapur (2020), PHEIs are institutions of HE that are privately owned and operated rather than publicly funded. These institutions can offer a range of programs, including associate degrees, bachelor's degrees, and master's degrees, as well as certificate and non-degree programs. Kapur (2020) further echoed that PHEIs are often motivated by profit, relying on tuition and other fees to fund their operations. However, they can also be motivated by a desire to provide high-quality education and training to their students. Some PHEIs focus on vocational training and preparing students for specific careers, while others offer a more traditional liberal arts education. PHEIs can have advantages over publicly funded institutions regarding flexibility and innovation, as the same rules and regulations do not bind them. However, they can also be more expensive for students and may have different resources or prestige than publicly funded institutions. Students must consider their options carefully and research before attending a PHEI (Stander & Herman, 2017).

Stander and Herman (2017) identified several challenges and opportunities faced by PHEIs when building business resilience in a rapidly changing environment. One of the challenges is competition. PHEIs may face competition from private and publicly funded institutions, challenging attracting and retaining students. They may require PHEIs to differentiate themselves by offering unique programs or services. Another challenge is the regulatory environment, as PHEIs may be subject to different regulations and accreditation standards, which can be challenging to keep up with and ensure compliance. PHEIs also face funding challenges, as they rely on tuition and other fees for funding, which can be affected by changes in the economy or student demographics. The rapidly evolving use of technology in education is another challenge for PHEIs, as they may need to invest in new systems and technologies to remain competitive and meet the needs of their students. Finally, demographic changes, such as an ageing population or shifts in the types of degrees in demand, can also affect the demand for PHEI programs.

In light of these challenges, Stander and Herman (2017) argue that despite these challenges, PHEIs also have the opportunity to be innovative and adapt quickly to environmental changes. They can also tailor their programs and services to meet the specific needs of their students and the job market. In addition, PHEIs can leverage their flexibility and independence to create unique educational experiences and partnerships. The National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008, "the NQF Act") is a law that established a national framework for qualifications (NQF), is a framework into which the South African qualifications and part qualifications are recorded and coordinated. They are divided into three (3) sub-

systems to be specific: (i) the HE and Training Sub-Framework (HEQSF), (ii) the General and Further Education and Training Sub-Framework (GENFETQSF), and (iii) the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF). Each sub-structure is the duty of a Quality Council. The three Quality Councils (QCs) are (i) Council on HE (CHE), which is liable for HE qualifications (Levels 5 – 10), (ii) Umalusi, which is liable for general and postsecondary education and training (Levels 1–4), and (iii) the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) which is liable for trades and occupations qualifications (Levels 1-8). DHET, (2020), among others, these QCs are answerable for the accreditation of qualifications falling inside their sub-systems, just as authorising private institutions that wish to offer their qualifications. To enable the Registrar to enlist private institutions in contravention, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is responsible for making decisions under section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa about which qualifications sub-framework a qualification belongs while avoiding a situation where private organisations may offer qualifications or parts of qualifications without enrolment on the National Qualification Framework.

The QCTO may assign its accreditation capacities to a designated authorising authority, for example, a Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA), an expert body. However, as the dependable QC, the QCTO will provide the final underwriting, and confirmation will give the final underwriting and verification. Far beyond being authorised by the HEQC (CHE) and Umalusi personally, the Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006 (Act No. 16 of 2006) (the CET Act) requires those private institutions to be enrolled with the DHET to work legitimately. In this way, accreditation of qualifications and the capacity of the organisation to convey the qualifications for private higher institutions (PHEIs) and private universities is a method towards enlistment, and it does not speak to or trade enrolment for them. In the interim, private institutions that offer qualifications that fall on the sub-framework of the QCTO, which is on the OQSF, that is, (the sub-framework for trade and occupations), do not need to enrol with the DHET. They should be certified by the QCTO as an authorised provider as required under the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No.97 of 1998) (from now on referred to as the SD Act), under which they are instructed.

AS OF AUGUST, the DHET report (2021), 93 PHEIs are granted registration in section 54(1) © of the Act. They have fulfilled the requirements for registration. 36 PHEIs are awarded provisional registration in section 54(3) of the Act. They have *not fulfilled all the requirements for registration* as PHEIs. The Registrar, however, believes they can fulfil the requirements within the stipulated period. This correlates with more than 300 PHEIs pre-1994 (Ballim, Scott, Simpson & Webbstock, 2016). This structure is set up to shield students from false/bogus foundations and unacceptable quality programs (CHE, S.A.). Following 25 years of majority rule, the CHE released a report stating that HE in South Africa is now a coordinated system guided by guidelines and legislation. With a single approach for quality assurance, improved admittance, a shift in demography, and a better designation for the monetary guide. PHEIs

assume an essential job in new South Africa and are viewed as a focal instrument for modernisation and change (CHE, 2016: Foreword).

The Fees-must-fall fights between 2016 and 2018 featured the students' disappointment with the current system and immediately became politically influenced by the decision and overseeing party, the African National Congress (ANC). The last activity of South African President Jacob Zuma as an active leader of the ANC (December 2017) was the declaration that overwhelmed everyone. The former president Jacob Zuma did not only ignore proposals by a commission of inquiry that confirmed that free education is unimaginable under the current fiscus but should have been discussed with those who need to make it a reality. Masweneng (2017) expressed that Zuma's declaration fundamentally will change over the current National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) credits system to an award system for all students from poor and ordinary guardians, just those with consolidated yearly pay up to R350 000. These activities show that HE is yet seen and utilised as a feature of political influence. Even with underfunding, CHE's (2016) previous CEO Professor Baijnath calls attention to the scholarly staff limit additionally hurts the quality of PHEIs.

2.8.1 The Purpose of Private HE Institutions in South Africa

In December 2020, the Minister of Higher Schooling, Blade Nzimande, protested the 4.7% expansion in educational expenses for the year 2021 academic year, saying it intended to adjust the pay prerequisites for the academic institutions. This does not coordinate with full-time students' financing and the proposed expanded educational expenses from a monetary perspective. The government grants awards increased in the following fiscal year by between 4 and 4.7%, as declared by then Finance Minister Tito Mboweni (South African Government News Agency, 2020). South African universities' average proportion of work is 40:30:30, with 40% endowment, 30% charges, and 30% third-stream pay as examination and other self-created pay (Webbstock, 2018). In the 2020 financial plan, R396 billion was distributed to basic education programs in 2020/21. The nation spends over 20% of its resources on fundamental and HE, and its consolidated education spending is more than 8% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Education Budget Brief, 2020). The overall easing back and negative turn in financial development further put HE under tension, with essential training education the most significant bit of the South African spending plan. The South African government did not allocate funds towards the PHEIs in South Africa. This indicates that PHEIs are to fund themselves to survive and thrive in a disruptive economy still yet to be compiled with a heavily regulated system.

The effect of the unfurling above the knowledge of the society is reshaping the PHEI system in South Africa, simply like some other nations around the globe. This has prompted a move of economies worldwide from cash-based to information-based because information supplants actual capital as a wellspring of national riches (Abugre, 2018). The significance of

HE to the local area is depended on the degree to which they grasp the information base economy and organisations (African Development Bank) (ADB), 2008; Miño Puigcercós *et al.*, 2019). This helps create an inexorably enhanced scope of abilities because of advancement needs (Kaliisa & Picard, 2017). PHEI in South Africa is a power in public financial improvement against persecution, aptitude lack, obliviousness, and unending reliance (Maharasoia & Hay, 2001). As needs are, one of the Department of HE and Training (DHET) goals is to increase the rate at which the critical aptitudes essential for financial development and social improvement are conveyed (DHET, 2019). HE is often seen as a transformative force for progress, leading to the phenomenon known as the 'massification' of HE - the shift from an elite to a more inclusive structure, both domestically and globally. Effective HE assumes a significant part in connecting the abilities lack hole in South Africa by raising the degree of aptitudes, which are urgent for labour force efficiency and fundamental for the creative limit of the economy (Fisher & Scott, 2011). The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) additionally stressed abilities advancement over accurate information, given the financial requirements of the South African culture (National Commission on HE, 1996).

Accounts of intermittent worries in the HE area include keeping up admittance to and nature of HE, accomplishing a superior result, and decreasing the number of students exiting education institutions (African Development Bank (ADB), 2008; López-Pérez *et al.*, 2011; RSA, 2013; Chaka & Govender, 2017). In any case, the odds for alums in South Africa to discover business is still far superior to a youthful individual without HE. The Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) 2020, among graduates, the joblessness rate was 33,1% during this period, contrasted with 24,6% in the fourth quarter of 2019 – an expansion of 8,5 rate focused quarter-on-quarter. As high as possible, the alum joblessness rate is still lower than those with other educational levels, implying that education is yet the way these youngsters' possibilities improve in the South African work market. PHEI in South Africa and around the globe is perceived as a critical instrument in human resources improvement. The more educated individuals are, the almost certain their odds are for business and occupations with excellent working conditions. Even though adolescents in the work market are defenceless, those with a tertiary degree of schooling have better utilisation odds. From 2005 to 2010, the HE in post-politically sanctioned racial segregation in South Africa was changed to free the training scene of politically sanctioned racial segregation designed inheritance (Webbstock, 2016). During this rebuilding, some truly advantaged organisations converged with verifiably distraught ones. Before the 1994 majority rules system, it is accounted that 36 state-funded universities were enlisted and perceived, and they were decreased to 26 state-funded universities, with two more added later (Webbstock, 2016). It is important to note that the organisational structure of HE institutions (HEIs) in South Africa may have changed since 2016.

Additionally, the information provided by Ballim, Scott, Simpson, and Webbstock (2016) needs to be more comprehensive and fully represent the current state of HEIs in South Africa. HE institutions in South Africa can be broadly classified into four categories: public

universities, comprehensive universities, technical universities, and private HE institutions (PHEIs) (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2021). Public universities, funded and managed by the government, offer various undergraduate and graduate programs focusing on postgraduate and research activities. Comprehensive universities also provide a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs, although they may prioritise research to a lesser extent than public universities. Technology universities typically offer undergraduate programs in industrial and technological disciplines and may additionally provide graduate programs and engage in research in these areas. Lastly, PHEIs are privately funded and managed institutions that offer undergraduate and graduate programs. However, their program offerings and research activities may not be as extensive as those of public and comprehensive universities (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2021).

While the debate on what HE is and the core business of HEIs continues in South Africa. Various policy and DHET reports describe that HE in South Africa performs "a fundamental and critical role in expressing the rights and values in the South African Constitutional and Bill of Rights" (DHET, 2016:1). At the *Second HE Summit* in 2015, the then-Deputy President of South Africa, His Excellency, Cyril Ramaphosa, noted that investment in education was a priority for the South African government. As quality HE contributed to economic development, motivated social development, and facilitated the transformation of South African society (DHET, 2016:2). Naledi Pandor, the South African Minister of HE 2009–2012 & 2018–2019, then previous Minister of HE and Training, described universities in South Africa as "playing a pivotal role in giving expression to the rights and values in the country's Constitution and Bill of Rights". This includes improving student access and success and developing contextually responsive curricula that promote transformative values, attributes, and actions in the country's Constitution and Bill of Rights" (DHET, 2018B:2). The aims outlined by Blitzer (2009) for PHEIs in the South African context are indeed relevant and well-defined. Providing students with a high-quality education that helps them develop critical thinking skills and become lifelong learners is an important goal for any HE institution.

Additionally, contributing to the body of knowledge through research and scholarship is a crucial aspect of the mission of many universities. It is worth noting that these aims are not specific to PHEIs in South Africa but can apply to HE institutions more generally. Universities worldwide often have similar goals of providing high-quality education and engaging in research and scholarship.

Lategan (2009) argues that new knowledge development (research) and knowledge transmission (teaching and learning) are historically cores of the HEI and that the most meaningful change to HE is how these two core activities are now performed. These ideas have their origins in older texts, such as John Henry Newman's *The Idea of a University* (1852), cited in Van der Zwaan (2017), where Newman promoted the concept of the university that was wholly oriented towards teaching and described "the transfer of knowledge as the

ultimate goal". This positioned the university as a teaching institution, and a "guardian of knowledge" (ibid.:21). Letagan (2009) indicates that PHEIs do not exist in isolation but are part of communities. Waghid (2009) proposes that the public mission of modern HE in addressing social problems is one of the most significant contributions, which seems particularly relevant in the South African context. HE is undergoing a massive transformation due to disruptions in many countries like the United States of America, the United Kingdom, South Africa, and the European Union. Internationally and locally, the public, policymakers, and academics debate the purpose and, more particularly, HE funding. In the Netherlands, Van der Zwaan (2017) describes these disruptions as turbulent times where universities are being criticised from many sides, with increasing student activism and the advent of rapid changes in technology, research, labour market privatisation, and funding constraints. Botman (2012) further attests that HEIs should fulfil a valuable role by serving the needs of society and that society should hold the institution accountable for its contribution to the public good. In South Africa, challenges faced by HEIs are improving graduation rates, the levels of secondary education, technology, budgetary constraints, decolonising the curriculum, and internationalisation (CHE, 2013a; Case, 2017a; Pandor, 2019; Ramchander & Naude, 2018; Swartz, Ivancheva, Czerniewicz & Morris, 2018; van Broekhuizen, Van der Berg & Hofmeyer, 2016; Maree, 2015; & Mabalebele, 2015). PHEIs are trying to fill the void that public universities fail to do so.

The belief that universities contribute to the public good, both through teaching and research, persists despite the abovementioned challenges (Botman, 2012; Commission of Enquiry into HE and Training, 2017; Enders & Jongbloed, 2007; Franco, 2016; Labaree, 1997), especially as far as both graduates and research outputs contribute to economic growth. Facione (2011) argues that, after years of viewing HE as a private good, HE has returned to being described as a public good that also benefits society. At the *Second HE Summit* in 2015, the Minister of HE and Training, Blade Nzimande, told HE as a public good, emphasizing HE 's social, cultural, and scientific value (DHET, 2016). In their presentation on the feasibility of free HE in South Africa, the HE and Training Commission of Inquiry. The CHE (2016) collates both views by arguing that it is recognised (and contested) that HE is both a private and public good as HE accrues benefits to both the individual and the broader society. For individuals, it leads to more significant opportunities and earning power. The community contributes to socio-economic, cultural, and other forms of development that benefit society. The literature established that HE contributes to public and private benefits more firmly in recent research.

The CHE (2016) report further attests to a correlation between HE investment levels and socioeconomic development in South Africa. In 2017, the Commission of Enquiry into HE and Training in South Africa found public and private benefits to HE despite wide variances in individual comparisons (2017). The Commission argues that the public benefits increase as the private benefits increase. There are beneficiaries beyond the state and individual students, such as the personal business sector. Hanushek and Woessmann (2008) support the

dual public and private benefits. They discovered persuasive evidence that the population's or organisation's cognitive competencies or strategies are strongly linked to individual incomes, income distribution, and economic growth. These public benefits partially accrue from an educated workforce able to make good decisions and tax payments. This is also perceived as a personal and public benefit for democratic societies, the development of individuals who can participate in the community and the economy. Phillips and Siegel (2015) describe the debate between private and public benefits as a dichotomy between the value of education as the transmission of knowledge and education as the fostering of inquiry and reasoning strategies conducive to the development of autonomy of the individual or organisation.

In evaluating the purpose of PHEIs, different authors argue that producing critical and problem-solving thinkers is essential to HE (Korbin, 2015; Huber & Kuncel, 2016). Alternative perspectives emphasise the importance of employable, educated graduates enabling various states to become knowledge-based societies and economies. " HE has to be relevant, and relevance is increasingly defined in terms of the employability of graduates and the direct contributions by the HE institutions to the economic competitiveness of states" (Enders & Jongbloed, 2007:28). In clarifying the UNESCO General Education Quality Diagnosis Framework, UNESCO (2016) conceptualises a quality general education system as "effective for the purpose, has enduring and sustainable development relevance or responsiveness, is equitable, is resource-efficient and translates into substantive rather than symbolic access". Botman (2012: xii) approves Freire (2004) from *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, where Freire argues that PHEIs should play a role in changing the world the better by stimulating critical thinkers, problem-solving, and empowering young entrepreneurial people. Young (2014) provides a more detailed commentary on the above, stating that educational institutions all assert and assume that they know that others are entitled to access.

In South Africa, The Commission of Enquiry into HE and Training in South Africa (2017) quoted the submission and presentation to the Commission by the University of Mpumalanga on 22 August 2012. They stated that HE must go beyond the formation of trained human resources to cultivate socially conscious, problem-solving, and critical thinkers who can develop novel solutions to old and recent business disruptions. HE is often tasked with achieving social and political objectives, such as attaining socio-economic growth (Balwanz & Ngcwangu, 2016). In South Africa, this mandate has been described under narratives of "undoing the damage of apartheid" or "historical redress" (Pandor, 2019; Department of HE and Training (DHET), 2016; 2014) and is echoed in the White paper (DHET, 2013a), the Report on the *Second HE Summit* in 2015 (DHET, 2016:1-2) and the later report of the Commission of Enquiry into HE in South Africa (2017). Yet, other countries' challenges echo many problems ascribed to historical disadvantage. For instance, in 2003, Georgia State University in the United States of America had a 30% graduation rate with a disproportionate gap between the success rate of

white students and those of other ethnicities – African American, Latino, and Asian – as well as between students from higher-income brackets versus those from lower-income households (Jenvey, 2016). In addition, Balwanz and Ngcwangu (2016) point out that in South Africa, "the scarce skills discourse offers an explicit challenge to tertiary institutions: it seeks to influence HE funding, programming, and mission is oriented around market demands" and employable graduates.

Several investigations on various aspects of PHEIs have been undertaken in South Africa in the last few years. As a result, an image of the sector's nature, size, and shape has emerged. Students vary every year as new institutions start and some close. The total HE system changes policy development and the environment in which PHEIs function [changing world of work, the rise of fourth and fifth industrial revolutions (4IR/5IR)]. Re-audits of the conclusions in the system's components become necessary. There have been a few empirical studies on the private provision of HE in South Africa. An investigation of the size and shape of the PHE sector (Mabizela *et al.*, 2000); a case study of 15 PHEIs concentrating on staff, students, management, and facilities undertaken by the Human Sciences Research Council; and a study of the size and shape of the PHE sector (Mabizela *et al.*, 2000; Kruss, 2002).

Another study looked at 58 PHEIs that had applied for reaccreditation of their programs by the Council on HE (CHE), Education Quality Committee (HEQC) in 2002 (CHE, 2003), as well as a study of public-private partnerships in the provision of HE in South Africa (Mabizela, 2005). Some of these studies were triggered by a need to understand the sector's operations since, previously, these had been concealed, and some of the industry's operations were new anyway. Even with the number of predominant studies encompassing none, either a combination of the research constructs, realised a gap in the literature. The private HE sector is dynamic. It develops and changes with time and due to the nature of the environment. This dynamism suggests that there must be an ongoing study of these developments, their role in human resources, social development, and HE, and how to develop the sector to support the entire South African system. To this extent, this study seeks to explore and evaluate the business management status quo or overall strategies used for business resilience within the PHEIs context.

2.8.2 The National Development Plan and Vision for HE in South Africa

The national development plan was launched in 2013 – by then-Minister Trevor Manuel. The method defined the desired destination and identified roles for society. The fundamental goal of the National Development Plan (NDP) is to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030 by harnessing the energy of the people, establishing an inclusive economy, increasing state capacity, and fostering leadership and partnership across society. PHEIs are now incorporating the national development plan into their curriculum to make sense of the world, probe questions and solve real-life problems. This is done to challenge the students to

think of real-world problems and find solutions to these problems, hence having a successful and sustainable society. According to the plan, South Africa can realise these goals by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the state's capacity, and promoting leadership and partnerships throughout society.

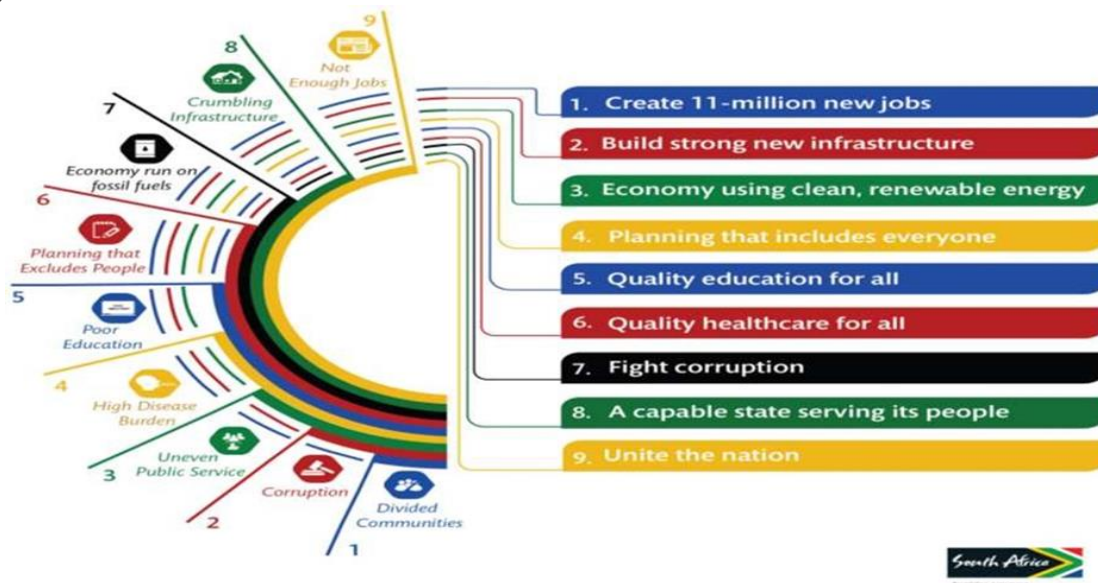


Figure 9: Collaborative democracy

[source:[https://content.sciendo.com/configurable/contentpage/journals\\$002fcejpp\\$002f-ahead-of-print\\$002farticle-10.2478-cejpp-2020-0004\\$002farticle-10.2478-cejpp-2020-0004.xml](https://content.sciendo.com/configurable/contentpage/journals$002fcejpp$002f-ahead-of-print$002farticle-10.2478-cejpp-2020-0004$002farticle-10.2478-cejpp-2020-0004.xml)]

The piece of tutoring positively delved into the progression plans for South Africa – the National Development Plan (NDP) states the going with (NDP, 2019): South Africa needs a post-school system that provides a range of accessible options for younger and older people. The system should adapt to technology, industry, population dynamics, and global trends. Accelerating economic growth requires science, technology, and vocational and technical skills, which must be produced quickly. Post-school institutions should accept academically less-prepared students and provide them with targeted support to promote lifelong learning.

In addition, NDP (2019) calls attention to public universities and PHEIs to assume a critical job in building up a country with three principal capacities in the public arena. First, these institutions teach and train individuals with significant abilities for the work needs of the general population and restricted areas. The second is that institutions are the predominant makers of added information and that they evaluate data and find new nearby and worldwide applications for existing data. Knowledge production is essential to change society, the economy, and openings. The third capacity of these institutions is that HE gives occasions to social portability and reinforces value, social equity, and popular government (NDP, 2019). Besides, the NDP pointed out that the insightful calling needs rebuilding for the South African

HE to expand, which applies to PHEIs. Even though PHEIs can drive the data society and economy, they need to convey young entrepreneurial graduates who will address the issues of industry and society (NDP, 2019). One segment of this is the necessity for more doctoral graduate classes to be added to the general plan of improvement.

2.8.3 Approaches to Knowledge Production in Private HE Institutions

The researcher examined the latest and most effective methods and procedures for producing knowledge in this literature review section. The focus was on exploring innovative strategies and best practices to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the knowledge-generation process. The goal was to gain insights from previous studies and research works that will inform the approach adopted in the current study. Through a comprehensive literature review, the researcher aimed to identify the latest and most effective methods and techniques for generating knowledge that can be applied to the present study. The unemployment rate in South Africa grew to 34.4% in the second quarter of 2021, up from 32.6% in the previous quarter. It was the most elevated jobless rate since tantamount information started in 2018, amid the demolishing pandemic emergency (Covid-19) and mirroring seven days of dangerous agitation and plundering last month (July 2021) in pieces of the country. The number of jobless people bounced from 584 thousand to 7.8 million. Work fell by 54 thousand to 14.9 million, and the workforce went up by 530 thousand to 22.8 million.

Employment misfortunes were gathered in the monetary area (- 278 thousand), trailed by the local area and social administrations (- 166 thousand), and assembling (- 83 thousand). The symbolic meaning of joblessness, including individuals who have quit searching for work, was 44.4%, up from 43.2% earlier. Estimating position searchers between 15 and 24, the young joblessness rate hit another record high of 64.4%. The relationship of education with industry is commonly beneficial when checking out graduates. One of the endeavours is to adjust course advancement with a drive at the undergraduate level. As a rule, utilising industry warning boards prompts industry prerequisites and outside balance where scholastics give input yet informed authorities in the business. Most PHEIs likewise have a time of entry-level position or occupation shadowing that the understudy needs to finish – this might go from two weeks to about a month and a half. Like this, business leaders give input about the information and abilities of the assistants. Presenting undergraduates to genuine briefs and customers as a component of studio education also limits the whole. South African college undergraduates are additionally consistently addressed in the high degrees of the neighbourhood and worldwide rivalries where judges are from various ventures. Some PHEIs are more lined up with the requirements and constructions of the scholarly community than the industry. This segment checks out Mode 2 and 3 ways to deal with knowledge production in a disruptive environment.

2.8.3.1 Leveraging Mode 2 Knowledge Production to Bridge the Industry Gap

One of the approaches to limit the distance between PHEI's academic exploration and industry and develop knowledge production and co-creation of new truths is the improvement of the Mode 2 methodologies. The Mode 2 model began as the response to the requirement for training grounded on critical thinking as a component of scholarly exploration, explicitly in Management Sciences. The attributes of Mode 2 information creation, as described by MacLean, MacIntosh, and Grant (2002), Sandstrom (2016), and Naudé (2013), refer to a particular approach to creating and disseminating knowledge. This approach focuses on the practical application of knowledge rather than on disciplinary boundaries. Some key attributes of Mode 2 information creation include its transdisciplinary nature, which means it is not limited to a single discipline but takes a more holistic, interdisciplinary approach. It also emphasises using non-academic evaluation measures, such as the opinions of stakeholders and the local community, rather than relying on peer review.

Additionally, Mode 2 information creation is characterised by its focus on social responsibility and reflexivity, which involves a dialogue with stakeholders and a recognition of the interconnectedness of different social groups and organisations. It also often requires collaboration with industry, with a more porous boundary between academia and the private sector. Boehm (2014) states that colleges in the Northern Hemisphere transcendently esteem Mode 1, while colleges in the Southern Hemispheres consider Mode 2 the more OK mode, with more community commitment and engagement. In any case, in South Africa, Mode 1 as the blue skies' choice appears to prevail in the state-funded universities and esteemed mode when checking out the course structures. Through this review, the Da Vinci Business School, a private institution, is a Mode 2 institute. This manages the cost of the analyst a direct encounter with the methodology and philosophies of Mode 2 examinations.

2.8.3.2 Embracing Mode 3 Knowledge

Mode 3, which leverages innovation and systems thinking to foster collaborations and impact in PHEIs, is currently being discussed as a potential approach to disruptive HE. This model is described as both "dynamic" and "disruptive" by Sandstrom (2014:16) and is one of several options being explored in the literature to transform HE. By adopting Mode 3, PHEIs can enhance their capacity for innovation and collaboration, thereby driving impact and advancing knowledge in their respective fields. This approach emphasises the need for cross-disciplinary collaboration, open communication, and the integration of diverse perspectives and experiences in the learning process. Adopting Mode 3 requires a shift in the traditional academic culture and adopting new practices and strategies that can enable PHEIs to adapt to the changing needs of the society they serve.

The literature offers valuable insights into this approach's potential benefits and challenges. The current study seeks to contribute to this discussion by examining its feasibility and

effectiveness in PHEIs. Dust storm brings up those researchers who autonomously began conceptualising and defining Mode 3 schooling as a reaction to Modes 1 and 2 (See Table 7). Mode 3, as an information framework, is arranged in the electronic data space and checks out the eventual consolidated fate of science, information, and innovation (Sandstrom, 2014). Carayannis, Campbell, and Rehman (2016) contended that Mode 3's prevailing exploration worldview is constructivism. Social (cultural) frameworks are not normally foreordained yet socially developed and cannot be perceived by some people as autonomous onlookers. They additionally call attention to that development (and advancement strategy) thinks about the information base of the public and economy (Carayannis *et al.*, 2016). Plan as an innovative and creative economy feature could fit Mode 3 information building. The author interprets a comparative map of Mode 1, 2, and 3, as shown in Table 7, which pertains to the nature of the South African educational landscape.

Table 7: The author’s interpretation of a comparative map of Mode 1, 2, and 3 (sources: Carayannis *et al.*, 2016, Sandstrom 2016, Boehm 2014 & Naude 2013)

Mode	Mode 1	Mode 2	Mode 3
Site / space	Academia: Universities (niches and specialisations)	Context of application Government, business, and various sectors of industry	Knowledge society: Industry and practitioners – open space. The post- industrial electronic information era Clusters and networks industry/academic/society
Structures of control	CHE, DHET, NQF, etc. Autonomist institutions top down. Faculty	RPL, WIL A space between academia and industry	Free will Bottom-up
Evaluation criteria.	Truth finding Peer review (Quality is controlled by expert few - professors and other academics)	Quality control involves diverse participants. The practicality of solutions as part of the evaluation. Workplace value. Socially accountable.	Transformative potential to change the world using science, technology, individual and community knowledge.

	Academic environment		
Characteristics or mode	<p>Newtonian disciplinary</p> <p>Homogeneous</p> <p>Hierarchical</p> <p>Permanent</p> <p>Minimally socially responsible</p> <p>Not aimed primarily at being marketable</p> <p>Work in niches of specialisation.</p> <p>Individual</p>	<p>Transdisciplinary</p> <p>Heterogeneous,</p> <p>Less hierarchical</p> <p>Transitory (not permanent),</p> <p>More socially responsible/accountable,</p> <p>Impact-driven: focus on marketable knowledge, entrepreneurial.</p> <p>Demand-driven</p> <p>Non-linear</p>	<p>Systems approach linked with innovation.</p> <p>Uncertainty and unpredictable</p> <p>Super complexity (new ways)</p> <p>Potential of individuals/groups to change the world,</p> <p>Reflexive by nature (“what can I do”? approach)</p> <p>Recognition of tacit (inward) knowledge (active knowing)</p> <p>The shift from impersonal to a personalised epistemology</p> <p>Solutions cannot meet problems – always consequences.</p> <p>Relativist, argumentative</p> <p>Focus on social needs, development – not necessarily growth</p>
Distribution of knowledge	<p>Linear, without an interest in the practical use of knowledge – that part is left for the industry to</p>	<p>Socially distributed – knowledge produced in the context of application</p>	<p>Distributed through networks and various platforms</p>

	notice and further apply the knowledge.		
Teacher-student	Positivist approach to student A teacher is an expert	Student needs and desires are accommodated	Attuned to learners' needs and desires. Integrative education Students become critical citizens – who a student is, focusing on what they know, do, or value for the workplace . Learning takes place officially and unofficially. The teacher directs knowledge.
Research paradigms	It can be for the sake of research or knowledge (Blue skies). (Cookie-cutter model) Basic/blue skies research with a comprehensive explanation	Allow problem-based, solution-gearred approaches. Practice-based research Research solves problems of society	Active in the world of complex problems Collaborative Constructivist

Sandstrom (2014) points out that he does not see tertiary education being made obsolete in the face of Mode 3 but transforming and developing innovative approaches to knowledge generation. "Imagination, innovation, and especially integral thinking are just as important as techniques and instrumental knowledge" (Sandstrom, 2014:37-38). The section identified the approaches in knowledge production that many PHEIs are now adopting to close the gap in academia, industry, government, and civil society. The researcher also reviewed a comparison between 3 types of modes. For this study, these approaches to knowledge production can be used to identify other business strategies for enhancing resilience in disruptive environments.

Given the context-specific nature of PHEIs and the fact that this study wishes to add a developing world and African perspective to the body of knowledge, it seems imperative to understand the socio-economic factors in HE, particularly those students face. The following paragraph will consider these factors.

2.8.4 Socio-economic Factors Impacting HE in South Africa

The traditional HE landscape has changed dramatically in the past decades with a shift 'from elite to mass systems across virtually all developed countries as there has been a tremendous increase in the number of 'non-traditional students, to the extent that the adult student is now 'the dominant learner in the 21st century and is 'changing education' (Williamson, 2009). However, Wangenge-Ouma (2012) argues that an increase in financially needy students characterises access to an expanding socio-economic system. This seems particularly relevant in Sub-Saharan Africa, where poverty is rife, and 220 million people are projected to be malnourished (Sabi, Kolanisi, Siwela, & Naidoo, 2015). Students seem particularly vulnerable to poverty and food security: Gwacela (2013) found that 55% of students at the University of KwaZulu Natal in South Africa considered themselves from low-income households with little or no financial support to them from home throughout the year.

Bowl (2001) highlights additional challenges non-traditional students face, including increased travelling, complicated arrangements for dropping off and collecting children, and childcare costs. It concludes that poverty is a reality for non-traditional students. In addition, research has confirmed that poverty significantly impacts students' academic performance leading to low graduation rates and high failure and drop-out rates (Letseka, 2009). In addition, Fekisi and Jaffer (2013) documented that many students at the University of the Free State in South Africa were ashamed to expose their impoverished lifestyle to the extent that they were reluctant to accept help, for example, from friends or food security aid on campus.

However, while universities often actively encourage the enrolment of non-traditional students in the HE system, they do not seem to understand these students' needs and circumstances and maintain a system designed for traditional students, whose needs are substantially different (Gilardi & Guglielmetti, 2011). Africa faces an ageing educational corps, resulting in a shrinking pool of knowledge producers and a stagnation of knowledge societies (Klemencic & Fried, 2015). The socio-economic context also places a demand on institutions facing severe austerity regimens imposed by the various economic stabilisation policies. At the same time, they were pressured to increase enrolment and maintain quality levels without commensurate increases in resources' (Sawyer, 2004). Due to these challenges, academic careers could be more attractive.

The researcher will now review the literature on business innovation as a primary strategy to address business disruption.

2.9 Future-Proofing Business and People: Strategies for Sustainable Growth

An organisation can only gain operational effectiveness and efficiency or apply successful and sustainable management strategies by considering its fit for purpose agile leadership, business innovation, and people. These elements function in a finely tuned relationship as each plays a significant role in ensuring the organisation's proper functioning in achieving a sustainable competitive advantage (Du Plessis, 2017; Barnes, 2011). The most successful and sustainable organisation uses a combination of training, mentoring, application, and communication efficiency in a culture that encourages organisation-wide dialogue, dissemination of information and the ability to manage the development and maintenance of its agile leadership, innovation, and people (Paulk *et al.*, 1993; Wirick & Bond, 2005). Bate *et al.*, (1995) propose that future-proofing people and business models means laying the groundwork for adaptability at its core. It means improving operations for agile leadership, innovation, and people for now and in the future. Capabilities with higher development ensure that the organisation's products and services are of high quality. Higher quality products and services increase the organisation's success and sustainability. The result of agile leadership, innovation, and people is measured according to distinctive characteristics. For this reason, each concept is discussed separately in the sections below.

2.9.1 Mastering Agile Leadership

The researcher discusses strategies for leading high-performing teams in an evolving world. Traditional definitions of leadership have evolved over the past decades at a constant rate (Northouse, 2016). In his study of material from 90 years (1900–1990), Rost (1991) documented more than 200 definitions of leadership. Based on the results of Rost's study (1991) and due to factors such as growing global influences and generation differences, it is virtually impossible to compile a single definition of leadership. – Leadership will mean something different to who is defining it and from what perspective it is being defined (Rost, 1991). Leadership is a complex and multi-faceted construct defined in numerous ways. However, several components are embedded in the concept of leadership, as outlined by Northouse (2016). Leadership includes influence, a continuous social process of leaders impacting individuals or groups (Barker, 2001). It starts in groups, as leaders influence groups of people who strive towards a similar purpose. Leadership is an institutional and individual trait (Stentz, Clark & Matkin, 2012), and it is a process in which the leader and followers are affected. Furthermore, leadership is available to all and not limited to individuals. Leadership effectiveness depends on a shared goal and mutual purpose between leaders and followers.

PHEIs that invest in creative brand leadership strive to build meaningful, socially significant brands and inspire innovative and co-creative business models and culture. As a result, these

institutions and businesses concern themselves deeply and intrinsically with the performance of every single link along the entire value chain and stakeholder network that will ensure a sustainable competitive advantage. The current study seeks to understand how leadership strategies are employed in business resilience within private HE institutions in a developing socio-economic context.

2.9.1.1 Changes and Current Trends in Leadership

In their paper presented at the 29th Annual Conference of the Southern African Institute for Industrial Engineering (SAIIE), Pretorius, Steyn, and Bond-Barnard (2018) claim several changes in leadership in the years directly preceding their findings. Pretorius *et al.*, (2018) observe that, at present, numerous organisations are experiencing challenges resulting from uncertainties, globalisation, the fast-changing business environment, and an increasingly complex working environment. A radical shift in leadership style may be needed to adapt to the new creative networked economy (Jarcho, 2013), which has followed the original industrial market economy. Traditionally, leadership has been perceived as a vertical top-down relationship. In the new creative networked economy, a shift towards a shared and balanced approach to leadership has been gaining momentum (Pretorius, Steyn & Bond-Barnard, 2018).

Although methods have changed over the last 20 years, there has been a prevalent view that an organisation runs as a "machine" in which senior management helps personnel (Fletcher & Käufer, 2003). The organisation can now be understood as a dynamic system of interconnected interactions and numerous new networks of influence, replacing this perception of management. It is clear that a paradigm shift has occurred, which will inevitably result in a change in the leadership construct (Fletcher & Käufer, 2003). The growing use of newly connected and empowered teams and the flattening of organisational structures necessitate a departure from the old leadership model. The ultimate purpose of a learning organisation is to identify creative exchanges through technology to produce optimal beneficial effects through financial manipulation and economic exploitation (Senge, 1993; Viljoen, 2008). The future challenge is for creative leadership to recognise that many PHEIs operate in a high-potential learning environment, which provides the necessary stimulus and support for continuous learning and finance generation. Organisations can achieve a technological advantage through the proactive participation of knowledge workers. This business needed to create the proper context for innovation to support further and be provided to other areas within PHEIs. It had to improve client relationships both internally and to strengthen loyalty. It must enable an environment that thrives on change and, therefore, consciously move toward change and proactively anticipate new technological changes that can be used as innovation strategies.

2.9.1.2 Creative Thinking, Creativity and Global Leadership

Jarche (2013) points out a global shift from an industrial market economy to a networked creative economy, requiring more independent workers with initiative, creativity, and passion. Old frameworks for managerial leadership were primarily based on the northern hemisphere (rational) and western hemisphere (pragmatic) principles, but the southern hemisphere (humane) and eastern hemisphere (holistic) codes needed to be sufficiently considered (Lessem & Schieffer, 2014). The world is experiencing unprecedented upheaval and chaos, climate change, terrorist and religious attacks, an economic downturn, a general societal breakdown, and failure in some political systems. Chaos brings disruption and crisis management, both to be avoided but inevitable. These factors indicate that the world fails to produce leaders who can navigate turmoil and uncertainty. South Africa does not need leaders; they need leadership. (Ramaphosa, 2018). In essence, chaos is necessary; chaos pushes one outside the comfort zones and, in certain instances, leads to innovative and creative thinking, resulting in new products, solutions and ideas.

Globally, companies seem to struggle since there appears to be a leadership vacuum, which results in difficulties in developing managerial effectiveness, inspiring others, developing employees, leading a team, guiding change, and managing internal stakeholders (Gentry, Eckert, Manusamy, Stawiski, Martin, 2013). Making the necessary paradigm shift to sustain profits in this context becomes challenging. Business leaders are looking for alternative methods to create a new way of thinking to yield satisfactory results (O'Conner, 2014). It is notably the permanently-installed hierarchical structures that cause a lack of flexibility in organisations (Peters, 1987), which, in turn, poses a problem in the rapid change in technology and global economic challenges, which are catalysts that drive change and chaos – even in a state of order. This is confirmed by Tom Peters Y William Bogner (1993–2005), who observes that changes in the global economy and technology are evidence of visible chaos. Businesses should respond to these changes and not set aside, follow, and accept them.

In his book on leadership practices for personal and professional performance, Klemm (2017) observes that creativity as a leadership quality should be essential to any job description. This should give this process time and resources, and the techniques used by leaders to influence people should also be creative. In an article on the importance of visionary leadership, Lysa Miller (2018) states: "Creative leadership drives productivity and fosters success in a company". She observes that creativity involves abandoning rigid structures – a much-desired trait for leaders in any business. Creative leaders can solve problems by noticing things others do not, simply by looking at things differently. In the current changing business climate, creativity in leadership is a vital component of the survival of any organisation (Miller, 2018). As William Pollard, English Clergyman, stated, "There is no innovation or incentive for improvement without change. Those who lead change will have a greater chance of managing the inevitable transition." This can extend the role of creative thinking creative leadership to

a global level. It has become necessary for global leadership to be creative and innovative in advancing sustainability and cultivating a creative environment that looks at problem-solving and leadership in a new way. Hiring creative employees or training current employees to think and operate more creatively are two possibilities for developing innovative leadership and team. In 2018, the Manpower Group conducted a comprehensive study, which resulted in the following observation:

Global skills shortages have reached an all-time high, and businesses should shift their focus from just-in-time hiring to becoming talent builders for today and the future. The only way to conduct your business goal, add value, and grow is to enhance people's lives is to develop the correct mix of people, skills, processes, and technology.

Thanks to modern evaluations, big data, and predictive performance, organisations have the best tools to identify adjacent talents, help employees transfer into emerging positions, and develop clear career paths. Individuals with an ardent desire to study and upskill will have a higher chance of finding work. It should be an operational imperative and a strategic priority for organisations and companies to create a culture of learnability to adapt and move within the company or elsewhere. As observed by Jonas Prising, Chairman and CEO of the Manpower Group: This Skills Revolution is how we will address talent shortages, accelerate growth, and assist individuals in developing new skills for long-term, sustainable careers.

2.9.1.3 Trends in Leader Competencies for Success: A Current Analysis

At the core of performance measurement and management control literature, the emphasis is on better understanding the drivers and measures of organisational success instead of managerial success. However, management and scholars have concentrated on correcting this predicament recently. In recent years, efforts have been made to understand better the most effective management control and performance evaluation approaches by adequately collecting and analysing data. The intention has been to understand more about what drives organisational success and how to measure it to foreground the role of business leaders and the tools that influence the manager's impact on organisational performance.

However, a significant gap remains, and far more research is required (Epstein, 2004). Collins and Porras (1994), Collins (2001), and De Waal (2010) all agree that further research is needed to understand successful organisations better. There is far more that management control research can provide to help us to understand better the actions required to drive organisational success. Careful research on strategy, structure, systems, people, and culture as determinants of corporate success can significantly contribute to academic literature and guide management practice. Laguna, Wiechetek, and Talik (2012), in their survey on the competencies of business leaders and their business success, conducted among 264

managers of Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs), noted that success was measured as a subjective evaluation of economic growth indicators in comparison with competitors in the market. On that account, business leaders and managerial competencies were significant predictors of success in successfully running a business, where such success was predicated on tangible financial parameters. This suggested that the concrete manifestation of business success through profits may have been a more profound symptom of intangible leadership attributes that directly caused quantitative measurement. The sections below will highlight some leadership and management skills needed to be successful and sustainable.

2.9.1.3.1 Qualifications and Experience

Educational qualifications and work experience are essential for any business undertaking because they enhance chances of success and minimise the risk of failing, using knowledge developed through associative skills or experience established through a relevant precedent. Buergermeister (1983) researched the assessment of the educational skills and competencies needed by beginning hospitality managers; the study aimed to develop and assess hospitality managers' academic skills and competencies upon graduation. The results revealed that educational qualifications and skills were positively related to the manager's competencies in the hospitality industry.

They concluded another study by Potgieter and Coetzee (2010) in their article, management competencies in HE: perceived job importance with the Level of training required, that there was a significant association between the level of training, experience, and competencies. It is worth noting that Cobanoglu, Dede, and Poorani (2008), in their research, found that soft skills were among the most effective skills for the hotel IT manager's job requirements. In addition, Henrich (2016) established that those higher qualifications positively influenced the competencies of a manager. In another critical study by Lubomska-Kalisz (2014), the results indicated that the competitive position of enterprises depends on experience and the level of the top managers' educational background and the level or grade of specific types of competence needed to fulfil their role.

2.9.1.3.2 People Skills

The so-called soft skills have been the subject of several empirical studies, which posit that they are critical. They equip business leaders with meaningful ways to channel and optimally direct organisational skills and talents. The Health Service Executive Group (2015) argues that "about 90% of executive failures are attributable to interpersonal competencies—leading teams, developing a positive work environment, retaining staff, inspiring trust, and coping with change." A study on the impact of people skills training conducted by Hunt and Baruch (2003) evaluated the influence of people skills training on top managers of 252 executives from 48 organisations. The results indicated a significant impact on some, but not all, of the competencies and skills. Mulqueen, Kahn, and Kirkpatrick (2012) found a direct correlation

between people skills related to versatility and leveraging diversity to sustain inclusive organisational culture. In addition, Seate, Pooe, and Chinomona (2016) established a correlation between technical and people skills (Seate, Pooe, & Chinomona, 2016). Furthermore, Kim, Min, Yune, Choi, and Gong (2008) found that interpersonal relationships had "long been considered an essential aspect in human functionality" and, as a result, were an important topic to investigate as a means of gaining a complete understanding of overall workplace competence.

2.9.1.3.3 Authentic Influence

Authentic leadership is a gateway to earning the trust of subordinates through the demonstration of values such as reliability and honesty (Wong & Cummings, 2009). For instance, State-Owned Enterprises are extensive organisations, employing many people, consisting of multiple departments and operating divisions. Transnet, for example, uses divisions such as Transnet Engineering, Pipeline, Port Terminals, Freight Rail and Port Authority. The researcher cannot emphasise the importance of genuine influence in such a setting. Leaders perceived to be supportive were more inclined to motivate staff participation and get better results (Wong & Cummings, 2009). Such leaders could engender influence unknowingly and unconsciously through their characteristics and presence in that company. Eskom, as another example, has departments dealing with power generation, distribution, grid access and procurement, to mention a few.

The business leaders of such complex organisations need to channel the efforts of others for them to maintain a successful organisation in the competitive business environment (Horwitch & Whipple, 2014). This effort is only possible with an inborn or natural ability to maximise their and others' output. Organisational business leaders should characteristically be inspirational to subordinates (Bass, 2000). Transformational leadership has four primary characteristics: charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006). An appeal involves achieving trust, respect and earning the confidence of others. "It is vital in the transformational process because it links leaders and subordinates with a view" to synchronising expectations and aims. Leaders or managers who were charismatic had a sense of mission and the ability to influence subordinates positively and authentically (Petersen, 2006). In examining some prominent Fortune 100 private and public companies, the study discovered that managers who inspired others were necessary for the organisation and improved organisational performance (Petersen, 2006).

Luna-Arocas and Morley (2015) show that a motivational leader has a high likelihood of influencing both job satisfaction positively (directly) and job performance (indirectly). As noted by Zhu, Chew, and Spangler (2005), in their study on the association between the transformational leadership style (incorporating motivating and inspiring) and organisational

performance, the 170 firms studied in Singapore demonstrated a positive association between the transformational aspects of boosting/inspiring and organisational performance.

2.9.1.3.4 Critical Thinking Skills

The act of seeking, defining, and assessing a method through which a solution is found is problem-solving. The behavioural disposition of decisive problem-solving increases their potential to influence positive outcomes, even where there is a possibility of deviation from the planned effect caused by previously known or unanticipated factors (Kerns & Ko, 2014). Critical thinking skills and speed were more rewarding in a more volatile environment (Atuahene-Gima & Wei, 2011). Businesses exist to solve problems or provide product or service solutions, which represent why they purchase their services or products. In delivering such products and services, which are solutions, several problems are projected to occur, meaning that the entire process is fraught with the risk of issues.

Accordingly, there is a direct benefit when business leaders display decisiveness in resolving problems or threats to attain the most desirable outcome. Problem-solving turns potential failures into successes and increases the chances of quantifiable outcome improvements (Atuahene-Gima & Wei, 2011). Martina, Hana, and Jiri (2012) determined that problem-solving was a crucial organisational competency in identifying managerial competencies in knowledge-based organisations. This quality of solving problems was considered necessary by respondents in the study. A study conducted by Toygar and Akbulut (2013) on the managerial skills of hospital administrators case study of Turkey revealed that hospital administrators' decision-making and problem-solving skill levels were positively and statistically significant to the overall effectiveness of the managers reviewed. Another study found a positive relationship between problem-solving and decisiveness (Ingason & Jónsdóttir, 2017).

2.9.1.3.5 Building for the Future

'Building for the future' can be used interchangeably with 'visionary leadership.' It relates to the dominant orientation to plan actively. 'Visionary leadership' is not limited to business but can be found in various occupations, including religion, sport, philanthropy, politics, and others (Kirkpatrick, 2004). Visionary leaders create an inspiring vision, which causes subordinates to look forward to the future with positive anticipation (Dhammika, 2014). Colton (1985; cited in Dhammika, 2014) describes visionary leadership as streamlining the organisation's time and actions to maximum effect. Leaders that build for the future tend to have high commitment levels and inspire followers' confidence and performance (Dubrin, 1998). Visionary leaders' attitudes and cognitive processes influence the conception of issues, solutions, and the energies directed toward resolving them (Waldman, Ramirez, House, & Puranam, 2001). A visionary leader can inspire confidence and support instantly, like one with authentic influence. As Waldman *et al.* (2001) described, the effect of articulated and

demonstrated plans inspires trust and the confidence of subordinates. There is, therefore, a crystallisation of the future, which improves the commitment levels of the team and the overall work ethic (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Another interesting finding is that future-oriented leaders inspire followers to make sacrifices and behave in ways that exemplify intellectual stimulation (Valenzuela, 2007).

The above sections laid the theoretical foundation for future-proofing leadership business to be successful and sustainable, the critical constructs involved in this study. The following section will lay another foundation for the future-proofing business, which is vital for any business to be successful and sustainable: business innovation.

2.9.2 Business Innovation

Here the researcher discusses strategies for driving growth and competitive advantage through creative problem-solving and business adaptation. Innovation refers to modifying procedures or developing more effective methods, goods, services, or ideas from a business standpoint (Kylliainen, 2019). This is how businesses can ensure adaptability and survival in an ever-changing marketplace. Innovation could translate into implementing innovative ideas, creating enhanced products, or improving existing services. Organisations can save money and time and provide a competitive advantage through innovation. Through innovation, organisations can differentiate themselves in an already saturated market. Innovation can do things differently from your competitors, whether this is through new products or services.

Life has evolved at least as fast as its environment for more than four billion years. Nature can inoculate itself against environmental risks by constantly creating new genetic material. This is evident in his ability to adapt to survive. Adaptability is the new competitive advantage achieved through flexible structures and the dispersal of decision-making, coupled with open communication and eradication silos. Markets are similarly highly adaptable. Businesses compete to attract funds, and investors can choose where to put their money. "Over the past 50 years, the New York Stock Exchange has outperformed virtually every one of its member companies" (Harvard Business Review, 2006).

On the other hand, the management of innovation (Moi) is a term used in business. It refers to the tasks and processes following to ensure that the company achieves its set objectives for innovation. This can be further defined as the planning, organising, managing, and monitoring of the organisation's tasks and processes of creation. According to the Harvard Business Review (2006), "Innovation in management principles and processes can create long-lasting advantage and produce dramatic shifts in competitive positioning".

2.9.2.1 The Importance of Business Innovation for Economic Development

Society revolves around continuous economic growth, and innovation is critical for the advancement of society. An increase in productivity can improve the material well-being of an economy, which enhances the standard of living, which is the core of long-term prosperity for any society. "It is usually thought that economic growth arises from improvements to one or both of the two primary components of an economy, i.e., capital and labour," according to economic history (American Entrepreneurship Center, 2015). Innovation has solved social problems sustainably and efficiently, generally using modern technology like products and services that meet a social need. Economic growth is thus dependent on the development of the labour market or an increase in capital intensity, directly impacting productivity. This is important for economic growth, particularly in developing countries like South Africa. Developing countries rely on innovation as new digital technologies and solutions help fight sickness, hunger, and poverty by connecting farmers to weather technology to help farmers make intelligent decisions about farming and agriculture. Caprelli (2015) highlights that "innovation is the cornerstone of sustained economic growth and prosperity". Innovative ideas lead to new products, services or processes, and this dependency is driven by innovation. Innovative thinking allows individuals to be more creative and effective in the organisation and, in return, the economy. It stimulates teamwork and encourages a free flow of knowledge sharing and information in cooperative learning.

2.9.2.2 Relationship Between Helix Innovation Systems and Business Strategy

This section will examine another model for knowledge production: triple helix, quadruple helix, and quintuple helix. The Triple Helix innovation model focuses on university-industry-government relations. The Quadruple Helix embeds the Triple Helix by adding the 'media-based and culture-based public' and 'civil society' as a fourth helix. By contextualising the Quadruple Helix and incorporating the helix (and perspective) of society's natural settings, the Quintuple Helix innovation model becomes even more complete. The Triple Helix acknowledges the importance of HE for innovation explicitly. The idea and use of the Triple Helix arrangement of information created between college, industry, and public authority began during the 1990s.

Such a framework is a crossover that incorporates configurations for creating, moving, and utilising information, including college, industry, and government (Stanford University Triple Helix research bunch, s.a.; Gebhardt, 2015). Two functional viewpoints guide how the Triple Helix works. The next point of view is a framework approach with arranged connections between sub-sets of frameworks that consider co-advancing. According to a down-to-earth viewpoint, such a college will be pioneering and foster business and hatching programs, interdisciplinary focuses, science stops, instructing people, and teaching associations. The focal reason for the Triple Helix framework is that the commitment of information by the

government, colleges, enterprises, and residents all add to expanding development capacities and working in every one of the fields through shared conditions (Gebhardt, 2015).

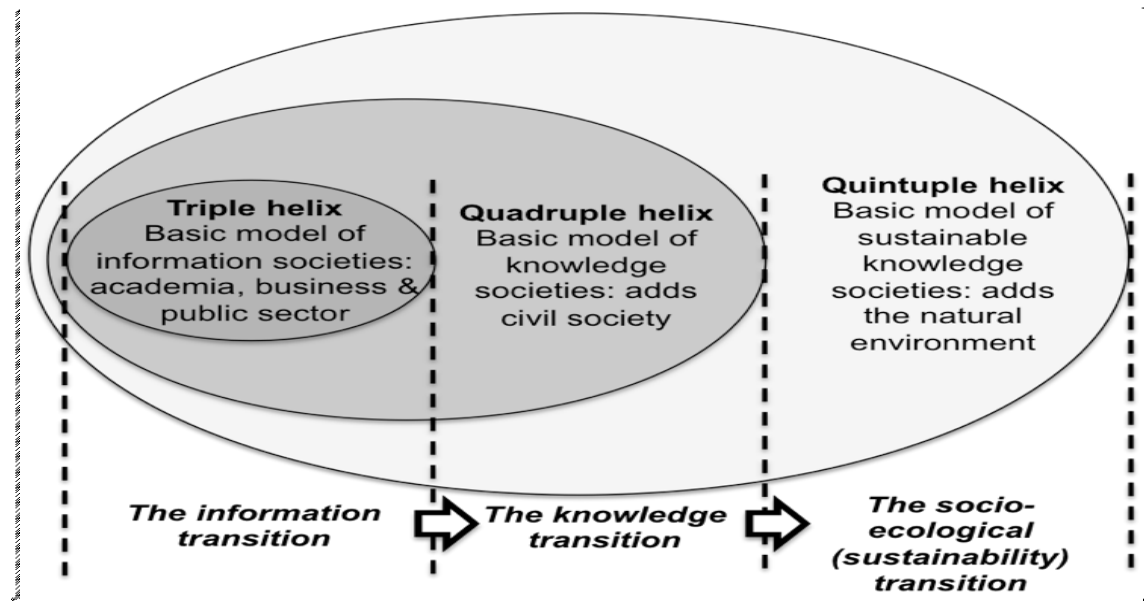


Figure 10: Helix Model and Transition to Sustainable Knowledge Societies

The Quadruple Helix adds points of view of the information society and information majority rule government. It explicitly proposes incorporating science and human expressions-based, media-based, and culture-based information, perceiving the between and transdisciplinary nature of development (Carayannis *et al.*, 2016). Quintuple Helix development frameworks stretch out the model further to incorporate that of the environment, where social and biological concerns drive advancement (Carayannis *et al.*, 2016).

2.9.2.3 The Importance of Business Innovation for Business Strategy

Competition within the business landscape has become fiercer, technology is advancing exponentially, and consumers demand sleek services and products. The products and services used today are primarily the results of innovation. More people have access to a mobile phone than sanitation or clean water as mobile technology enables innovative new ways. Organisations must seek creative ways to improve their performance and remain relevant in these changing times to keep up with this rapid technological surge. Businesses are improving product offerings and services and trying to reach a more comprehensive database of customers to maintain their competitive advantage. Innovative companies hold their market shares and become employees of choice by retaining talent. Innovation is more than producing the next best device, such as an Apple iPad or a smartphone. In a business context, innovation involves many variables apart from developing new products. Innovation requires organisations to understand unique business practices in industries other than their own. The BPM Institute (2022) states it can obtain best practices to create the best approach. For instance, in the banking sector, the banks have looked at companies such as Apple Inc and

Amazon for inspiration in building their platform business. Consulting firms like Mckinsey can provide services, and companies like Coca Cola for effective marketing strategies. Their innovative approaches saw a rise in their brand effectiveness and customer loyalty.

2.9.2.4 Steps in the Business Innovation Process

Ideation is the creative process of originating, developing, and communicating innovative ideas in the innovation process. In a creative process, designers generate innovative ideas in a session, such as brainstorming. Ideation is innovative thinking aimed at solving a challenge or offering a more efficient way of accomplishing something by producing creative ideas or building on existing concepts and finding a way to put these innovative ideas into practice. Amazon's "Prime" two-day delivery service is an example of ideation used to solve a business challenge and effectively serve customers. This two-day shipping programme allowed Amazon customers a free two-day delivery in thousands of cities across the United States, with orders delivered by noon the next day. According to Alcor Fund (2020), an innovation process is a systematic approach to creating and implementing new ideas. This process involves several steps: idea generation, evaluation, development, testing, and commercialisation.

The steps involved in the innovation process can vary depending on the organisation and the innovation being pursued. The first step in the innovation process is to identify a problem or opportunity that business leaders can address through innovation, which may involve market research, gathering customer feedback, or analysing industry trends. Next, brainstorming, mapping, or lateral thinking generates potential solutions or ideas. Thereafter, the most promising pictures are selected through market research, prototypes, or pilot tests to determine their feasibility and impact. The best ideas are then developed and refined into a final product, service, or solution by creating prototypes, conducting market tests, and refining the design and features. Finally, the innovation is launched and commercialised by creating a marketing and sales plan, manufacturing the product, and providing customer training and support.

The innovation process is an ongoing cycle of identifying needs, generating ideas, evaluating, and selecting the best ones, developing and refining them, and launching and commercialising the resulting innovations. By following this process, organisations can effectively create and implement new ideas to help them grow and succeed in the marketplace. Innovative ideas may be easy to develop; however, implementing them can be difficult. Innovation requires a deep understanding of customer behaviour to predict people's needs, even before articulating them. Innovation requires out-of-the-box thinking derived from creative thinking and design analysis. There are multiple dimensions that a business interacts with to unlock a breakthrough that will provide that competitive advantage. Increasing revenue through innovation has become essential for organisational success. As

companies innovate systems and processes, workers become more efficient due to system and process enhancements. Robotics and automation, for example, have eliminated the need for repetitive manual labour and reduced human error. Increased efficiency of businesses and workers leads to increased profits, revenue, economic growth, and job creation. There is no room for complacency with it comes to innovation.

2.9.2.5 Barriers and Enablers to Business Innovation within the Workplace

Innovation can often be complicated and an uphill struggle for most organisations. Harvard Business Review (2019) states that across industries, one survey after another has proven that business impacts still need to be met, despite all the money spent, due to the failure to address the challenges that stifle innovation. The article further states, "major paradox managers face is that the systems that enable success with today's model reinforce behaviours inconsistent with discovering tomorrow's model". Innovation can be complicated and challenging for most organisations; however, this should not be a barrier to moving forward amidst the constant digital disruption. There are several barriers to innovation. The world is becoming more complex, and creativity and innovation are vital in taking an organisation forward.

Furthermore, organisations fail to realise that their most valuable resources are their employees' creations and imagination. Organisations that fail to innovate do not survive in these changing times. Blockbuster, for example, could not innovate and is no longer around. Netflix began as a small business but now has a market value of \$32,9 billion due to its adaptability and innovative approach. EO Melbourne (2022) states, "A creative leadership team tends to be the ultimate driving force for innovation".

2.9.2.6 The Development of a Business Innovation Strategy

Innovation may sound like a buzzword. However, there are various reasons why corporate leaders believe that innovation is critical to their success. Namely, innovation allows businesses to remain relevant in a highly competitive market, and innovations can resolve vital problems. Kylliainen (2020) highlighted that there is nothing new without innovation, and there will only be progress if there is something new. An organisation that does not progress will not survive or remain relevant in a competitive market. For an organisation to lead, it must set the pace for innovation by seeing innovation as an ongoing business process. Solving a business challenge in a radically new way that benefits the business is an innovation process. This improvement also helps our companies, communities, and societies. Innovative organisations set the pace for the industry in which they operate. The most critical step in innovation is conceptualising an idea into a successful concept.

Innovation is an essential and viable aspect of all organisations. An innovation strategy must ensure that the processes required to come to fruition are embedded correctly and support

the innovation team. The innovation processes can appear complicated and unachievable; therefore, such procedures should be well understood and have all the supporting structures for successful execution. Key initiatives that will support the activities and help achieve the organisational goals must be included. Organisations must build incentives for both staff and employees in the innovation process. Incentives will attract more customers and encourage employees' and customers' creative thinking and innovative ideas. Luenendonk (2019) refers to a study or report by the consulting firm Luenendonk, which provides insights and analysis on innovation strategies. The points mentioned in the question are important considerations for implementing an effective innovation strategy. First, it is essential to understand why innovation is necessary and what specific goals the organisation hopes to achieve. This will help guide the development of the innovation strategy and ensure that it aligns with the organisation's overall mission and objectives. Next, it is essential to consider the potential risks associated with implementing an innovation strategy. This can include financial risks, such as the cost of investing in new technologies or market research, and technological and market risks, such as the potential for a new product or service to fail to gain traction in the market. Identifying and mitigating these risks is essential to developing a successful innovation strategy. Finally, the innovation strategy should include a detailed plan or procedure for how the organisation will go about implementing the system. This should consist of conducting market research, developing new products or services, and implementing processes for testing and iterating on those products or services. A clear, step-by-step plan will help ensure the innovation strategy is carried out effectively and efficiently.

2.9.2.7 The Role of Culture in Business Innovation

Culture underpins innovation. For an organisation to fully achieve the benefits of an innovation strategy, creativity must be encouraged throughout the organisation's culture since people and corporate culture are the most critical drivers of innovation. An authentic innovation culture will encourage employees from all ranks to contribute ideas. If the strategy is viewed only as leaders or specialists, there will be little involvement from employees who do not see themselves as leaders and specialists. It is easier to consolidate ideas when multiple people and teams work toward creative solutions. A culture of innovation and creativity provides for a constant flow of ideas, making it easier to ideate and move to the next step of the innovation process. An innovative culture consists of choices, actions and attitudes that impact the implementation of modern technologies or processes; therefore, buy-in from all stakeholders is essential for the strategy to succeed.

Each culture is unique. Cultures contain symbols or artefacts and can evoke various emotions or reactions. The critical components of culture also include a person's language, values, beliefs, norms, and symbols. The use of language as a means of communication is standard. When these components of culture are shared, it makes social interactions possible. Whether verbal or non-verbal, shared characters are essential for any culture and can lead to

misunderstandings or hostility if others are not correctly interpreted or respected. An entire culture can be based on a belief system. The foundation of all organisations is the vision, mission, and purpose. People become the "culture carriers". The organisation's values are the core of its culture as it provides guidelines for the behaviours and mindsets required to achieve its vision. Values must be embedded into the organisation's practices and reinforced in daily life principles. Employees must embrace these values since an organisation can only maintain a culture with people who share the core values. Interacting with employees, customers, and other stakeholders will understand the organisation's culture.

The following highlights a culture of innovation that supports an organisational strategy: leaders cannot force an organisation's culture. The working environment's culture should allow employees to challenge assumptions and create openness to innovative ideas with the freedom to experiment, fail and learn. Employees find a creative workplace stimulating. Employees should be motivated to innovate by being provided with challenging projects. However, the strategy must align the tasks to employee skills and capabilities. A culture of innovation increases the likelihood of improved productivity and staff performance.

2.9.2.8 Building Clarity and Alignment Around Business Innovation

Organisations must align teams to the definition of "innovation" for the organisation. The strategy for innovation must be clearly articulated and easily understood by all employees. For employees to buy into the culture of innovation, the system should be made simple, clear, and easy to understand. The six elements of an innovation strategy outlined by the Board of Innovation (2022) are essential considerations for any organisation looking to develop and implement an effective innovation strategy. These elements include a compelling growth mission aligned with a clear innovation mission statement and framework. This will help ensure that the organisation's innovation efforts are focused, consistent, and aligned with the organisation's overall goals and objectives; a focused innovation portfolio outlines the key activities that business leaders will undertake to achieve the innovation mission. This can include specific plans for conducting market research, developing new products or services, implementing new technologies, and launching innovation in the market; an actionable innovation plan that serves as a blueprint for executing the innovation initiatives outlined in the portfolio.

This should include detailed steps and timelines for implementing the innovation strategy, as well as specific goals and metrics for measuring the success of the innovation. This innovation culture map identifies and benchmarks potential challenges and opportunities that may arise as the innovation process unfolds. This can help the organisation understand the cultural and organisational factors that may impact the success of the innovation and take steps to address those challenges or take advantage of those opportunities; a structured innovation capability approach defines the people, processes, programs, targets, and metrics necessary to measure

the success of the innovation. This can include specific plans for recruiting and training personnel, implementing strategies for testing, iterating on new products or services and setting targets and metrics for evaluating the success of the innovation, and a playbook for innovation (optional) that provides tools, methods, and processes for achieving the innovation plan. This can include specific techniques and approaches for conducting market research, developing new products or services, and implementing new technologies.

Overall, it is essential for the business innovation strategy to be grounded in clear, well-defined business goals and to be developed and implemented in a way aligned with the organisation's overall mission and objectives.

2.9.2.9 The Role of an Employee and Leadership in Business Innovation

The organisational culture should encourage active dialogue by ensuring employees feel safe sharing ideas and challenging the status quo. Honest and open conversations will only occur when people are comfortable sharing their feelings. Time must be allowed for innovative ideas to emerge through workshops and brainstorming sessions. Employees must be encouraged to look at the success of other industries and consider how these can be adapted or improved for the current challenge. This enables and stimulates the necessary behaviour for a culture of innovation. Employees involved early in the innovation processes and plans will be more motivated to support and see the goal completed. A diverse workforce must be brought together, as this can amplify innovation. Organisations must build various teams to work on cross-functional projects and lend their skills and expertise to other projects and industries where required. A diverse set of skills, experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives is critical to innovation. Organisations must implement training and development programmes with performance objectives in mind. Processes should accommodate the incubation of innovative concepts. Relationships must be encouraged that extend outside of the parameters of the organisation. Business leaders can bring teams from other organisations to provide guidance and knowledge of innovation, providing a wide lens on developing and commercialising technology.

Leaders play a pivotal role in introducing and embedding the culture of innovation. They should be tasked with creating the right conditions for successful innovation by enabling the free flow of ideas and knowledge sharing within and across teams. Leaders play a crucial role in forging a culture plan for creation and understanding how innovation impacts the generations in the workplace. Millennials, for example, will seek out opportunities for interaction with people and projects of interest, which can result in innovation energy. Such individuals want to solve problems that matter and will push for innovative ideas and improvements in their field. The organisation must be open to brainstorming and unconventional box thinking. Leaders also need to lead by example. Failure often stems from a weak organisational culture instead of operational or resource constraints. There must be

a balance between all these key elements to support the success of innovative initiatives. Creating an innovation culture is critical to managing innovation since the culture can dramatically enhance the flow and development of creative ideas, services, or products.

2.9.2.10 The Role of Technology and Tools in Supporting Business Strategy

Organisations strive to be innovative and passionately believe innovation is critical for survival and success. Technology and innovation have become integral to daily life and rapidly changing how value is created for customers and shareholders. Organisations such as artificial intelligence, robotics, and the Internet of Things rely on the latest technology to advance their businesses. A wide range of technological tools is used for marketing, research, and networking to develop products and services. Innovative technology has enabled companies that have been purely local to become global market competitors simply by automating processes and using relevant information to their advantage. Business processes have been enhanced due to the rapid expansion of innovative technology globally. Technology is being used for communication, travel, learning and conducting business. Furthermore, technology is available to assist firms in maintaining their flow of data by tracking processes and the efficiency of systems while maintaining employee and consumer records and trends. Companies use online conferencing for virtual meetings irrespective of geographical location, cutting time and travel expenses.

New employees are recruited, hired, and trained virtually, simplifying the hiring process and saving time and costs. Online capabilities have enabled banks to transact seamlessly both nationally and globally. Businesses are operating more efficiently and effectively using innovative technology. With the proper tools, an organisation can approach innovation more systematically, keep track of progress and discover innovative approaches to innovation. Together with the right technology, these tools will take an organisation forward. Innovation is becoming extraordinarily accessible to those that know how to cultivate it. The right tools can provide an organisation with a competitive advantage. McKinney (2022) emphasised the importance of using various tools and approaches to fast-track the innovation process and improve the chances of success. One such tool is design thinking, which focuses on user empathy, creative problem-solving, and iterative testing, and can help teams quickly and effectively generate and evaluate new ideas. Another helpful approach is the lean startup methodology, which emphasises creating and testing prototypes of new products or services to determine their viability and minimise wasted resources. Collaborative tools such as project management software, online collaboration platforms, and virtual meeting tools can help teams work efficiently and effectively. Additionally, creating physical or digital prototypes of new ideas through prototyping can help teams test and refine their concepts quickly and cheaply. Finally, obtaining customer feedback early can often validate teams' ideas and ensure they address real problems for real people.

The key to business innovation success is to focus on testing and learning as quickly and efficiently as possible. By using the right tools and approaches, teams can increase their chances of success and bring their ideas to the market faster. In conclusion, the bigger the organisation's problem, the bigger the opportunity is for innovation. It takes much perseverance coupled with imagination to solve big problems. It is futile to waste human labour when a task can be re-engineered and performed less. The challenge for organisations is to discover unconventional principles that can unearth new ways of innovation management. Organisations can enhance the productive capacity of an economy through innovation. Innovation-driven productivity has remained a driver of economic growth for decades. "A country's ability to increase its standard of living over time depends almost completely on its ability to raise outputs per worker," according to the Center for American Entrepreneurship (2015). Productivity growth is about achieving more with less by advancing modern technologies, systems, and processes. Innovation is the core of contemporary existence (CW). Change is inevitable, and innovation can bring about positive change. Innovation is critical for organisations to stay afloat.

2.9.3 Developing and Nurturing the Most Valuable Asset: People.

The corporate strategy paradigm has recently shifted away from Porter's classic "value chains and competitive forces" model. It emphasises intangible and intellectual assets inherent in an organisation's human resources. These new focus areas are the key to sustainable organisational development and growth (Liebowitz & Beckman, 2008, p.164). Srinivasan and Murthy (2010), the real essence of an organisation is where people work together towards a common goal through the coordinated effort of decisions and actions by individuals and groups. People contribute to an organisation's capital investment and are essential for productivity and the efficient functioning of the organisation. To reach a competent stage in any organisation, people must understand and apply the correct processes; otherwise, they are not assets to the organisation (Barnes, 2011). Thus, employees and organisations must take heed of and develop the right competencies to ensure the organisation's overall maturity. The leadership can ensure their commitment by investing in the organisation's most valued asset – the people, to create a knowledge balance between technical and behavioural skills, emphasising cognitive and behavioural skills that shape leadership in becoming and driving innovation into the future. This will result in improved resources for training on internal systems and policies and more bursaries available for people to embark on self-study that would benefit both the employee and the organisation.

2.9.3.1 Developing Individual Skills Maps for Assessing and Utilising Abilities

Organisations can depict the abilities required to fulfil any function in the firm by constructing a skills map. Companies can use skill mapping to manage their flexible networked teams as they change over time. It also allows the organisation to adapt to changing markets and technologies. By using specific technology, companies can forecast which skills will be needed

for each role in the future. Exploring and measuring people in an organisation may yield a more subjective than objective approach as it comprises elements. These include the action involving the person's ability to act and decide; the attitude or the mental position of an individual or group (Hofstede, 1982); the willingness to be involved in an organisational process (Ayers, 2003); and the knowledge or understanding of how willingness and action can contribute to the success of the organisation (Andersen & Jessen, 2003).

Funchall, Herselman and Van Greunen (2011) assert that people's development is a combination of competence (skills, knowledge, and abilities), development (the right person for the job), and innovation (developing employees to become innovators). The researcher notes that people's development is more than just competency development. It also involves selecting and recruiting the right people with the right temperament and creating an environment conducive to innovation. Many organisations that manage scarce skills make decisions driven by resource availability in crucial roles (Van Zyl, 2001). Referring specifically to the development of people, Liebowitz and Beckman (2008) further point out that competency development and knowledge creation are critical factors when enabling capability development which in turn supports business strategy and organisational goal achievement. Liebowitz and Beckman (2008, p.164), referring to Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995), also propose that "the essence of the strategy lies in developing the organisational capability to acquire, create, accumulate, and exploit knowledge". Pee and Kankanhalli (2009, p.6) agree and explain that successful and sustainable organisations view knowledge as an asset to improve performance through increased profits.

2.9.3.2 Learning Agility: The Power of Unlearning and Relearning

People development also includes a narrowly related aspect, namely development in conflict management, especially when collaborating with different departments or when systems are interconnected and accomplishing a task as one team. According to Lock and Scott (2016), conflict management is the responsibility of everyone in the organisation. However, directors and senior management should be committed to setting the standard for conflict management. It is intricately linked to emotional intelligence (EI), the ability to manage interpersonal relationships sensibly and empathetically. EI is the awareness of and being in control of one's emotions and positively influences the negative emotions of others (Mersino, 2013; Zhang & Fan, 2013). If managers are exposed to intimidating behaviour from senior management, they tend to follow the same behaviour and similarly manage their staff and tasks (Lock & Scott, 2016).

People development must focus on employee development by providing an organisational framework that improves employees' knowledge, abilities, and skills, ensuring improved practices and performance (Curtis, Hefley & Miller, 2002). In a study conducted by Gama, da Silva, and da Silva (2017), there is a positive correlation between organisations that invest in

human capital and return on investment (ROI). Organisations that support developing their people to higher levels of development have higher returns on their investments than those that do not invest in their people. Andersen and Jessen (2013) believe that organisational development highly depends on knowledge, attitude, and action of the workforce's three legs. While this indicates a strong relationship between development and competency, Castillo-Cedeno, Flores-Davis and Miranda-Cervantes (2015) describe the learning organisation as one where the learning of its members is facilitated, and the organisation continuously transforms itself as this happens. The organisation's growth depends on the development of its people, the increased ability to innovate new ways of getting things done, and the institutionalisation of better working methods and a culture conducive to progressive thinking. In a sense, Castillo-Cedeno *et al.*, (2015) infer that people's development is the critical building block of organisational success and sustainability.

Taking it a step further, Van Zyl (2018) points out that the ability of people to learn faster allows the organisation to innovate quicker, which is the key to competitive advantage and success. Highly competent people drive organisational success levels, but Gama *et al.*, (2017) caution that people present the most significant barriers to implementing processes and systems as they are the most resistant to change. The researcher notes that apart from being the most critical element in development, people are also present with the most hurdles in developing a successful and sustainable organisation. The research can reasonably conclude that people play a significant role in organisations, and organisations must invest in people's development through structured development programmes. People are instrumental in designing, developing, and executing processes and, in the story, testing and use of technologies. It seems inefficient if the organisation has high-end processes and systems, but the people need to be developed or competent to use them to the maximum effect.

2.9.3.3 Embracing Change: The Role of Continuous Development and Adaptability

The business industry is volatile; the future is uncertain, which can be scary for any organisation and its employees. As a result, the company must assist their employees in preparing for the future. This entails more than just putting money into personnel. Businesses must put their staff first to care for their customers adequately. Strengthening the workers' abilities, skill training, and development is the most effective strategy to raise the business's value. The world is becoming increasingly technology-oriented, and innovative ideas to improve corporate operations will continue to emerge. There is constant progress, flexibility, and readiness to change in today's technologically trending markets. Employees allowed to advance in their industries through company endeavours or training upskilling are more uplifted and motivated to achieve their skills, which is an integral part of growth and future proofing. To achieve that level of adaptability, corporate leaders and executives must develop a staffing strategy that is focused not only on people. Although people are essential, they are also on the jobs they must complete and how they should be completed (SOPs or standard

operating procedures). Training or developing employees in these three areas and management will be essential to make it through disruptive times and anything else that might come along the way. Leadership must also plan to put the best practices in place for change. Overall, management will be responsible for how a team responds to a crisis and having a strategy in place will ensure the company's best approach.

For this reason alone, organisations must move on to equipping their employees with adequate knowledge to increase their competence and skill. This preserves their contribution to the company's success by increasing employee satisfaction, which leads to higher staff retention. Retraining and reskilling employees also helps the company stay afloat in fiercely competitive sectors. All training should emphasise the development of each employee's leadership qualities; when a firm strives to develop future leaders, the company's standards and merit rise as a result. The research can conclude that, in his mind, 'futureproofing' is synonymous with improving an organisation's agility. Even the best predictive reasons are still determining what future changes will bring, so organisations need a team prepared for anything and adapt well to change.

2.10 A Fresh Lens on Socio-Economic Dynamics

The research will now discuss the development of a new perspective to address the challenges of the modern world. At the same time, the researcher acknowledges that there may not be a single nation in the world that does not have socioeconomic challenges, mindful that the challenges facing countries within a developing socio-economic context are more complex than those in a developed context. The current study is embedded in the socio-economic context of South Africa. South Africa is classified as a middle-income developing country with several challenges, such as high unemployment and stunted economic growth. Unemployment was 29.1 % in the fourth quarter of 2019 (Dludla, 2020). The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in South Africa contracted 0.6 % year on year in December 2019 (CEIC, 2020). Black South Africans pre-1994 were excluded from any political and economic participation. There were many discriminatory practices against Black South Africans in education, employment, skills development, managerial roles, business ownership and control, and access to necessary social and physical infrastructures required for small business development (SAHO, 2020). The decades of exclusionary legislation began to change after the first democratic elections bringing hope for greater equality, education for the majority, and increasing employment and other opportunities in the business sector (ERAN, 2016).

Since its first democratic elections in 1994, South Africa has changed rapidly from a segregated to an integrated society. People who speak different languages, cultural backgrounds, religions, political ideologies, histories, and socio-economic backgrounds are learning to live and work together in a unified South Africa in one geopolitical dispensation. Despite the significant and courageous policies by the government to address the

tremendous social challenges facing South Africa, the reality is that implementation still needs to reach the policy ideals adequately elaborated. While significant changes have occurred, poverty, unemployment, and inequality remain (Umsizi, 2019); a socio-economic development organisation highlights some of the socio-economic issues South Africa still faces. These issues are listed below to give context without elaborating on each case. This list is not exhaustive but points to some of the significant problems faced in South Africa, high unemployment and low incomes, a breakdown in the nuclear family, a high crime rate, poor education standards, and unsustainable business practices. Development practitioners are becoming increasingly aware of socioeconomic and political structures' role in shaping a country's development paths and results (Worldbank, 2006). Such legacies take many years to be corrected, and the inequalities created by structural inequalities and the dysfunctional effects of political behaviour influence the socio-economic context in significant ways. It is within this shifting and dynamic context that a strategic framework to support PHEIs and HE institutions, in general, builds resilience by establishing innovative business practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment. This context is potentially daunting and overwhelming and an inspiring call to action.

From the above, the reader becomes aware that these disruptions are significant socio-economic challenges South Africa faces. Create a more detailed state of the socio-economic context that outlines how the New World of Work manifest in most PHEIs in South Africa as described below. Almost half of the South African population continues to live under the levels described in the poverty datum line (Aldelzadeh, 2006). Estimates indicate that just over 22 million people in South Africa live in poverty (DBSA, 2005a). Racial, gender, spatial and age dimensions characterise poverty and inequality in South Africa. This state of the economically marginalised has mostly stayed the same in the last 15 years, as seen in the unemployment statistics below. Having outlined some of the critical social challenges in South Africa, a brief review of the economic climate is first in the African continent and then within South Africa. Woods (2008), in an article entitled "Governance Matters: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and Sub-Saharan Africa", states that the IMF found it extremely difficult to facilitate successful growth, development and policy reform in Africa over the past two decades. According to Woods (2008), while the IMF looks very favourably on African countries because of its considerable resources, knowledge, and expertise, it has yet to come any closer to the promise of economic growth over the past two decades region (Woods, 2008).

Economic growth in SA has virtually flat-lined. Some economists believed the South African Economic Outlook for the second half of 2019 might swing into a 'technical recession. Growth in 2020 is likely to be only about 1 %, slightly less than the 1.4 to 1.6 % range expected by the SA Reserve Bank (SARB) and other economists (Parsons, 2020). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) recently confirmed that the SA economy would experience 'sluggish growth in 2020 - for the sixth consecutive year' (Parsons, 2020). Parsons (2020) holds the view that, given the economic and financial landscape in South Africa, it is both a challenging and

sombre year that lies ahead. If economic recovery is to be fostered, more jobs must be created, public finances must be controlled, and business confidence must be lifted. This economic growth scenario, or the lack of it, begs the question, what can PHEIs incorporate from the strategies applied by modern commercial enterprises outside of education to ensure growth, sustainability, and operational efficiency amid business disruptions and, in turn, the broader socio-economic context?

2.11 Conclusion

Efforts have been made to offer insights into what HE can do to transition into a successful and sustainable institute. The literature reviewed chapter reviewed theory and literature, which positioned and formed the study's research questions and design and identified gaps in knowledge relevant to the scope of this study, focusing on the primary constructs pertinent to the research topic. A historical summary of the development of these constructs was presented to show the extent to which this subject is of potential interest to business leaders. Even though the theory has limitations, the researcher presented frameworks and highlighted the researcher's thoughts and views on each and their significance for this study. The literature review reveals some common themes that present novel and sometimes overlapping perspectives regarding success and sustainability in organisations with a competitive advantage. The study and analysis also demonstrated the various research attempts on the subject matter, including the different approaches adopted by researchers over the past three decades.

This review also identified weaknesses and empirical gaps within and across the current frameworks. These give a solid foundation for further investigation. There is a chance to make a significant contribution to the development of constructs. As they positioned educational approaches in South Africa, the author investigated the research context and national education policy. These give a solid foundation for further investigation. There is a chance to make a significant contribution to construction development. As they positioned educational approaches in South Africa, the author investigated the research context and national education policy. Various definitions and theories relating to business strategies and disruptions are discussed in a constructivist paradigm. The study examined the nature of HE and its present local and global environment. The literature review findings will guide the methodology and research design presented in subsequent chapters.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter two of this study provided an in-depth exploration of the existing literature on HE as a business and the factors driving business success. The review focused on best practices for navigating business disruptions and future-proof businesses and people, particularly on agile leadership, business innovation, and people. This chapter now turns to the research design and methodology used in this study, which involved a qualitative data collection and analysis approach. This chapter aims to articulate the research paradigm, data collection methods, and data analysis approach, as Hart (1998) defined. By describing the methodology used, readers can evaluate the appropriateness of the approach and the techniques employed to gather data. The chapter also addresses issues of trustworthiness and ethics in justifying the research as a meaningful contribution to knowledge.

The study focused on gaining an understanding of both the relevant literature and the perspectives of research participants. The research design and method contribute to the dependability of the research by providing transparency into the research process. The study involved two phases, with the first phase consisting of a detailed literature review conducted in parallel with the second phase, which involved empirical research and subsequent data analysis. Empirical research was conducted by conducting interviews and utilising data collection methods rooted in inductive reasoning. Additionally, specific contexts were explored through detailed, thick descriptions of related phenomena. Non-random purposive sampling, emergent and flexible designs, and multiple data collection methods were utilised to collect naturally emerging data (Creswell, 2015; Young & Babchuk, 2019).

The study adopts an interpretive approach focusing on refining the context of qualitative research design. The researcher's roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and described. The study explores the current state of strategic business management practices for resilience within PHEIs in a developing socio-economic context. The purpose is to design a strategic framework that supports PHEIs in building resilience through innovative business practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment.

3.2 Research Questions

The principal research question is:

1. What specific gaps or areas for improvement in business resilience can be identified in Private HE Institutions (PHEIs) operating in a developing socio-economic context,

and how can a strategic framework based on innovative business practices be designed to help them build resilience and thrive in a rapidly changing environment?

The research suggests the following sub-questions to explain and examine the primary research questions:

1. Why do PHEIs in a developing socio-economic context need to adopt innovative business practices to build resilience and thrive in a rapidly changing environment?
2. Which business strategies can PHEIs adopt from successful enterprises outside of education?
3. How does the New World of Work impact the PHEI sector in South Africa?
4. What effective proactive strategies do PHEIs utilise to navigate business disruptions?
5. How do PHEIs maintain their resilience and profitability while delivering an exceptional educational experience?
6. What business strategies and strategic frameworks can PHEIs adopt from successful enterprises outside of education to foster innovation, agility, build resilience, and succeed in a disruptive environment?

In the previous chapter, the researcher highlighted that conceptual framework plays a vital role in informing the design of an inquiry. According to Miles and Huberman (1994:18), a conceptual framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied: the key factors, constructs or variables and the presumed relationships among them. It represents the researcher's synthesis of relevant literature on explaining a phenomenon, coupled with the researcher's experience of the phenomenon in question. The conceptual framework thus helps to delimit the study by providing the researcher with a map of the phenomenon under investigation (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Maxwell (2017) explains that the conceptual framework is primarily a set of concepts and ideas and that the proposed relationships are related to the phenomenon under investigation. Among other things, it helps the researcher to select appropriate research methods. Roundy, Bradshaw, and Brockman (2018) support qualitative methods for studying complex issues because the flexibility offered by methods such as semi-structured interviews allow for a rich set of data to be collected. The next step is to describe the strategy or plan to answer the research question. This chapter accordingly describes the research design and methodology that the researcher followed.

3.3 Research Design and Methodology

The research is designed with a qualitative approach as the primary methodology. Qualitative research focuses on words rather than numbers and the transmission of meaning from the words to construct a meaningful picture without compromising richness and dimensionality (Bryman, 2012; Leung, 2015). Yilmaz (2013) defines qualitative research as 'an emergent,

inductive, interpretive and naturalistic approach to studying people, cases, phenomena, social situations and processes in their natural settings to reveal in descriptive terms the meanings that people attach to their experiences of the world'. While human emotions and perspectives from subjects and researchers are considered undesirable biases and confounding results in quantitative research, the same elements are essential and unavoidable in qualitative research, adding depth, meaning and richness to the findings (Leung, 2015).

The interpretive worldview aligns with the qualitative research approach, which prioritises understanding the perspectives and meanings of participants. The qualitative approach requires the research to report on the values and assumptions of 'participants,' explore the participants' context, and interact actively with them where possible (Creswell, 2015; 2018). In a dynamic socio-economic context, this study examines the current state of business management or overall strategies for business resilience inside PHEIs. The study aims to assist PHEIs in building strength by establishing innovative business practices that promote agility amid disruptions in a socio-economic context. This is in a specific context meaning that the current phenomenon under investigation in this study is business disruption, with selected individuals with a background in either contemporary commercial business or PHEIs taking part. Some individuals may have experience working in private HE, while others may have none. This is similar to 'knowledge by 'description' or 'knowledge by 'acquaintance' from an epistemological perspective.

Following Taylor, DeVault, and Bogdan's (2016) approach to methodology regarding how problems are treated, and research is conducted, this study uses a qualitative theoretical perspective to incorporate a phenomenological approach, prioritising the participants' views and experiences. This study produces descriptive data that aids in understanding participant beliefs and theories of action (Taylor, DeVault, & Bogdan, 2016). It is inductive, as it tries to build concepts, insights, and knowledge from the data rather than testing hypotheses. Inductive reasoning links observations and theory to provide insights that may apply beyond the sample of people interviewed (Given, 2008). Hence the researcher started with a literature review before engaging in data collection. The literature identified the existing gap regarding research design and methodology and, therefore, informed the research questions to be used to gather data. As a result, the study followed an emerging approach that allowed the research questions to become more clearly defined during the survey's operation based on feedback and participant viewpoints at each stage (Creswell, 2018). Additional data is collected to clarify or corroborate identified findings regarding the study context, and 'participants' perspectives are further probed.

Furthermore, an interpretive paradigm informs the researcher's qualitative approach in this study. Piaget (1952, 1970) introduced the interpretivism paradigm, which emphasises the importance of 'participants' views and exposes the meaning of individually held within-

participant views (Creswell, 2018). Interpretivism aims to document how people construct their worlds, drawing on various experiences, learning meanings, and interpreting each situation (Taylor, DeVault & Bogdan, 2016) and because it ignores meaning and values, a scientific-positivist method had little use in this type of research. An interpretive paradigm permits a review of methodology that incorporates critical reflection methods, particularly reflexivity in research, on why the methods are appropriate to the nature of the research and the research question, as well as a dialogue with research participants to interpret the current business management strategies status quo. As a result, unexpected facts emerged more transparently during the investigation, allowing for disclosing a complicated or "deep" description within a given context.

Moustakas (1994) noted that a phenomenological case study is a research method that explores an individual's or a group of individuals' subjective experiences and perceptions of a particular phenomenon. The approach aims to understand how people experience and interpret the world around them rather than focusing on objective facts or data. In a phenomenological case study, the researcher typically conducts in-depth interviews with the participant(s) to understand their lived experiences, feelings, and thoughts related to the studied phenomenon. The data analysis involves identifying recurring themes and patterns from the participant's accounts.

A phenomenological case study aims to provide a detailed and rich description of the phenomenon being studied from the participant's perspective. Researchers often present the findings as narrative accounts that emphasise the experiences of the participant(s) and aim to provide a platform for their subjective understanding of the phenomenon. Using a phenomenological case study, the researcher adopted a detailed view of research participants in the form of words through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Using a case study allowed for a more in-depth examination of a few people's lived experiences within a phenomenon.

The researcher used the onion-like approach to summarise the research design, as Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016) described. Researchers can investigate various options, paradigms, strategies, and stages (see Figure 11 below). The multiple layers of the research onion serve as a foundation for considering the researcher's philosophical orientation, the research method taken, appropriate research strategies, the study durations under consideration, and the data collection procedures used. This structured yet flexible methodology takes a dynamic approach to arrive at the results. It is iterative and requires a nonlinear, back-and-forth interaction between data collection and analysis (Chun Tie, Birks & Francis, 2019). What follows is an explanation of the concurrent role of the qualitative researcher, phenomenology case study, research assumptions, population and sampling, data collection and analysis undertaken for this study to respond to the research question. Adapted from Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, Figure 11 depicts the research onion (2016).

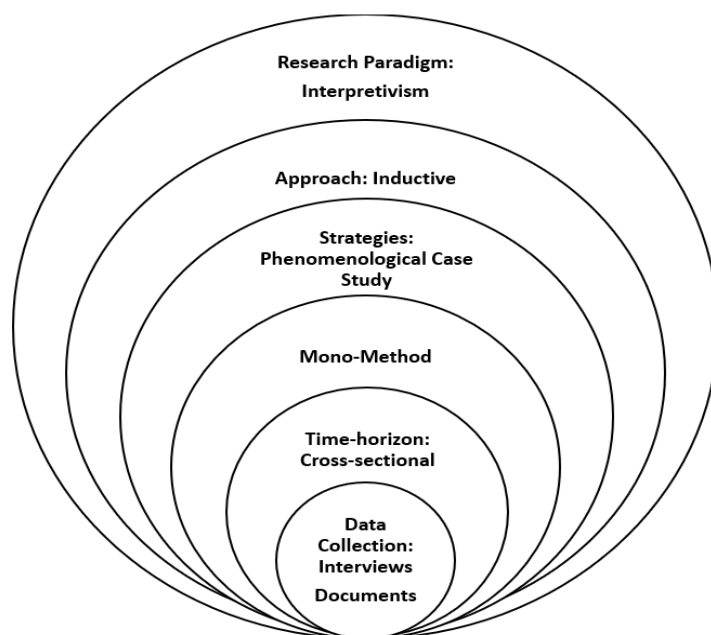


Figure 11: Research Onion (source: Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016)

3.3.1 Qualitative Research

According to Yilmaz (2013:312), qualitative research is "an emergent, inductive, interpretivism, and naturalistic approach to studying people, cases, phenomena, social situations, and processes in their natural settings. This reveals the meanings in descriptive terms people attach to their experiences of the world." The transmission of meaning originating from the terms is at the heart of qualitative research, focusing on words rather than numbers to generate a meaningful picture without sacrificing richness and depth (Bryman, 2012; Leung, 2015). While human emotions and viewpoints from participants and researchers are regarded as unwanted biases in quantitative research, qualitative research considers these components necessary and unavoidable, providing depth, significance, and richness to the findings (Leung, 2015).

Qualitative research focuses on participants' inquiry and interpretation of social reality to understand it. The ontological position is that social features result from individual interactions rather than facts separate from the people who created them (Bryman, 2012). According to various researchers, such as Creswell (2018), the essence of qualitative research is as follows: - it is a way of delving into and grasping the meaning given to a social or human issue by individuals or organisations. As a result, knowledge is socially produced rather than independent of the knower, and reality is neither static nor fixed (Yilmaz, 2013). Many realities emerge because of distinct subjective perceptions and societal backgrounds, introducing numerous interpretations or perspectives on any event or scenario (Creswell,

2014). The qualitative research approach tries to generalise by describing a specific situation. As a result, the reader must draw connections between the study and their status (Borrego, Elliot, & Amelink, 2009; Yilmaz, 2013). It looks for answers to "what," "why," and "how" questions like "How does one phenomenon affect another?" (Borrego *et al.*, 2009; Yilmaz, 2013).

Qualitative research focuses on participants' inquiry and interpretation of social reality to understand it. This "inside" approach necessitates that the researcher evaluates the more comprehensive picture, considering behaviours and other components such as events, processes, situations, and the like that vary over time and are context specific (Evered & Louis, 1981; Ospina, 2004). Creswell (2018) summarises qualitative research effectively: 'Assumptions, a worldview, the potential use of a theoretical lens, and the exploration of research questions that seek to understand the meaning that individuals or groups attach to a social or human situation are all part of qualitative research.' According to qualitative researchers, data is acquired in a natural context sensitive to the people and places being researched, and data processing is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of the participants, the researcher's reflexivity, and a clear description and interpretation of the situation, which either enriches the literature or signals a call to action.'

Based on the beginning premise, the aspects of qualitative research that made it appealing and relevant to this study were performed in its natural setting (naturalistic worldview). The subject under inquiry is not disconnected from its context (Keele, 2012). The primary data-gathering and giving instruments are the researchers and other human participants, intuitive or felt knowledge. Appreciating and interpreting the complexity of interactions and data obtained at the abstract or non-verbal level is crucial (Keele, 2012). Gaining insights into individuals' behaviour can be achieved by connecting verbal and nonverbal cues. Such an approach is essential for this study, as comprehending the subjective lived experiences of those involved is vital to understanding the challenges they faced and the strategies they employed to overcome them. The different ways participants understand reality diversified the uncovered perspectives (Keele, 2012). The researcher captured multiple facts related to current strategies employed by PHEIs through semi-structured interviews. Qualitative research design is best for the present study as it explores the current state of strategic business management practices for resilience within PHEIs in a developing socio-economic context.

3.3.2 Qualitative Researcher: A Vital Role in the Research Process

In a qualitative study, the researcher's principal role is the primary instrument for data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). When making decisions, the researcher must be cognisant of the impact of context (Henning *et al.*,

2014). The researcher's ontology, epistemology, and methodology, according to Graue (2016), impact the researcher's role, as highlighted above. While the researcher's history, theories of praxis, ontology, and epistemology impact this study, the researcher strives for responsibility in gathering and analysing the data. Triangulation, transparency, methodology, and participants were used in this study. According to Singh (2017), researchers aware of their ontological, epistemological, and phenomenological perspectives will account for subjectivity in their research designs and findings. As a result, phenomenological reduction conceptions are supported. To convey the participants' perceptions and experiences, the researcher must perceive, investigate, and judge the contents of the phenomenon's experiences.

3.3.3 Phenomenological Case Study

Phenomenology is a philosophy, investigation, and process applied in qualitative research approaches (Saevi, 2017). Phenomenology has been used in social scientific, educational, and business management research (Dall'Alba, 2017; Theodoridis, 2014; Yildiz & Gizir, 2018). This is not a new methodological approach; it has been around for almost three decades. According to Sanders (1982) and Groenewald (2004), phenomenology is characterised as studying conscious phenomena and analysing experiences lived, explained, and theorised. According to Saevi (2017), phenomenology entails conducting educational and business management research to investigate questions in their context. The researchers also pointed out that phenomenology and case studies are complicated and frequently debated as qualitative research methodologies, leading to some scholars categorising qualitative case studies.

According to Yildar and Gizir (2018), phenomenology concerns how humans see a thing, remember it, judge it and relate it to others, and transfer their experiences to their minds. Furthermore, according to Gibson and Hanes (2003), the philosophical assumption underlying phenomenology is that people seek meaning from their backgrounds and other people's experiences. This makes this method suited to an interpretive paradigm used in this study. According to the authors, this meaning leads to a socially constructed reality, corresponding to Smith's description of knowledge as a matter of agreement within a socially and historically constrained environment (1983). The authors suggested that the research participants' experiences are connected to the phenomenon. Business Leaders provided these experiences, Consultants, Financial Managers, IT specialists, Quality Assurance Managers, Instructional Designers, Curriculum Designers, Business Development Managers, Business Strategists, and Team Leaders who guided PHEIs and contemporary business strategy. Thus, the researcher will use a phenomenological case study as a conceptual methodology within an interpretive paradigm while keeping their perspectives in mind.

A case study is an in-depth qualitative research method that examines phenomena or occurrences in their natural setting (Hijmans & Wester, 2010). Case studies are conducted in

real-life situations, where sensations and context are not always clearly separated and thus developed within the study inquiry due to the case's boundaries. Timmons and Cairns (2010) defined the case study methodology as versatile. It enables a researcher to investigate various events ranging from the common to the unusual and straightforward to complex interactions. According to Timmons and Cairns (2010), the case study approach is versatile in analysing constructs not anticipated in the researcher's original goals. In addition, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), a case study can draw from multiple data sources, including participants who hold various positions in PHEIs, or contemporary businesses present inside the settings. The case study technique has been recognised as the most appropriate method of attaining insight for this study, allowing for an in-depth exploration of a few individuals' lived experiences with the phenomenon. The current phenomenon under investigation in this study is business disruption, with selected individuals with a background in either contemporary commercial business or private HEIs taking part. Some individuals may have experience working in private HE, while others may have none. Participants should have experienced specific disruptions in HE or contemporary business during this time that would have affected their business or institution. The researcher was interested in the participants' views and lived experiences regarding these disruptions and how their institutions and companies responded to them.

In addition, Theodoridis (2014) argues that a case study method investigates decision-making challenges. This allows the researcher to focus on a particular group of players while exploring their perspectives. In-depth interviews are a common way to perform phenomenological research, and they are usually accompanied by other material like documents or observations. Participants are asked two broad general questions: "what have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon?" and "what context of situations have typically influenced your experiences?". Creswell endorses a systematic approach to phenomenological case studies, which Moustakas (1994) proposed and Theodoridis (2014) adopted. This method asks participants two general questions: "what have you experienced in terms of the phenomenon?" and "what contextual situations have typically influenced your experiences?"

Sanders (1982), who stated that a phenomenological research paradigm includes setting the limitations of what and who should be examined, backs up this claim. Furthermore, Creswell (2018) emphasises the importance of defining a case that can be confined or specified within specific criteria in case of study research, defined as the in-depth analysis of a bound system inside a real-life contemporary context or setting (such as a particular place and time). According to Creswell (2017; 2018), a case may refer to a single individual or a group of individuals, but what is being discussed may determine the case's bounds and the scope of the study. A phenomenological case study, according to Theodoridis (2014), can include six steps: the construction of the lifeworld, which consists of a literature review and the development of an interview schedule; the interviewing; an exploration of intentionality,

which includes the thematic analysis; validation of the transcribed data by interviewees, which builds trust and achieves intersubjectivity; and phenomenological reduction, which consists of the use of feedback with other phenomenological case studies. Moustakas (1994) says that the last stages of theory development are when researchers summarise the entire research and assess probable constraints. The author explains how the researcher should go back to the literature review and distinguish findings from previous research, outline a future research project that would advance knowledge on the topic, and discuss the investigation's results regarding social meanings and implications for personal and professional values.

However, an additional step was incorporated in the construction of guidelines and the development of a resilience framework that responds to the established phenomenon and insights and aligns seamlessly with the existing literature. The development of this resilience and agility framework constitutes an original contribution to the new body of knowledge. Consequently, this inquiry aspires to accomplish what Moustakas (1994) refers to as the ultimate objective of phenomenological investigation: where the researcher evolves into an expert on the phenomenon, the research delineates the nature and findings of previous studies, the research report generates novel knowledge on the subject, and the research outlines the types of future investigations that would deepen and expand the understanding of the phenomenon.

Methodological assumptions refer to the researcher's beliefs and assumptions regarding the methods employed in qualitative research (Creswell, 2018). These assumptions are explicitly stated to clarify the alignment between the qualitative research approach, an interpretivist approach, and the phenomenological case study method, thereby enhancing the reliability of the research. This study adopted an inductive approach for data analysis, emphasising the development of concepts, insights, and understanding from the data rather than testing data against pre-existing hypotheses. The inductive approach is a fundamental characteristic of qualitative research and aligns with the phenomenological approach (Creswell, 2015; Young & Babchuk, 2019). Inductive reasoning aims to establish connections between observations and theory to derive insights and theories that can be applied beyond the sample of participants interviewed (Given, 2008:429). Guided by Given's definition of the inductive process, this research extends beyond mere understanding and strives for practical application, thereby facilitating the achievement of the research objective.

By adopting an interpretivist approach to learning, this study examines the influence of context in both the formulation of interview questions and data analysis. In line with the views of authors such as Mascolo and Fischer (2015), who argue for the importance of considering the role of context, this research recognises that individuals adapt their actions based on contextual factors and the support available for skilled performance. To ensure systematic and coherent integration of the literature, the research addresses identified gaps and thematically incorporates them into the data analysis. Consequently, the literature review

explores theories pertaining to resilience, the evolving nature of work, and disruptors impacting Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs), thereby informing the data collection process at the research site.

In the methodological framework of a phenomenological case study design, phenomenology encompasses four key concepts: internality, lifeworld, intersubjectivity, and phenomenological reduction. Building on contextual considerations, this study delves into the lived experiences of research participants within a specific context, recognising that these experiences may be influenced or constrained by the context itself. This exploration extends further into the development of a resilience and agility framework. Moustakas (1994) asserts that phenomenological research relies on firsthand accounts of life experiences as evidence. Therefore, this research draws on comprehensive and up-to-date literature to inform the interpretation of the data and the descriptions of participants' lived experiences in the interviews. This approach facilitates the development of a conceptual framework that serves as a guide for the study.

3.4 Research Assumptions

According to Creswell (2018), the researcher's belief about the qualitative research methodology is the research assumption. Rather than testing data against a specific hypothesis, the current study aimed to build concepts, insights, and knowledge from the data gathered and analysed. An inductive technique, as is a phenomenological approach, is a crucial feature of qualitative research (Creswell, 2015, 2018; Young & Babchuk, 2019). Inductive reasoning links literature, data gathered, observations and theory to provide insights and perspectives "intended to apply beyond the sample of individuals interviewed" (Given, 2008:429). The definition of the inductive process provided the study with guidance to move beyond a mere understanding of the topic towards its application, ultimately facilitating the achievement of the research objective.

Mascolo and Fischer (2015:114) believe that the inquiry should consider the role of context and that people modify their activities depending on context and support for competent performance. Using an interpretive approach, the researcher investigated the impact of the setting in both the interview questions and the data analysis. From contextual considerations, the study progressed to participants' lived experiences as functioning within a specific context and informed or constrained by the context, then extending this to the evidence of practice. According to Moustakas (1994:84), evidence from phenomenological research comes from first-person accounts of life events. The study described how individuals involved in current and potential future business strategies implement these strategies to remain sustainable and operationally efficient and enhance business growth amid business disruption environments. These have been developed, redesigned, and adapted to meet disruptive environments and more current concepts that drive business success and sustainability to

inform the interpretation of the data and participants' lived experiences as described in the captured data from the participants.

The following section describes the sampling strategy employed based on the qualitative approach.

3.5 Population and Sampling

The research design is complete with a sampling approach. According to Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston (2014), clearly outlining the study's aim, which is to explore the current state of strategic business management practices for business resilience within PHEIs in a developing socio-economic context, will have an impact on the value of the data obtained, the type of analysis, and the generalizability of the findings. Given this context, the first step is to define the target population or sample universe. After that, to design a strategic framework to support PHEIs building resilience by establishing innovative business practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment. The researcher built on earlier assumptions about the scope of the study. The participants in the study involved Business Leaders, Industry Consultants, Financial Managers, IT specialists, Quality Assurance Managers, Instructional Designers, Curriculum Designers, Business Development Managers, Business Strategists, and Team Leaders within PHEIs and contemporary businesses. The initial sampling plan involved a purposive selection of fifteen to twenty (15 - 20) key participants in Gauteng, South Africa. The primary reason for selecting this sampling frame was convenience regarding the time, finances, and information available to the researcher.

Sample sizes for qualitative studies are often small (when compared to quantitative studies). The main reasons for this include (i) diminishing returns – the study reaches a point where more data does not necessarily mean more information. The rationale is that one manifestation of a piece of data must ensure that it becomes part of the analysis framework. Consequently, frequencies are less critical in qualitative studies as one occurrence of the data is potentially as beneficial as many in understanding the rationale behind an issue (Mason, 2010); (ii) the main indicator of sample size in qualitative research is often the point at which redundancy or theoretical saturation of the data is achieved (Law, Stewart, Letts, Pollock, Bosch & Westmorland, 1998). Data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study; when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained, and when further coding is no longer feasible (Fusch & Ness, 2015); and (iii) the labour-intensive nature of qualitative research means that analysing a large sample can be time-consuming and often impractical (Mason, 2010).

3.5.1 Purposive Sampling

Figure 12 illustrates a group of non-probability sampling techniques: purposive sampling. This method, also known as judgmental selective or subjective sampling, focuses on the

researcher's judgment in choosing the units of analysis, such as interview participants. As shown in Figure 12 below, purposive sampling collects non-probability sampling approaches (Dudovskiy, 2016).

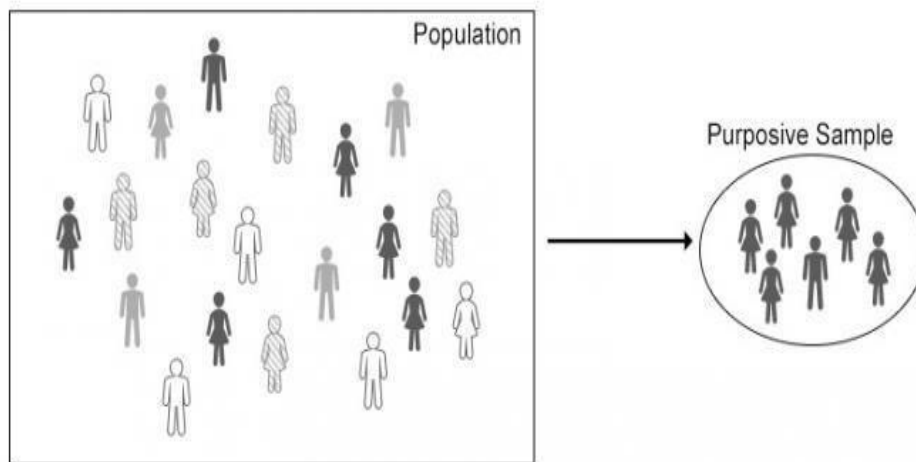


Figure 12: Purposive sampling (source: Dudovskiy, 2016)

Purposive sampling's dynamism is based on selecting information-rich examples for in-depth investigation; that is, one can learn much about the research's most important concerns (Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling is the deliberate selection of participants (also known as informants) in which the researcher determines what information is required and seeks out people (groups or individuals) who are able and willing to provide it based on their knowledge and lived experiences (Tongco, 2007). The researcher chose the sample units because they fit essential criteria that will allow the researcher to fully explore and comprehend the central themes and topics they desire to investigate. These may be socio-demographic characteristics or relate to specific experiences (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014). In addition to knowledge and expertise, Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, and Hoagwood (2015) note the importance of the ability of these information-rich sources to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner.

In addition, purposeful sampling gives the researcher the first set of data to analyse. The researcher purposively selected participants that could answer the research questions from different participants/individuals briefly mentioned above. In the case of this study, the target population or sample selected consisted of individuals represented at least in one of the different positions. The participants chosen for this study have worked in their current place of employment in HE or contemporary business for at least five years. During this time, participants have experienced specific disruptions in HE and contemporary business that have affected the institution and business they worked for. The researcher aimed to explore the perspectives and lived experiences of the participants regarding the disruptions they

encountered, as well as how the institutions and businesses they are affiliated with address such disruptions. The participants were divided into the following categories: (i) Strata 1: Middle Management [Manco] level; (ii) Strata 2: Senior Management [EXCO] level and (iii) Strata 3: Industry Consultants – includes retired or semi-retired who either held an executive or business leader position or consulted within an Institution or other contemporary business. Individual interviews were conducted and lasted approximately 45 and 60 minutes. The researcher sent a personal invitation and letter outlining the purpose of the study and obtained separate consent from individuals signing a confidentiality letter to this effect. All interviews were recorded using an audio recorder and later transcribed.

Qualitative researchers agree there needs to be a consensus on how many participants are enough to make up a sample population. As Baker and Edwards (2012) explained, the sample size depends on many factors relating to methodological, epistemological, and practical issues. According to Morse (2000), the more superb the usability of the data collected from each participant, the fewer the participants required. These are all critical factors to consider when conducting research. The scope of the study should be clearly defined and focused on a specific question or hypothesis. The subject's nature, including its complexity and accessibility, can affect the feasibility and potential outcomes of the research. The data quality is crucial for ensuring the reliability and validity of the research findings. And the researcher should carefully choose the study design to address the research question and produce reliable results.

Considering the parameters discussed above, the researcher may become aware that the level and nature of questions in a qualitative interview influence the richness of the generated data (Ogden & Cornwell, 2010). Therefore, the researcher in this study structured as many open-ended questions as possible to cover the scope, research objectives and nature of the topic. Ogden and Cornwell (2010) posit that empirical research shows that open-ended questions produce rich data. Keeping this in mind, the researcher posed almost all open-ended questions in the semi-structured interviews. Other specific numerical recommendations have also been identified from the guidance given above. For example, Clarke and Braun (2013) recommend a sample size of 15 to 20 interviews for a PhD study. The work produced by Hennink, Kaiser and Marconi (2017) on code saturation vs meaning saturation concurs with the results produced by Guest *et al.*, (2006), who identified that data saturation occurred between seven and twelve interviews (Hennink *et al.*, 2017). Hennink (2017) also concurs with Namey, Guest, McKenna, and Chen (2016), who identified that saturation occurred between eight and twenty-five interviews, depending on the saturation level. Purposive sampling entails the deliberate selection of research subjects well-versed in material related to the study's topic. Its goal is to learn more about the phenomenon at hand, not to make an empirical generalisation from a sample to the entire population (Patton, 2002).

3.5.2 Purposive Sampling Techniques

Three major categories of purposive sampling procedures are described by Teddlie and Yu (2007). In sampling for representativeness, the goal is to select a sample that closely resembles the larger population being studied. This can involve using different sampling strategies, such as extreme or deviant case sampling, to identify particularly relevant cases to the research question. In the second category, individual cases or specific groups of patients are the focus of the inquiry. This can involve using necessary case sampling to select cases essential for understanding the research question or special or unique case sampling to focus on particularly noteworthy cases. Finally, sequential sampling involves a gradual selection process to build the sample over time. Purposive sampling is suitable when the research aims to generate a theory or when the sample evolves as data is collected, such as in snowball sampling. It is beneficial for selecting a sample that aligns with the research's specific goals.

There are a variety of purposive sampling procedures, each of which is meant to produce different sorts of sample composition depending on the study's goals and scope. For example, due to the similarity of situations or people, homogeneous samples are picked to provide a detailed picture of a particular phenomenon in the selection (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014). On the other hand, heterogeneous sampling is when an intentional technique covers vastly different topics. The goal is to find common threads that run through many cases or people (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014). The researcher used critical case sampling in this investigation. Cases are chosen for essential case sampling because they demonstrate a specific position or are necessary for delivering a process or operation. According to the logic, these situations will be "essential" to any knowledge provided by the research (Ritchie *et al.*, 2014). 'Critical cases can make a strong argument or are important in the grand scheme of things for whatever reason' (Patton, 1990:174).

This sampling method allows for logical (rather than statistical) generalisation based on the weight of the evidence gathered during the investigation of the critical case. Patton (2002:174) identifies two crucial markers of the presence of a vital point: a significant participant's judgement that "if it happens there, it will happen anywhere" and vice versa, or the declaration that "if one group is having problems, we can be sure all the groups are having problems." Critical case sampling is helpful when a research budget is restricted because it focuses on subjects most likely to provide essential information (Lund Research, 2012). For example, suppose resources limit the evaluation to only one site. In that case, selecting the site to generate the most information will make strategic sense and significantly impact knowledge growth (Patton, 2002).

Critical case sampling is used when a study must acquire information from people with specific expertise, such as crucial participants (Lund Research, 2012). 'Key participants are those whose social positions in a research setting provide them with more extensive, detailed, or privileged knowledge of other people, processes, or happenings than ordinary people, and

who are thus valuable sources of information to a researcher, particularly in the early stages of a project' (Payne & Payne, 2004:134). The researcher actively chooses key participants because of a crucial or different viewpoint or standing in a culture or organisation and knowledge of the examined problem. To summarise, because the researcher judged the typical or representative responses of the phenomenon under examination, the researcher chose the purposive sample strategy, emphasising crucial cases. Because of their personal experience, the researcher selected knowledgeable volunteers for the study. Participant's data will be expected to be content-rich, necessitating the use of informants who can supply the most information and have the most significant impact on knowledge production. It was convenient and cost-effective because the researcher had access to resources (networks and information) relevant to the study due to their employment within a PHEI.

Once the researcher determined specific participants, semi-structured interviews were used to engage them to collect the necessary data.

3.6 Data Collection: Semi-structured Interviews

In-depth, semi-structured interviews allowed participants to express their thoughts, insights, attitudes, and lived experiences related to the study's topic. The researcher chose this method because it could give the researcher a deeper understanding of the participants' ideas, feelings, and relevant lived experiences (Naidoo, 2007). The semi-structured interview lends itself to ongoing change, allowing the interviewer to bring up new concerns and questions as they occur while also reducing the number of unproductive inquiries. On the other hand, conducting interviews to gather data is not difficult. To explore the participant's views, this research employed semi-structured interviews to collect data in spoken words. In phenomenological approaches, interviewing is considered a 'typical technique' (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Siedmann (2013:9) writes that the purpose of an interview is to "understand the lived experience of other people and the meaning that they make of that experience".

Siedmann (2013) clarifies that if a researcher's goal is to understand the participants' views and experiences regarding the disruptions and how the institutions, they worked for responded, then interviewing provides a necessary and sufficient mode of inquiry. From an interpretivist paradigm, this makes interviewing an appropriate part of the research design in exploring the current state of business management practices for business resilience within PHEIs in a developing socio-economic context. The researcher used a semi-structured interview to support other data, and this process commences with the preparation of interview questions. Sanders (1982) argued that the phenomenological approach explores participants' lived experiences in-depth. It is better to start with fewer questions and probe intensively rather than ask too many questions to get a better meaning.

The researcher followed the qualitative approach. The approach to interviewing participants modelled itself more on a normal conversation than a fixed formal question-and-answer exchange. An interview is consistent with an interpretivist paradigm. Taylor, DeVault and Bogdan (2016) describe an interview as a form of social interaction within which the participants and interviewer are face-to-face or virtually explore the meanings of each other's words, expressions, and gestures. As interviews with participants progressed, their answers were probed and clarified, allowing new lines of enquiry to emerge. This means that an interview question guide was used as a starting point (refer to Annexure A), and then the researcher probed participants' answers with a conversational approach. The researcher informed the direction of probing by researcher curiosity (as consistent with the researcher as the instrument) and participant responses. As a result, there was some expected variation in interviews with the different research participants. Data emerged in the form of verbal feedback. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) propose that the personal interview is one of the critical data collection processes for phenomenological studies. In this research design, the interviews were semi-structured to standardise question themes and allow probing of answers or exploration of solutions. The interviews were conducted virtually via MS Teams. The researcher planned only one interview per research participant in the initial design.

A phenomenological case study aimed to explore how research participants experience phenomena (within the lifeworld) and who they are about the phenomena. So, participants were encouraged to provide rich (detailed) descriptions of their experiences (Gibson & Hanes, 2003) and their meaning-making processes through probing questions. Taylor, DeVault and Bogdan (2016:102) comment that interviewing is flexible and dynamic within a qualitative approach. They also point out that using non-standardised and open-ended questioning directs an interview towards understanding participant perspectives in their own words. This type of interview is modelled after "a conversation between equals rather than a formal question and answer exchange" (Taylor, DeVault & Bogdan, 2016:102). Initially, in such an interview, the interviewer attempts to establish rapport with participants and enable them to reveal what is important to them before focusing on research interests (Taylor, DeVault & Bogdan 2016:102). The research explores participants' views within this approach but attempts to remain non-judgmental (Taylor, DeVault & Bogdan, 2016:116). This strategy encourages participants' honesty (Shenton, 2004:67), as participants are encouraged to contribute their ideas without image management.

Taylor, DeVault and Bogdan (2016) suggest that interviewing is appropriate where the research interests are well-defined, where interviewing allows access, where there are time constraints, and where a researcher is interested in understanding a range of participants. The limitations include the following: that participants may say something different to what they do; that the language used by a participant may be misunderstood if the words used are not universally understood in the same way conceptually; and that participants may be unable to articulate some of their thinking and experiences (Taylor, DeVault & Bogdan, 2016).

The researcher can address these through strategies that lessen these limitations, such as confirming a participant's meaning using specific terms and triangulation through related documents and sources. However, the researcher may not fully mitigate these limitations to achieve trustworthiness, which is common in this type of research. Table 8 shows the specifics of certain potential issues and mitigation options.

Table 8: Highlights the Interview Challenges (source: Myers, 2013)

Problem	Description	Amelioration
Artificiality	The interviewer may be asked to interview a topic unfamiliar to them. Furthermore, participants are frequently requested to express or generate opinions under time constraints.	Minimising social dissonance will reduce the participant's discomfort with the manufactured situation. This can range from the researcher's appearance to the use of suitable language and jargon.
Lack of trust	Interviewees may choose not to disclose information that they deem "sensitive." The data collection is incomplete if this data is potentially essential to the study.	Indirect inquiries, which remove the close relationship with the participants, could help overcome this obstacle. Furthermore, by focusing on the subject's reality rather than imposing it on the researchers, echoing the participants' words and phrases could assist in bridging the trust gap.
Time constraints	Due to time constraints imposed on the interview, may collect inadequate data due to necessity or circumstance. Furthermore, because participants generate opinions under time constraints, it may result in incorrect or unreliable information.	The semi-structured interview tool is designed to allow for some improvisation and flexibility. The researcher's judgment of the progress will determine the researcher's interviewing strategy. For example, if necessary, the researcher will investigate themes of interest more in-depth or end a line of questioning when the dialogue appears to have achieved saturation or a decline in energy levels.

Elite bias	Interviewing a few high-ranking individuals could lead to a lack of comprehension of the issue.	The participants were Business Leaders, Industry Consultants, Financial Managers, IT specialists, Quality Assurance Managers, Instructional Designers, Curriculum Designers, Business Development Managers, Business Strategists, and Team Leaders.
Hawthorne effect	Interviews are intrusive by nature and have the potential to change the situation. The interviewer is not a faceless, impersonal entity; they are participants in the study and have the potential to influence it.	The researcher will try to give a neutral and unbiased perspective on the study. This may help participants avoid customising their responses to what they believe the researcher wants to hear.
Creating new knowledge	The interviewer develops the tale and reflects on problems they may not have openly examined before in reaction to the interviewee.	The researcher will compile the data gathered via the interview process and give equal weight to all conclusions. The researcher will take no preventative steps or decisions to eliminate "meaningless" data.

This research employed semi-structured interviews as the primary method for collecting data, allowing participants to express their views through spoken words. In phenomenological approaches, interviewing is recognised as a common and essential technique (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). According to Siedmann (2013), an interview aims to understand individuals' lived experiences and the meaning they attribute to those experiences. Interviewing is a necessary and sufficient mode of inquiry for researchers seeking to comprehend the meaning individuals involved in education derive from their experiences (Siedmann, 2013). From an interpretivist paradigm, interviewing is a suitable component of the research design when exploring the need for business leaders to adopt innovative practices to build resilience and thrive in a rapidly changing environment. A semi-structured interview approach complemented other data collection methods, which commenced by preparing interview questions. Sanders (1982) argues that, given the focus on an in-depth exploration of lived experiences in phenomenological approaches, it is preferable, to begin with a smaller number of questions and delve deeply into those areas rather than overwhelming participants with too many questions.

Adhering to the qualitative approach, the interviewing method in this research was designed to resemble a natural conversation rather than a rigid question-and-answer exchange (Taylor, DeVault & Bogdan, 2016). This approach aligns with the interpretivist paradigm, as described by Taylor, DeVault, and Bogdan (2016), where interviews are seen as social interactions in which participants and the interviewer engage face-to-face to explore the meanings behind each other's words, expressions, and gestures. Participant responses were probed and clarified throughout the interviews, allowing for new lines of inquiry. While an interview question guide (refer to Annexure C) served as a starting point, the conversation took a conversational approach, probing guided by the researcher's curiosity (as the research instrument) and the participants' responses. Consequently, some variation was expected in the interviews with different research participants. The data collected took the form of verbal feedback. As McMillan and Schumacher (2010) highlighted, personal interviews play a pivotal role in phenomenological studies as a key data collection method. In this research design, the semi-structured interviews ensured standardization of question themes while also allowing for probing of answers and exploration of participant responses. The interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams. Initially, only one interview per research participant was planned as per the initial design. However, after reviewing the collected data, a follow-up interview was offered to clarify the findings.

In a phenomenological case study, the primary objective is to explore how research participants experience phenomena within their lifeworld and how they define their relationship to those phenomena. To achieve this, participants were encouraged to provide detailed and rich descriptions of their experiences, including their processes of making meaning (Gibson & Hanes, 2003). Probing questions elicited deeper insights and facilitated participants' reflections on their experiences. While interviews serve to capture participant perspectives, it is important to note that participants also act as observers, reporting on their own experiences and the need for Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) to embrace innovative business practices to build resilience and thrive in a rapidly changing environment (Taylor, DeVault & Bogdan, 2016). Paget ([1983] in Taylor, DeVault & Bogdan, 2016) described the interview as a "search procedure," emphasising the collaborative nature of the interaction between the interviewer and participant. This collaborative process reveals aspects of the participant's experience and insights relevant to the research. It is worth noting that knowledge and meaning can be constructed during the interview (Taylor, DeVault & Bogdan, 2016). Participants may develop new insights and understanding about their knowledge through the interview process, particularly if they have not previously reflected upon certain aspects brought forth by the interviewer's questions and probes. Furthermore, non-verbal aspects of communication, such as gestures and tone, can contribute to interpreting meanings conveyed during the interview.

Taylor, DeVault, and Bogdan (2016) emphasise the flexibility and dynamism of interviewing within the qualitative approach. They note that non-standardised and open-ended

questioning allows interviewers to focus on understanding participant perspectives in their own words. This type of interview is designed to resemble a conversation between equals rather than a formal question-and-answer exchange (Taylor, DeVault, & Bogdan, 2016). At the beginning of the interview, the interviewer seeks to establish rapport with participants and create an environment where they feel comfortable expressing what is important to them before delving into the research interests (Taylor, DeVault, & Bogdan, 2016). This research explores participants' views within this approach while the researcher maintains a non-judgmental stance (Taylor, DeVault, & Bogdan, 2016:116). By adopting this strategy, the research aims to encourage honesty in participants (Shenton, 2004), allowing them to contribute their ideas without concerns about managing their image or presenting a particular facade.

Taylor, DeVault, and Bogdan (2016) assert that interviewing is an appropriate method in situations where the research interests are well-defined, provides access to participants, where time constraints exist, and where the researcher seeks to understand a range of participants. However, there are certain limitations associated with interviewing that should be acknowledged. Participants may say something different from their actual behaviour or actions during the interview. This discrepancy between what participants say and what they do can create uncertainty in the data collected. Secondly, the language used by participants may be subject to interpretation and potential misunderstandings, especially if certain words or concepts are not universally understood in the same way. This can complicate the process of accurately capturing participants' intended meanings. Lastly, participants may struggle to articulate certain aspects of their thinking and experiences, particularly if they involve complex or deeply ingrained thoughts and emotions. This limitation can hinder the researcher's ability to capture and comprehend the nuances of participants' perspectives fully. To address these limitations, researchers can employ strategies to mitigate their impact. These strategies may include confirming the participant's intended meaning using specific terms, engaging in follow-up discussions to clarify potential misunderstandings, and triangulating the interview data with information from related documents and other sources. However, despite these efforts, it is important to acknowledge that these limitations may persist to some extent, and achieving complete trustworthiness and eliminating all potential biases may not be fully attainable in this type of research.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted over three months, and this depended on the participant's availability. In total, 17 key participants were interviewed before the researcher reached data saturation. These individuals were identified through the researcher's existing network, online research, and snowball sampling (participants' recommendations). Each interview lasted approximately 45 -60 minutes to complete. The researcher developed a core set of questions to help guide the conversation. The researcher asked additional questions as the interview progressed to gain greater insight into the responses obtained from the core questions. Once the researcher completed each interview, all interviews were transcribed.

The interview schedule is included in Appendix A. Before each interview, participants received an information pack via email, which provided general information, background to the study, which highlighted the study's aim and objectives, and a consent form to allow them to prepare (Appendix B, C and D). The following chapters provided further details specific to the interviewees (Analysis of the Results and Discussion of Findings).

The outcome of the purposeful sampling using semi-structured interviews was an initial set of data that the researcher put through colour-coding and thematic analysis.

3.7 Data Analysis

Following an explanation of the data-gathering techniques, the researcher discusses the approach to data analysis. It is vital to note that the verbal information gathered from participant interviews be analysed. Data gathering and analysis may co-occur because qualitative research is not linear and follows an emergent process. To 'make sense of, or interpret meaning' (Creswell, 2018), the researcher recognises that qualitative data aims to convincingly explain the phenomena under examination (Tajuddin & Jauhar, 2015). Coding was required for this type of study. Coding can be defined as the link between gathering data and comprehending its meaning. As a result, coding enables the researcher to gradually construct increasingly abstract conceptual categories for synthesising, explaining, and comprehending developing themes and identifying predictable linkages within the data (Charmaz, 2003).

Partington (2003:113) maintains that “there is little standardisation with no absolutes where a specific type of qualitative data relates to a specific type of analysis”. Neuman (2011:518) argues that “there is no ideal qualitative data analysis approach or a method”. On the other hand, Schurink, Fouchê and de Vos (2011:403) postulate that “there are always variations in the number and description of steps for the same data analysis process by different authors. From the preceding views, it can thus be inferred that each qualitative data analysis, to some extent, will be a uniquely designed activity”. It is imperative that the approaches match what the researcher needs to know, and they should accept these decisions and recognise them as such.

The data collection process revealed the need to learn and appreciate that the immediate step of analysing data would be challenging. Because the very nature of qualitative research is undoubtedly compounded by the complexities inherent in being human, attempting to measure and make sense of behaviour quantitatively and attitudes was going to be daunting. This overwhelming aspect of qualitative research often forces researchers to avoid a less-than-rigorous analytical process. The practice is to acknowledge the seminal task of giving meaning to the data collected by thoroughly processing and verifying data. A well-thought-out work was critical if a quality research product were to be achieved; otherwise, the

collected qualitative data, no matter how rich and detailed, would not have amounted to anything of significance. Researchers have discovered that finding the connections in the qualitative data to make sense of the phenomenon, concept or construct under investigation is very difficult and often leads to researchers taking shortcuts to analyse the data. Roller and Lavrakas (2015) say this anomaly are not impossible. However, proper analysis remains the only thing that separates an honest, professional qualitative study from a random amalgamation of conversations.

From the preceding, as part of data analysis, the decision on how to interpret or make sense of data had to be deliberate. The process employed entailed 'engaging with the data', which meant abandoning everyday stances, attitudes or knowledge to acknowledge the 'liminal' experience of living between familiarity and strangeness (Kerdeman, 1998). All the while, the goal was for each participant's lived experience associated with the research to be appropriately understood and for an informed, contextually nuanced interpretation across participants to be developed. Consequential and actionable outcomes would be produced by deriving "thick meaning" within and across participants. As the researcher immersed himself in the process, his feelings ranged between a feeling of familiarity with some of the participants' attributions of meaning in their lives and a feeling that he could not identify personally with what they could be feeling or describing. Aware that he would encounter this 'liminal' experience encouraged him to explore the data with a sense of flexibility and open-mindedness, improvisation and creativity, as well as planning and adhering to the requisite steps and rules (Janesick, 1998, in Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

Analysis transforms data into findings by "bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data" (de Vos, Forche & Venter, 2005:333). The analytical process "does not proceed tidily or in a linear fashion but more in a spiral process; it entails reducing the volume of the information, sorting out significant from irrelevant data, identifying patterns and trends and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what was revealed by the data". There is an "inseparable relationship between data collection and data analysis, and this is one of the major features distinguishing qualitative research projects from traditional research" (de Vos et al., 2005:335). The analysis process began immediately after completing the first interview and receiving written responses from email interviews by writing down what was learned from each participant relating to the research questions and objectives and new, unexpected, yet relevant topic areas. A thoughtful study was given, and each participant's lived experience associated with the research questions and objectives was internalised, which facilitated an understanding of the complexities of any one thought or idea while also respectfully preserving the integrity of the individual. Preserving the integrity of the individual is an important component of the research analysis, which is grounded in the belief that researchers have a moral obligation to make a concerted effort to uphold each participant's individuality to the extent possible in the analytical process.

Data analysis goes further than analysing, identifying and reporting themes or patterns. It construes numerous collections of the research area (Boyatzis, 1998). Interpretation involves explaining and making sense of the data to produce outcomes that are ultimately useful to the research users (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this again involves continuing reflexive discourse on the part of the investigator regarding the interrogation of the data throughout the analysis. Fine (2002) cautions that it is important for researchers to acknowledge their theoretical values and positions relative to qualitative research. A researcher must do more than 'give voice' to their respondents. As Fine (2002:218) puts it, even a giving expression "involves carving out unacknowledged pieces of narrative evidence that we select, edit and deploy to border our arguments".

The researcher reorganised the data and looked for patterns and themes. The initial step in this approach was to transcribe and code the interviews. According to Creswell (2007:244), an inductive technique was used. This involved looking at data and transcripts and steering them toward more basic ideas. The coding process informed the study questions, literature, and interview techniques, which looked for themes and patterns in the data (Given, 2008: 105). The researcher examined the existing literature documents, using the data sets to corroborate findings and establish connections and themes. Several qualitative research software programs allow efficient data storage, organisation, analysis, and retrieval (Foley & Timonen, 2015). This relieves the researcher of the work of manual data coding while still allowing them to evaluate the coded data. The researcher utilised Atlas.ti programming software to transcribe the interviews and coding. Atlas.ti has significantly improved qualitative research's rigour and reliability (Tajuddin & Jauhar, 2015). As a result, the researcher designed a conceptual framework to support PHEIs building resilience by establishing innovative business practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment based on the literature review evidence, data collection, and the findings' analysis. The qualitative data analysis for this study (replies from semi-structured interviews) is conducted in accordance with the thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.8 Data Integrity Processes

Every effort was made to ensure the trustworthiness of the research, and research methods were used to ensure the integrity of participants, the data, its management and its analysis (Babin et al., 2015). According to Gray (2018), the trustworthiness of qualitative research is addressed by considering the data collected and its analysis in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and authenticity (Gray, 2018). The following two sections reflect how this qualitative study establishes trustworthiness and ensures ethical issues.

3.8.1 Trustworthiness

Unlike quantitative studies, the notions of validity and reliability are not commonly emphasised or prioritised in qualitative research. Instead, qualitative researchers prefer to focus on the trustworthiness of their data and the thoroughness in which the different phases of the research process are conducted. In quantitative research, the reliability and validity are in the data itself, whereas in qualitative it shifts to how the researcher gathered data. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985:290), the primary challenge with dependability is simple: 'How can an inquirer persuade the audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking into account?' Lincoln and Guba (1985) further argued that trustworthiness entails establishing credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, with credibility referring to faith in the "truth" of the findings. "transferability" refers to the outcomes' ability to be used in other situations. The level of trustworthiness indicates that the results are consistent and repeatable. Confirmability refers to the degree of neutrality or the extent to which respondents, rather than researcher bias, motivation, or interest, determine the outcomes of a study (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008).

3.8.2 Credibility

Credibility is defined as the degree of trust that may place in the veracity of the research findings; that is, whether the results represent believable information derived from the participants' original data and are accurate interpretations of their genuine opinions (Anney, 2014). The researcher may use several techniques to establish credibility. These include prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, and peer debriefing. For this study, triangulation was used to establish the credibility of the data. Credibility is defined as the degree of trust that may place in the veracity of the research findings; that is, whether the results represent believable information derived from the participants' original data and are accurate interpretations of their genuine opinions (Anney, 2014). This means comparing and cross-checking the dependability of information derived at different times and using other qualitative methods (Patton, 2002). Information derived from the interviews was triangulated as far as possible by including data from the literature review (secondary data) and a statement that emerged during the study.

Triangulation of sources involved the examination of the consistency of different data sources from within the same method by comparing participants with different viewpoints (Patton, 2002; Cohen & Crabtree, 2008). Munaf and Smith (2018) describe triangulation: 'The argue that triangulation is a necessary protection against incorrect ideas.' This is when you employ a combination of ways to answer a single question. Each approach has its assumptions, strengths, and flaws unconnected. Artefacts are less likely to be found inconsistent results across diverse systems. Finally, providing assurances of anonymity and confidentiality have been described by some commentators (Farsi, Modarresi, & Zarea, 2011) to increase the credibility of qualitative data. Several measures were implemented to assure the anonymity

and confidentiality of the participants in this study. Firstly, during the data collection process, participants were assigned unique identifiers or pseudonyms instead of using their real names. This ensured that their true identities remained concealed throughout the research. Additionally, any personally identifiable information that could reveal their identities was carefully altered in the analysis and reporting of the data. Furthermore, strict protocols were established to safeguard the confidentiality of the participants' information. This included storing collected data securely, using password-protected electronic systems, and limiting access to authorised research team members, the student and the supervisor. The researcher was committed to maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, ensuring that their personal information and responses were treated with the utmost care and protection. Implementing these measures, the study aimed to create a safe and trusted environment for participants to freely express their thoughts and experiences, allowing for more accurate and candid remarks.

3.8.3 Transferability

A qualitative study assumes that the findings are context-specific and co-constructed by the researcher and the participant. Hence, it does not attempt to generalise them (Petty *et al.*, 2012b). The researcher can consider transferability a collaborative enterprise; that is, it requires effort on the part of the researcher as well as the research of the study (Polit & Beck, 2010). Those who might apply the findings to their situation are responsible for establishing transferability (Petty *et al.*, 2012b). It can be accomplished by 'thick description,' as Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined it. By thoroughly describing a phenomenon, one can assess how to apply the findings to different times, settings, events, and people (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008). According to Badenhorst (2015), thick description is "information that provides the reader with knowledge, followed by an explanation so that the reader may comprehend." Give examples so the reader may see how the material has been used. Then, using synthesis, take it apart to analyse it for the reader and put it back together with interpretation, insight, and new knowledge. Finally, take a step back and assess your work.'

Polit and Beck (2010) state thick descriptions are "rich, detailed descriptive information on the research site, study participants, and observed transactions and processes." Readers can only make appropriate judgements regarding the proximal similarity of study contexts and their environs if researchers give high-quality descriptive information. Thick details can aid other researchers in replicating the study in different contexts with similar conditions (Anney, 2014). The researcher's job is to write detailed explanations that allow readers to extrapolate the findings to different situations. The reader's job is determining how the findings relate to different scenarios. As a result, the audience is the one who 'translates' the research findings to other systems (Polit & Beck, 2010). In the researcher's case, he achieved transferability by probing individuals for more specific descriptions. Allowable time limits to achieve comprehensiveness are often disregarded; additionally, seek detailed and nuanced

information to improve the possibility of adapting the findings of this study to a similar context, demographic, or case study (Billups, 2014). The sampling strategies described in this chapter clarify how research participants were identified and selected. Pursuit of the same sampling strategy and applying criteria specified for the participants selection and purposive sampling to sample representation are indicators of transferability. Using the same sampling strategy and methodology, the study could conceivably be repeated by other researchers to test for similarities or differences in the descriptions that participants in this study voiced.

3.8.4 Dependability

When another researcher can follow the researcher's decision path, this is called dependability in quantitative terms (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Qualitative research acknowledges that differences between persons and contexts are unavoidable, prohibiting replication in other settings. Furthermore, data analysis is a dynamic and creative activity the researcher performs, during which new ideas emerge and alter over time. An audit trail of the researcher's methods and functions will allow someone to make a judgment and provide a "trackable variance" or research study blueprint for another researcher to copy if they so desire (Billups, 2014). This study created an audit trail by (a) describing the specific purpose of the study; (b) discussing how and why the participants were chosen for the study; (c) describing how the researcher collected the data and how long it took to collect the data; (d) describing how the data was reduced or transformed for analysis; (e) discussing the interpretation and presentation of the research findings; and (f) communicating the specific techniques used to determine the results (Gray, 2018). All recordings of interviews (audio recordings, MST auto-transcriptions and MST chat notes) were retained and stored safely, as were notes, diagrams and other material aids such that they may be used as evidence and for verification at a later stage (Gray, 2018). Annexure F contains a summary of the codes applied across the data. This reflects descriptions of the ideas that codes encompassed to reflect consistency and dependability of coding and interpretation of data by the researcher.

3.8.5 Confirmability

Confirmability comes when credibility, transferability, and dependability have been demonstrated, much like objectivity in quantitative terms (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Confirmability relies heavily on reflexivity. The qualitative researcher must acknowledge and disclose their biases and experiences about the study to the reader. The amount to which the findings reflect the investigation's emphasis rather than the researcher's bias provides the reader confidence in the study's trustworthiness and applicability (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011; Petty *et al.*, 2012b). Thomas and Magilvy (2011) propose an approach for managing a researcher's assumptions applied in this study: the researcher recorded the notes about personal feelings, biases, and insights immediately after each interview. Furthermore, the researcher tried to follow rather than drive the course of the discussions by asking participants to clarify terminology, daily speech, and abbreviations. The audit trail, as

previously noted, helped to ensure confirmability. An audit trail can be shown in the file retained by the researcher, which reflects the thinking, re-arrangement, categorisation and eventual theme generation. Each time data was analysed and adjusted; the spreadsheet was dated and saved, indicating the analysis's progression over more than six months. An independent researcher could thus access and listen to audio recordings, read transcripts, and view analysis files to confirm the researcher's interpretation. Verbatim extracts and conceptual mind maps in presenting findings (Chapter 4) also reflect how the researcher interpreted the data through the steps followed in the thematic analysis.

3.9 Limitations and Scope of the Study

The researcher understands that this research study has limitations and may be subject to criticism. The first constraint is due to the study's nature, and the researcher has recognised the shortcomings of the interpretive approach. First, the interpretations are based on subjective beliefs, making data analysis more complex, and second, understanding could make it challenging to reconcile discordant data (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2015). As a result, the researcher stated that the study would take an epistemological approach to address this issue. During the data analysis phase, the researcher was constantly aware of his bias. Finally, using Alas.ti software helped inform the researcher about what happened during the analysis phase.

The data-gathering method is the source of the second limitation. Although semi-structured interviews are suitable, the researcher is aware of the drawbacks. On the one hand, the questions may appear overly directive, preventing a spontaneous narrative. On the other hand, the flexible technique may pose challenges in ensuring the comparability of responses and maintaining the reliability of the research findings. To overcome this constraint, the researcher recognised the importance of paying close attention to the research participant. It was necessary to probe and clarify which responses require further depth and explanation to clarify meaning. In addition, the researcher promised participants that all interviews would be kept anonymous and that they would make no moral judgments. This research took place in a developing socio-economic environment, namely South Africa.

The study highlighted that the results are not generalisable and are limited to a specific social environment. As previously stated, generalisation is not the primary goal of this research. By pointing out linkages between findings and past knowledge, the researcher can prove the generalisability of such a study in its conclusions (Babbie & Mouton, 2001; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Gibbert & Ruigrok, 2010). Rather than the study's generalisability, the qualitative researcher focuses on how the study creates practical information and tackles common or universal features of the current human experience (Chapman, Hadfield & Chapman, 2015).

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The researcher has stated that the project will not be approached with a pro-rail bias (despite being employed by a PHEI). This situation requires the assurance that research is undertaken, and decisions are made on a very ethical and transparent basis to ensure the trustworthiness and application of research results (Kivunja & Kuyani, 2017; Saunders *et al.*, 2019). All interviews were conducted after the researcher had received an ethical clearance letter (please see Annexure A). In addition to the data integrity aspects described in the preceding section, steps to ensure ethics address the research aspects of "privacy, accuracy, property and accessibility" (Kivunja & Kuyani, 2017, p. 28).

3.10.1 Personal Data and Privacy

Declarations made in letters of consent to assure anonymity of responses. Permission was obtained for the recording of interviews. The methods used to develop databases have been described in sampling and participant contact methods. The study information letters and letters of consent explicitly indicated that the study aimed to obtain participants' perceptions of the nature under investigation and that no one would need to divulge personal nor secret, classified or commercially sensitive organisational information. The letters also gave participants the right to withdraw from the study at any point.

3.10.2 Informed Consent

A core ethical foundation of human subject research is to obtain informed consent. Before the interviews, participants were asked to sign an informed consent agreement (Appendix B). All informants were given information about the study's purpose, the investigation's procedures, and the most likely risks and benefits of participating. They were informed of the voluntary nature of the experience, the informants' right to stop the interview at any time, their willingness to be named, and the procedures used to protect confidentiality (Groenewald, 2004).

3.10.3 Accuracy

Statistical packages were used to assist with analysing the data. A rigorous process is described, and all recordings and transcripts have been retained should verification be required. The researcher exercised responsibility and objectivity in the data interpretation processes.

3.10.4 Property and Accessibility

Intellectual property ownership has been verified to be following the rules and procedures of the DaVinci Institute. Declaration of safe storage of response information with the institute's period for which data will be stored for academic and research purposes. Participants of

interviews were advised at the start of engagements (through letters of research information and consent to participate) that they have a right to access the study results via the established protocols and publication of the findings in the final report or other publications.

3.10 Conclusion

The researcher selected the research design and methodology described in this chapter to explore the current study. A qualitative approach enabled by semi-structured interviews was considered the most appropriate vehicle for this study. This was based on various realities within the research area's limits. These realities are a function of personal interaction, experience, and perception and are thus highly subjective phenomena needing interpretation rather than measurement.

Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2013) explained that the qualitative researcher embraces the ontological assumption of multiple truths and realities, explores reality as constructed by individuals, obtains textual accounts of the individual's life/world and reflects the diversity and variation of lived experiences. It is affected by the dynamics people bring to the situation – the meanings they ascribe to their experiences and the values, experience, and understanding they bring to the process. The qualitative data collection approach specifically engaged participants in private HE institutions and contemporary businesses for this study. It was believed that they would be best placed to help answer the research question with sufficient depth.

The next chapter that follows commences the exploration of the outcomes of the semi-structured interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher provided the reasoning and justification for the chosen research design and methodology in chapter three of the study. This included explaining why the researcher selected the specific methods and techniques and how they align with the study's overall aim, objectives and research questions. The researcher also discussed how the research design and methodology would contribute to understanding the research problem and generating new knowledge. Rather than systematic inquiry and disciplined procedures to progress, improve, broaden knowledge, establish facts, and draw new conclusions, interpretive research relies on a more flexible, open-ended approach that allows for exploring complex and nuanced phenomena. It often emphasises understanding the context and perspectives of the participants rather than seeking to establish objective facts or universal truths.

This study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the strategies and practices used by private HE institutions (PHEIs) in a specific socio-economic context to manage their businesses and identify potential areas for improvement in business resilience. It is important to note that this study is not evaluating the businesses themselves but instead gathering data to inform the development of a framework for a strategy. Based on this understanding and learning from the lived experiences of the interviewed PHEIs participants, the study aims to develop a strategic framework to help PHEIs build resilience by adopting innovative business practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment. This framework will support PHEIs in adapting to and thriving in a rapidly changing environment and contribute to their local communities' overall development and success. To accomplish this, the researcher identified the following five objectives:

1. Conduct a comprehensive literature review to understand the current state of strategic business management practices for business resilience in commercial enterprises that PHEIs may repurpose in a developing socio-economic context.
2. Analyse the key challenges and opportunities faced by PHEIs in building business resilience in a rapidly changing environment.
3. Develop a conceptual framework for strategic business management practices that promote agility and resilience in PHEIs.
4. Recommend practical strategies and interventions that PHEIs can implement to enhance their business resilience and agility.

5. Contribute to the existing body of knowledge on strategic business management for PHEIs in developing countries and to provide insights and recommendations for policymakers and practitioners in the field.

This investigation collected primary data through semi-structured interviews with purposively selected research participants. Seventeen (17) interviews were conducted over three (3) months, reduced from the planned twenty (20) when data reached saturation. This chapter explores the outcomes of the semi-structured interviews. It does not interpret the findings but merely comments on them. The discussion of the results is detailed in the next chapter.

4.2 Interpretive Paradigm and Sample

The interpretive paradigm is a theoretical perspective that emphasises understanding social phenomena by interpreting people's subjective experiences and meanings. This paradigm guided the data collection and analysis in this study because it is well suited to studying social phenomena and understanding people's perspectives, which is particularly important. It is also motivated by the nature of the study to understand how people make sense of their lived experiences and the meaning they attach to them. By using semi-structured interviews, qualitative research allowed for a form of social inquiry that focused on how interviewees interpreted and made sense of their lived experiences with the phenomenon under investigation. This approach enabled the participants to contextualise their experience with a particular disruption in HE or contemporary commercial enterprise that impacted their institution or business. This helped in comprehending the social phenomenon by categorising it into significant themes of human experience (O'Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015).

The qualitative research approach, emphasising the 'participants' perspectives and meanings,' fits an interpretive worldview. The qualitative approach requires the research to report on the values and assumptions of 'participants,' explore the participants' context, and interact actively with them where possible (Creswell, 2015). In a dynamic socio-economic context, the study examined the current state of strategic business management practices for business resilience within PHEIs in a developing socio-economic context. The goal is to design a strategic framework to support PHEIs' resilience by establishing innovative business practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment within a specific context. This is similar to knowledge by 'description' or 'knowledge by acquaintance' from an epistemological perspective.

In the previous chapter (3), the researcher outlined the research design used to answer the research question, underpinned by the researcher's philosophy, methodology and methods. Before commencing this research, the researcher was upfront in positioning his philosophical beliefs and interpretations of the world. The methodology is the research design that shapes the selection of and use of data generation and analysis methods to answer the research

question (Tie et al., 2019). Key individuals with experience and understanding of PHEIs and contemporary commercial enterprises have been invited to participate in the study. The participants in this study included Business Leaders, Industry Consultants, IT specialists, Quality Assurance Managers, Instructional Designers, Curriculum Designers, Business Development Managers, Business Strategists, and Team Leaders within PHEIs. The participants were divided into the following categories: (i) Strata 1: Middle Management [Manco] level; (ii) Strata 2: Senior Management [EXCO] level and (iii) Strata 3: Industry Consultants – including retired or semi-retired who either held an executive or business leader position or consulted within an Institution. The researcher interviewed only 17 individuals after it became apparent during the 16th interview that saturation was being reached.

The participants in this study have diverse backgrounds; some have experience in the business world, specifically in contemporary commercial enterprises, but not in private HE institutions (PHEIs) or HE. Others have experience primarily in the corporate world and consult in the PHEI environment. The researcher noted that with several interviewees, their business management strategy experience in PHEIs extended beyond their current positions (and organisations, in some instances), giving them a broader understanding of the phenomena being investigated. Interviews were conducted over approximately three (3) months, from June to August 2022. At the culmination of the sixteenth (16) interview, it became apparent that saturation was being reached since many themes were recurring. The researcher conducted the seventeenth (17) interview to confirm this. Each interview took approximately 45 and 60 minutes. The original intention was to interview, in person, only individuals based in Gauteng. However, because of the COVID-19 epidemic and the requirement that participants work remotely, all interviews were conducted online using the MS Teams platform. For anonymity, interviewees have been identified using conventions such as participant [P1] or [P2]. The main participants from the study were as follows: technologist, chief information officer, senior general manager, deputy vice dean, business leader/entrepreneur, cooperates, executives, directors, marketing and management consultants, operation team managers, compliance officers and executives from the IT department.

4.3 Qualitative Data Collection and Coding

The researcher recorded, transcribed, and coded each interview. The researcher analysed the previously coded interviews to identify common themes among all 17 interviews, using a data analysis method called thematic analysis. Thematic analysis has been defined broadly as “a way of seeing” and “making sense of seemingly unrelated material” (Tie et al., 2019). It goes beyond these activities to interpret several facets of the topic of the study. On the other hand, Tie et al., (2019). view it as a technique for locating and analysing meaning patterns in a dataset or texts. The researcher believes the process is organic and reflexive and requires an

engaged, intuitive investigator who considers their role in the study. The objective is to create a narrative from exciting texts. An investigator may create a codebook, an organised compendium of codes describing how codes relate to patterns and themes observed in the coded texts. The researcher can assert that coding categories frequently take the shape of a hierarchy of categories.

The fact that there are numerous approaches to thematic analysis, despite its widespread use, is another crucial characteristic of the discipline. Confusion concerning its nature and how it varies from other analyses, such as discourse investigation and content analysis, results from its openness to many methodologies. Thematic analysis, like case studies and biographical investigative techniques like narrative inquiry, looks for patterns or themes throughout the entire data set instead of inside a data piece, such as a single interview or interviews from a single person (Tie et al., 2019). The researcher uses these identified themes to interpret and understand the research or topic under investigation. A theme captures something significant about the data relative to the study question and signifies some patterned meaning response inside the data set. The researcher used these themes to generate insights and conclusions about the research.

In a thematic study, researchers can identify patterns or themes in the data using one of two main approaches: bottom-up or inductive, top-down or deductive, or inductive. An inductive approach means that the themes identified closely relate to the data. In this approach, the themes identified may have little connection to the fundamental questions asked of the respondents, even if the data were gathered specifically for the study through a focus group or interview. The researcher's theoretical interest in the subject or area would not influence the identified themes. Therefore, inductive analysis involves coding the data without fitting it into a pre-existing coding framework or the researcher's analytical assumptions. This makes the thematic assessment process data driven. However, 'theoretical' theme analysis is more clearly analyst-driven and is more likely to be motivated by the scholar's theoretical or analytical interest in the subject (Tie et al., 2019). The data will generally be described less in-depth in this analytical study than in some specific features. The decision between inductive and theoretical approaches maps how and why data is coded. A particular research question can be coded for the data, corresponding to the more theoretical method. The specific research question can develop during the coding process, corresponding to the inductive approach.

In addition to selecting the logical system for theme identification, the researcher must also choose the type of analysis to perform and the assertions to be made concerning the data set. To help the reader understand significant or dominating themes, the researcher can, for instance, provide a thorough thematic analysis of the entire data set. In this situation, a precise copy of the data collection content is necessary to identify, code, and analyse the topics. Although some complexity and depth are inevitably lost in this inquiry, a thorough

overall summary is maintained. This method is mainly beneficial where the area under study is under-researched and participants' views on the topic have never been expressed.

4.3.1 Recording and Transcription

With the interviewers' consent, the researcher recorded every interview. Each recording was converted into a text using otter.ai voice meeting notes, a paid transcription service, and the MS Teams recording transcript. The researcher listened to and re-listened to each interview once the artificial intelligence (AI) based transcription was finished before making quick adjustments to the transcripts. The essential benefit of this procedure was that it guaranteed high accuracy in the final transcript while also addressing transcribing mistakes related to accent variations and mishearing, among other things. The researcher started a thematic content analysis, as explained above, once they were confident in the accuracy of each transcript. An interview transcript is included in this document as an annexure.

4.3.2 Thematic Content Analysis

Thematic analysis has been defined broadly as “a way of seeing” and “making sense of seemingly unrelated material”. It goes beyond these activities to interpret several facets of the topic of the study (Boyatzis, 1998:4). Conversely, Braun and Clarke (2006) see it as a method for identifying and analysing patterns of meaning in a dataset or texts. The process is regarded as organic and reflexive, requiring an “engaged, intuitive” investigator who considers how they are part of the analysis. The goal is to develop a story from texts of interest. The investigator notes patterns and themes from the coded texts and, from these, may construct a codebook, a structured compendium of codes that includes a description of how codes interrelate (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012:50). According to Joffe and Yardley (2004), coding categories often form a hierarchy of categories.

Another important descriptor of thematic analysis is that, although widely used, there are different ways in which it can be approached (Alhojailan, 2012; Boyatzis, 1998; Javadi & Zarea, 2016). That it is open to different approaches leads to confusion about its nature and how it differs from other analyses, such as discourse examination and content study. Undoubtedly, thematic analysis shares a search for certain patterns or themes through the whole data set, rather than inside a data piece, such as a single interview or interviews from an individual, as in the case of case study or biographical procedures of investigation such as narrative inquiry (Murray, 2003; Riessman, 1993). It then uses these themes to address the research or discuss an issue. A theme captures something significant about the data relative to the study question and signifies some patterned meaning response inside the data set.

However, patterns or themes within data can be acknowledged in one of two primary means in the thematic investigation: in a bottom-up or an inductive way (Frith & Gleeson, 2004) or in a top-down or deductive or theoretical means (Boyatzis, 1998; Hayes, 1997). An inductive

method means the themes acknowledged are intensely connected to the data (Patton, 1990). In this method, if the data has been composed precisely for the study through a focus group or interview, the themes acknowledged may bear a slight association with the exact questions posed to the participants. They would also not be motivated by the researcher's theoretical curiosity in the topic or area. The inductive examination is thus a procedure of coding the data without attempting to align it with a prior coding frame or the researcher's analytic presumptions. In this sense, this procedure of thematic examination is data driven. It is worth noting that scholars cannot free themselves of their epistemological and theoretical commitments, and information is not coded in an epistemological void.

On the contrary, 'theoretical' thematic analysis is prone to be driven by the scholar's theoretical or analytic interest in the area and is thus more explicitly analyst-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This form of analytic analysis is inclined to provide a less detailed description of the data overall and a more detailed analysis of some aspects of the data. The choice between inductive and theoretical approaches also maps how and why data is coded. Data can be coded for a specific research question which maps onto the more theoretical approach, or the specific research question can evolve through the coding process, which maps onto the inductive approach. Apart from the choice the researcher ought to make between inductive and theoretical approaches in identifying themes, he still must decide on the type of analysis to be done and the claims to be made relative to the data set. For example, the researcher might offer a rich thematic account of the whole data set to give the reader a sense of important or predominant themes. In such a case, the subjects to be identified, coded, and analysed must precisely reproduce the content of the complete data set. In this investigation, some complexity and depth are habitually lost, but a rich general account is sustained. This method is mainly beneficial where the area under investigation is under-researched, and participants' views on the topic have never been expressed.

Another alternate usage of thematic examination is to offer a more exhaustive and nuanced explanation of one specific theme, or group of themes, inside the data. This might relate to a particular area or question of interest inside data – a semantic method or to a specific underlying theme through the entire or bulk of the data set. These are, in practicality, the stages at which themes are to be recognised (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A thematic analysis characteristically focuses primarily or exclusively on one level. With a semantic method, the themes are acknowledged within the obvious connotations of the data, and the analyst is not searching for anything beyond what a participant has alleged or what has been written. Preferably, the analytic process involves a transition from description, where the data have simply been organised to show patterns in semantic content and summarised, to interpretation, where there is an attempt to theorise the importance of the patterns and their broader meanings and implications (Patton, 1990), often in relation to previous literature. In contrast, a thematic analysis at the latent level goes beyond the semantic content of the data.

It identifies or examines underlying ideas, assumptions, conceptualisations, and ideologies theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data.

Braun and Clarke (2006) also note that qualitative inquiry encompasses a succession of questions, and the researcher's responsibility is to understand the relationship among these questions. Firstly, there is the general inquiry question and exploratory questions that drive the study project. A research question might be exploratory and very broad. These narrow inquiries may be part of a comprehensive, all-encompassing research question, and if so, the analysis they inform would respond to the general research question. Although the investigation questions direct all projects, these questions may also be modified as the project evolves. Secondly, if the data from the interviews have been gathered, then perpetually, there are questions that the participants have answered. Finally, some questions guide the analysis and coding of the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) opine that the worst form of thematic analysis uses interview questions as the 'themes' identified in the 'analysis' when no analysis was done. While transcription is often seen as time-consuming, frustrating and, at times, tedious, the opportunities it provides far outweigh its negative results. The verbatim transcription of the data allowed familiarisation with the data (Riessman, 1993). The interview questions were formulated with the research questions and objectives in mind. Therefore, the analysis was driven by the research questions and was essentially top-down. The inductive thematic content analysis method required evaluating each transcript critically to establish the proper coding and then developing themes (Heydarian, 2016). Concepts, or descriptive or explanatory notions, were given codes, which the researcher used to find "conceptual reoccurrences and commonalities in the patterns in the data" (Birks & Mills, 2015:89). In the end, a thematic idea framework was feasible.

Figure 13 indicates an example. "Coding is an active process taken from the substantive area of investigation, the researcher's knowledge and experience, and existent theory," argues Birks and Mills (2015:90). The researcher used the study's research questions, his expertise in the field, and the knowledge he gleaned from the literature review to assign meaningful codes to significant passages in each transcript. The researcher introduced codes to the "new comment" feature in Microsoft Word that was connected to the theoretical framework or research question ideas like obstacles, enablers, and leverage, some randomly and others intentionally.

How are you safeguarding your institution against further disruptions?]

Raymond, I would suggest, you know, just say five items to you, but it again comes back for me; the management orientation, the institution administrators, and the fixation on just, let's say, programme delivery, etcetera to the detriment of remaining in touch with the broader society, you know, locally continentally as well as globally. Now at least where it's also important for us to be connected to, for example, locally, is an African Business School's Association, where we are an active participant, similar to the Da Vinci. You know where we are, although everybody competes. Nick Bernadel, I remember using the term co-optician; you know, although we compete, we can also cooperate, especially regarding management education in South Africa. So that is very valuable because you know it's a network of people that also travels broadly and widely, and that's a platform where we also share. You know this. Let's say best practice, but there's an openness to share with the people. Further to that, we're also then, of course, members of the South African Association of Business Schools, which extends our collaboration to the continent, which is also important to us to drive the continent's agenda and then the layer above that would be our relationships and networking with the amber. You know, its community and the AACSB community call it the internationalization aspect and the mechanisms you also build into from leadership and management practice perspective as administrators of an institution. I may call the alerts the alert I don't want; for example, I use Google with that. You know when you put in a keyword, for example, business schools, I get these alerts in the mail when there's anything that the crawlers pick up on, some research that has been done or that that type of thing or when at some point I also put in their fourth industrial revolution, and I know you guys are talking about. But you know you have to be very proactive besides your collaboration, so networking, let me, networking is paramount. You cannot isolate yourself to think that you will be a successful private higher education institution in South Africa; isolating yourself is a big mistake. So, I did part of what I started with Milpark in 2008 and 2009. There was still at that stage, and this is just my lived experience, there was a bit of a from the public, the big guys, you know, that gives us you UCT, GSB, the Stellenbosch is they were kind of looking down on us. But I deliberately worked on those relationships, and today you know, I've got wonderful peer relationships with all those institutions, which is very important. Second to that would be your collaborative quality internationalization, so we have with a couple of, you know, like within India we also have an MOU with globe ethics and was in Africa with business ethics networks, business ethics network of Africa. But you know, we signed to prime the principles of responsible management education. So those sources of not only information, but they create these events for discussions and deliberations, and things that I might have missed in the global legal thing or where that is the case. and then, of course, one once owns mechanisms, and I mean you and I are both on LinkedIn, we frequently also know how to inform there. But there, whether it's, I don't know whether it's News 24 or any of those things, and I know we, we overwhelmed them by information via channels that you can think of, but I would suggest one finds out over time. For me personally is then to cherry pick What we want to be, where I believe the richness of and value and factualness and truthfulness of the information you know comes one way and then you know when from my side again if to make sure that my team, you know, our disseminate that information further so that one stays in touch with trends. First, the drivers of change, you know, take a societal, political, uh, you know it's extra etcetera, but that from those this myriad of megatrends also spawned or small. For example, sorry, I'm thinking all over the place now. Raymond, you've got me going. You know, the current hot topic is the hot meat of it, you know now. One can say, oh no, you know that's not, and I can park it to the side. Even though we know there's still a long way to go, that will definitely impact education, so I must make it my job to stay in touch with that. We see that the University of Johannesburg started using blockchain for the verification of patents so. Even a person like Prof Maseko, you know he's a member of ethics, and I think you know in these spaces and I have. What's

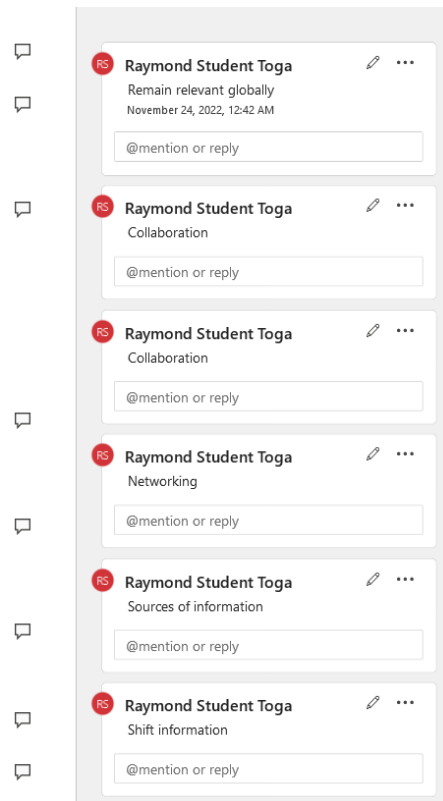


Figure 13: An extract from participant [P17]

In this study, to enable the researcher to access only the different codes while still viewing them in the context of the larger paper, all comments (codes) were extracted after the open coding and placed in a new Microsoft Word document. Sample codes taken from the interview transcript of the participant [P7] are shown in **Table 9**.

Table: 9: Sample code – Interview Transcript of the Participant P7

Interview 7	2	So, we've also done with the understanding that the majority of our student numbers are working adults, so screen fatigue big become a real thing. We had the majority of our country working from home and people sitting in front of their devices for 8-15 hours a day. So, the idea was to deliver a class virtually over two days; we realized that it would be almost impossible. So, we changed our strategy. So instead of having a two-day class full day and a six-week application or implementation cycle, we changed it to our online delivery model where we have a six-to-eight-week delivery cycle, six to eight weeks to the smaller classes of two hours at a time, but more frequently. The idea is to hold the attention of Student Two out of the two hours at a time if it was a digestible chunk of information or faculty gate session. So, we shifted focus in terms of delivery methodology, and we changed rather drastically and then.	Adapt to change	BUSINESS ADAPTATION TO CHANGE
Interview 7	1	The benefit of the organization that I'm currently with is we were on track on PA to go digital, even before the pandemic. And all the pandemic did was speed up our processes to make that happen faster. However, that's just from an operational and delivery standpoint.	Technology platforms	DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION
Interview 7	2	So, what we try to do as a business is give the same quantity and quality. So, we moved from a previous system; we reached out to date classes. But then we moved that online. And it was an interesting exercise because we didn't want it to be a paper beyond class exercise. We wanted it to be online learning in a truly online spirit.	Technology platforms	
Interview 7	2	So that's interesting that that has; I wouldn't put that down to a pandemic, but it was almost coincidental that we had a tiny business development team starting the year before, but we did experience growth during 2019, 2020 2021. I'm not sure we could fit that down to the change of online delivery. Yeah, I'm not convinced that it is there, but that does help. So much there. But we do help prior to that. We were restricted to a hot thing delivery. Right. So, especially the month the larger businesses that have a presence throughout the country, we had access to deliver our learning programs to most students in the online modality.	Online learning	
Interview 7	3	So, in my humble opinion, I would say agility is the ability to be agile to what the customer needs, probably service, all those elements you mentioned. Okay, so the main point is agility. Let's look at our business as an example. I tried to finish what I noticed is that the more agile we are, the more we can cater to the customer's specific needs. The more they are willing to work with us or start working with us in modifying the curriculum according to the customer's needs. Yes, so the curriculum but also the content, the application, the scheduling, everything of that sort, okay	Flexible structure	INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATION FACTORS
Interview 7	3	It's tough during disruption. But I think the regulator is a very, has rightly such regulated space. I don't think that in my opinion for me, leads to the academic quality and integrity of your offerings. And I don't think that there should be any leniency there because of the fact that they are because it is so highly regulated. It's so clearly defined; can the most significant African public rest assured that if that regulator says this Institution is worthy, the country can believe it? I don't, in my opinion; don't think that regulators should ease any regulation.	Regulations	REGULATION CHALLENGES
Interview 7	3	So, I would assume they vary from Institution or assume at a strategic level within each of those businesses; they have a credit risk. And again, it'd be the opportunity to almost try to identify what potential disruptions could look like and what those potential solutions look like as well but up front rather than be more proactive than reactive	Identify disruptions	

After the open coding, the researcher applied the second coding round to identify codes' relationships and to determine higher-level categories and sub-categories. The table was then transferred to Excel for data manipulation and thematic analysis. The researcher followed the following steps: The first step was to have a Macro in MS Word to extract the comments. The researcher used a Macro created by Wheaton College (Peach, 2022) to insert the Macro on MS Word. The researcher went to the tools section, selected Macro, opened the Visual Basic Editor, pasted the Macro copied from the link above, and saved it. The researcher then individually codes each interview in MS Word using the comments feature and then extracts a table of comments from each interview using MS Word Macro. This creates separate Word document tables with the interview quotation and the page number where each quote is found. Each quote has an identifier. The researcher then transferred each extracted table of comments onto an Excel document and engaged with the data and developed themes.

The data analysed resulted in axial codes through emerging storylines to explain further and explore code patterns. This resulted in selective codes (emerging themes) that were considered and distilled to create six broad main themes. The researcher only highlighted the major themes and extracts of responses that contributed to building each theme. The researcher will explain all six emerging themes in detail in the next chapter. The primary detailed interview transcripts are attached as annexures. The researcher grouped all related

text excerpts from the seventeen interviews into common open categories and then into each of the six common themes. Below is a summary of tables grouping responses into themes. The final list of the themes emerging from the coding, discussed in detail in the next chapter, is provided below in Table 10.

Table 10: Key Themes Extracted from Participants' Responses

No.	Themes
1	Theme 1: Client-Centred Approach to Business
2	Theme 2: Digital Transformation
3	Theme 3: Communication Strategy
4	Theme 4: Business Adaptation to Change
5	Theme 5: Drive Strategy
6	Theme 6: Strategic Collaborations

4.3.2.1 Theme 1: Client-Centred Approach to Business

The client-centeredness approach to business is a critical theme from the research data gathered that stood out. A client-centered approach in business focuses on understanding and meeting the customer's needs. Businesses should adopt a strategy of placing their customers at the centre of their core business to provide a long-lasting, memorable experience and customer retention. A unique experience and customer retention. For institutions to be sustainable and wealthy, business leaders must be able to put their customers at the centre of their operations. Another way to say it is to be customer centric. As data becomes available, client knowledge should lead the way for client experience transformation, allowing the organisation to have a deeper grasp of the value of the client. This should put a company in a position to develop a client engagement plan that is well-informed and built on a deeper understanding of the clientele's needs. It should enable the company to equip staff with the appropriate tactics and motivate them to keep their commitments.

A robust client-centred approach can contribute to business agility in the PHEI sector by allowing institutions to adapt quickly to changing customer demands. For example, by regularly gathering feedback from students and using it to inform decision-making, a PHEI can ensure that its programs and services align with the needs and preferences of its target market.

Additionally, a client-centered approach can lead to increased customer satisfaction and loyalty, which can help an institution build a strong reputation and attract new students in

the country they operate in and around the globe. Table 11 below indicates extracts responses from the participant's transcripts.

Table 11: Participants' Responses on Client-Centered Business Approach

No.	Theme and responses	Participants
1	<p>Client-Centred Approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... become incredibly client-focused but also doing the same thing internally, becoming incredibly people-focused. Understanding that you know people are afraid, you know, uncertain and just becoming very empathetic about how you deal with your clients and then investing properly and being prudent and sensible about investing in platforms that will protect your business. But B will give you a competitive advantage. • ... still, do we then understand the value propositions that came to solving the needs or dealing with the problems that those clients have? And if those are the value propositions, what capabilities do we need to borrow to realise those value propositions to deal with those client needs? And, of course, these three can result in an economic outcome. We know that they are cost drivers and they are drivers of profit. And when you look at those four business model components, they encapsulate how we think about our business model. • ... your delivery and the way you deliver it is more than the content, we created an online platform, but we remained quite strong in that concept session, face-to-face human interaction mode of delivery. And we ignored a little bit about what the market was doing because everyone was going online. And we said, Sure, we'll have a platform where all the information is kept and where you can do assessments but that you must still have the environment where you can ask questions and engage, we did take a little bit of an of a detour and I still don't regret it. • ... leaders can compare everything online. They expect design user-friendliness to happen in schools and institutions that don't understand why we can't do things as fast. So yes, I think it's got to be about if you know your customer because that's not every customer. Some customers aren't like that, but I'd say a lot has changed. And so, it's about understanding the customer. • ... so, if the client comes through, for example, strategically and says they are having a problem, they need to get all the people fit and proper in a short time. Okay, that is a strategic initiative one must embark on to add value to that process. The key component that we add value from is ensuring that we give them the qualifications aligned to the, you know, 15 profit requirements, especially in the banking 	<p>[P1], [P2], [P3], [P4], [P6], [P13], [P14], [P5], [P9]</p>

	<p>environment. So, it's about understanding what the client wants and providing them with that solution to impact and use learning as an instrument and enabler to achieve their business objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... I meant to remain in the business world and there's a lot of competition, so there are different aspects. They are absolute; I would say they are geared towards the student and the needs of the students and something as basic as computer literacy. So, students maybe had a disadvantage if it wasn't a school subject, but now they have to be on par with other learning adults. • ... Parents and customers are the sources of many ideas and innovations. If your customer says, they've like this, or that's not necessarily going to be the solution. They're not going to produce your big idea. But if you understand the customer, you can then have a better idea of what might work for you, so you might decide to go one route in education, but then another school or organisation will take another route, but not the same. 	
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4.3.2.2 Theme 2: Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is incorporating digital technologies into all aspects of an organisation's operations, including its business model, processes and culture. This approach can significantly contribute to creating business agility in the Private HE Institution sector. Emerging data show that as new concepts, digital technologies, business operating models and working methods enter the market, the capacity of individuals and organisations to embrace change and adapt is crucial. Businesses like PHEIs in South Africa succeed when they actively hear and positively respond to the needs of their customers and invest aggressively in technology to increase customer loyalty now sustainably and in the future. The emerging data revealed that business leaders' role in how important they can accelerate digitalisation and grow/steal the critical talent required to shift the system into a new data-driven era. For example, automating repetitive tasks through digital technologies can increase efficiency and allow a faster response to changes in a disruptive environment.

Additionally, data-driven decision-making can be facilitated by the vast amounts of data generated by digital technologies, which business leaders can use to make more informed and strategic decisions. Digital technologies can also provide more flexibility in how, where and when students learn, which can be more convenient for students and help institutions stay competitive. Online learning can be facilitated by digital technologies, which can help institutions reach students who cannot attend traditional classes. Furthermore, digital technologies can enable remote teaching, which can help institutions continue their operations even during unexpected events such as pandemics.

Overall, digital transformation can help PHEIs operate more efficiently, respond to changes more quickly and stay competitive in an ever-evolving world of work and markets. Table 12 below indicates extracts responses from the participant’s transcripts.

Table 12: Participants’ Responses on Digital Transformation Theme

No.	Theme and responses	Participants
2	<p>Digital Transformation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as an institution, we need to stay abreast of new technologies and what the marketplace is and constantly review our technologies. • ... I've been taking the marketing approach, which people often don't assume because it cuts across the whole organisation to everything we do. And it's not just social media, as we tend to think it is where digital marketing is, but it's much more than that. It's automation. And it's, you know, it's also about the customer experience on online booking and all of those things. • ... for example, can come to the list, but we can say a quick one to a general WhatsApp. It's the best thing to capture all these clients or potential clients that quickly want to inquire about this, and you know, we must meet at that WhatsApp number. It's visible all over because if you can check on our Facebook page, everywhere we go, you know, posting about the conditional of your sessions. And the client would be asking how much this cost; we have that. But it's visible if that WhatsApp number is somewhere in your communication. Somebody can quickly pick it up and ideally ask to be on this copy of that cost. Then you take it from them. • ... you know, we invested a huge, uh; well, a significant amount into these client platforms when people are scared. But we said that now is the time that, more than ever, this is on your client's need you, and you've got to invest in these platforms, so those are the kinds of things that we've done; we are quite sensible about risk. But we also try to be open-minded, and uh, you know, we have a lot of diversity built into our structure and decision-making structures within the firm. So, when we consider an opportunity or a threat, we can, you know, consider it from multiple perspectives. Umm. And we have processes that enable good discussion and robust discussion around things. So yes, I think that's, you know, the kind of thing that we did. We became focused on fewer things and aligned. • ... as a result, we evolved as an organisation in that, you know, all of our material is digital. We own our platform. We own our learning platform. So, we invested we had to put money into the process. And it just gave us that much more credibility in the market. 	<p>[P1], [P2], [P3], [P4], [P6], [P11], [P14], [P5], [P14]</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... the other platforms, of course, are technology platforms. Our ability to use, you know, the best-integrated technology platforms that can create visibility and create the ability for us to make data-driven, evidence-based and decision-making. Not just reactively but proactive is an absolute focus of all our technology platforms. 	
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4.3.2.3 Theme 3: Communication Strategy

A well-designed communication strategy can create business agility in the Private HE Institution sector. Clear and transparent communication can help institutions build trust and credibility with their stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff and the broader community. Lack of information, inadequate instructions on what to do and a failure to recognise emotional distress all have an immediate detrimental effect on stress levels in individuals and organisations. It is well recognised that heuristic interpretations of situations are the source of feelings of dread and anxiety, which raise stress levels in both the individual and the group. Therefore, a communication approach emerged strongly from the data to address this situation. A communication strategy is a plan for how an organisation will communicate with its various audiences, including employees, customers and stakeholders. It is an important tool for promoting business agility because it helps ensure all stakeholders are aligned and informed about the organisation’s goals, plans and progress. A well-executed communication strategy can create a culture of transparency, trust and collaboration within the organisation. This is important for promoting business agility because it allows employees to understand their roles and responsibilities and to work together effectively towards common goals.

Additionally, a communication strategy can help to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the organisation’s plans for responding to changes in the business environment. This is important for promoting business agility because it allows the organisation to respond quickly and effectively to changes in the market, technology, or other factors that may impact the business. Developing and effectively communicating the need for the right skills strategy can help an organisation achieve its goals, be more efficient and effective and attract and retain talent. This can, in turn, help institutions respond more effectively to changes in the market and adapt to new challenges. Effective communication can also help institutions engage with their stakeholders and gather feedback that business leaders can use to inform decision-making and improve programs and services.

In a crisis, a well-planned communication strategy can help institutions respond quickly and effectively, which can minimise the negative impacts of such events on the institution. A strong communication strategy can also help institutions build a strong brand and reputation,

attracting new students and allowing institutions to stay competitive in the market. Furthermore, effective communication can help institutions share new ideas and innovations with students, faculty and staff, facilitating idea generation and collaboration and developing new programs and services.

Overall, a well-designed communication strategy can help private HE institutions to engage with their stakeholders, build trust and reputation, respond to changes more effectively and stay competitive in an ever-evolving market. Table 13 below indicates extracts responses from the participant’s transcripts.

Table 13: Participants’ Responses on Communication Strategy Theme

No.	Theme and responses	Participants
3	<p>Communication Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still, you should learn about things you are not good at. It's prepared me for many things, difficult decisions, crucial conversations, and challenging times and you should never forget where you came from. You try and get your colours wherever you can and be the best version of yourself. And wherever you think you are lacking or have a weakness, get to know it better or leverage others' strengths. You don't necessarily have to be the specialist but get someone who specialises and learns from them. Learn from better people than you. • ... you need to communicate this over and over and get feedback over and over, even when we've implemented the strategy. Get feedback on whether it is still relevant and is our strategy appropriate. One of the things that, if nothing else, the last three to five years I've taught us is that a five-year plan sometimes goes out the window within your one or two. So, it would help if you were agile enough to navigate the landscape without losing your site again, which is your overall objective regarding why you're doing what you're doing. • ... umm, when the institutional forum meets. The student representative, who would have gathered information from the rest of the student body, is free to deposit whether it concerns whether it complements, whether it's requested, et cetera to the institute. • Our open-door communication policy and governance structure allow us to resolve issues and address challenges quickly. At the EXCO level, we have a weekly where we raise and discuss issues and anyone with a case can call anyone in the organisation to assist them. We try not to operate in silos—our flat organisational structure with collaborative problem-solving. • ... your communication strategy, you know, has to be augmented. Your support has to be augmented. You need to provide that, you 	<p>[P1], [P10], [P15], [P17], [P2], [P3], [P6], [P5], [P9], [P8]</p>

	<p>know, psychological support, you know, to your students. And yes, they're such, you know, multi facets to delivering, you know, learning solutions. That's realistic. That requires, you know, attention in all areas in terms of effectiveness. You use digital transaction automation to be effective, get things at your fingertips and ensure that you know the responses are quite quick at low costs. So, you know, whilst you're doing all of that, just being very clear about costs and you know, cost management is it's, it's important.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... you have a vision. Your vision is a dream. And I mean, people only follow that dream if you've got proper leaders and followers will only follow readers if you communicate with them appropriately. And communication is not like giving instructions, so communication must be meaningful to them. • ... we're going to hit chatbot in the back of enhancing communication, which ultimately enhances service delivery to the regulatory entities. • ... so, on the other hand, in terms of connecting and communicating. I think proper communication channels, devices and, you know, whatever, we need to upskill and upgrade our infrastructure, which will include customers and employees. • ... a relatively flat governance structure, allowing for agile and cooperative problem-solving. A straightforward process for decision-making. Transparent communication. Policies and procedures and adequate resources 	
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4.3.2.4 Theme 4: Business Adaptation to Change

All organisations are not open to change regardless of how long they have existed or how solid they may be. The research participants believed that one must adapt to avoid being altered by the environment. Organisational leaders must be aware of the complex environment in which their organisation's function and should closely monitor changes occurring both within and outside their organisations. Leaders must be aware of both internal and external changes and be able to implement necessary changes for their organisation to thrive. However, implementing successful changes can take time and effort and can occur through growth, decline, or transformation.

Additionally, organisational change often occurs in a chaotic environment, making it important for leaders to have methods and tools to navigate and adapt to external disruptions. It is crucial for leaders to be proactive in identifying and responding to external changes that may disrupt their business operations to remain competitive and successful. Unfortunately, putting into practice successful organisational innovations can take time and effort. Organisational change may result through an organisation's growth, decline, or transformation. While it may be tempting to believe that organisations are stable structures

in a dynamic society, the reality is that they undergo an ongoing transformation and take on a wide range of shapes. Organisational change takes place in a chaotic environment. Any change endeavour will likely occur in a complex context that can make navigating confusing if not well controlled because it is far more intricate than usual human behaviour. The data has led to developing several methods and instruments for dealing with business transformation adaptation.

Adapting to change is crucial to creating business agility in the PHEI sector. Responding quickly and effectively to changes in the new world of work and new markets or environments, institutions can remain flexible and responsive to new challenges and opportunities. This ability to adapt can also foster innovation and experimentation, leading to developing new programs and services that better meet the needs of students and the broader community. Additionally, adapting to change can help institutions anticipate and manage risks, minimising the negative impacts of unexpected events on the institution. Furthermore, adapting to change can help institutions better understand and meet their customers' needs, increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty and assisting institutions in staying competitive. Finally, this ability to adapt can help institutions continuously improve their programs and services, which can help them remain relevant and competitive in an ever-evolving market.

Adapting to change is critical to creating business agility in the PHEI sector. It allows institutions to respond quickly and effectively to market or environment changes and stay flexible, innovative and competitive in an ever-evolving environment. Table 14 below indicates extracts responses from the participant's transcripts.

Table 14: Participants' Responses on Business Adaptation to Change Theme

No.	Theme and responses	Participants
4	<p>Business Adaptation to Change</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... we realised that we had to reconsider how we think about almost that quadruple helix, about how we impacted markets on the broader African market. And, of course, you know, specifically, because the bulk of our income still comes from South Africa, we then add specific considerations for South Africa. • ... since we were in a medium-sized organisation, we could evolve, still, deliver with impact and be agile in our approach and to an extent, because we went through such a quick evolution. • ... people are finding it difficult to make time on top of that, they still now have to be full-time sort of home executives, you know, walk into the kitchen every time look at all the dishes, make sure that you know your place is neat right before when you're in the office. You didn't have that your expenses at home have increased, you know, electricity, water etc. The infrastructure, you 	[P1], [P11], [P12], [P15], [P16], [P3], [P3], [P17], [P9], [P8]

	<p>know, required some, you know, stuff, some new way of managing the process. So, it is all of that, you know, one needs to consider the way you know, the lifestyle of individuals has changed. People have now become tutors, you know, once they work in, they need to tutor the kids because the kids may be homeschooled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... but of course, we know how to sort out problems at Davinci. We always find a way around issues like that and we are managed. I think just by tweaking; if I may speak about my role, I am tweaking that role to talk to the kind of support that the regulator would like to recommend, but also being mindful of our brand, who we are and the type of support that we want to give to our students. So, there is room when the one you know thinks of it where you can fulfil what the regulator wants you to do. But also add your brand promise to it. • ... so, there are specific engagements we do now that we approach very differently. We approach it very differently from how we would do it in our industry because we've met with presentation specialists and folks who've done a different side of things. So, it gives the organisation different ideas to play with. • ... I've got this attitude of do you know what, let's always make a little bit more time. It doesn't matter. So and I think that will account for, you know, people also get stressed if they can't meet face-to-face. The traffic's not what they expected. Or something goes wrong with a car or whatever it is. So, over time because this has been a while since 2020. Yes, over time, it's become a lot easier and it's become a bit acceptable. And I have an exciting story to tell. 	
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4.3.2.5 Theme 5: Drive Strategy

Drive strategy is the implementation of processes and systems that motivate and engage employees to work towards a common goal. This approach can significantly contribute to the creation of business agility in the PHEI sector. The data has shown that managing HE as a business requires new governance practices to be more successful, sustainable, and resilient in this time of upheaval. The perception of corporate executives is that they are not honest or ethical and always lead from the top without teamwork or collaboration. More collaborative workers with more initiative, invention, creativity and enthusiasm were necessary to shift from an industrial market economy to a more connected, creative and sustainable economy.

The participants shared that the traditional method of developing strategy and producing lengthy documents is no longer effective. Strategy in this new era must be concise, pertinent and easily adaptable. According to emerging data, thinking imaginatively and considering

areas not previously thought to be vital in older theories when aligning new company innovation strategies and leadership will be beneficial. By increasing employee engagement, institutions can increase productivity and efficiency and create a more agile workforce that can respond quickly to changes in the market or environment. Aligning employees' goals with the organisation's overall goals can help to focus efforts and resources towards achieving common objectives. Drive strategy can also foster a culture of innovation, which can lead to the development of new programs and services that better meet the needs of students and the broader community.

Furthermore, it can create a culture of continuous improvement, which can help institutions to continuously improve and adapt their programs and services, which can help them to remain relevant and competitive in an ever-evolving new world of work and environment. Empowering employees to take the initiative and make decisions can lead to faster and more effective responses to changes in the market or environment. Drive strategy can help create a motivated and engaged workforce that can respond quickly and effectively to changes in the market or environment, leading to a more agile organisation that can adapt to new challenges and opportunities and stay competitive in an ever-evolving market. The participant's transcripts in Table 15 below provide examples of responses related to this strategy.

Table 15: Participants' Responses on Drive Strategy Theme

No.	Theme and responses	Participants
5	<p>Drive Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... in my role as managing director, I always try to be the visionary of the business in aligning it to pillars. Starting with people because I believe you can't have a strategy if you don't have people and the right people start with a highly motivated and excellent workforce, internal processes and technology; how does that translate into that strategy? Customers and then, of course, finance. The role that I play is to bring forward the idea and align it to those four pillars, but then get the team to want also, almost to say voice and add to what you need to eliminate, reduce, create and improve. ... Raymond, part of My Portfolio Would be to influence. When we say set the strategic direction now and, in our context, we know we have an EXCO or C-Suite where the CEO and CFO, CIO, you know, all the Cs are there. So, I am the in the layer just below the EXCO. So, you know, all heads of school are part of MANCO of the management committee. But above that, of course, from a holding company perspective, Stadio Holdings is the holding company, which is a listed entity, and within there, you have study education. You have multiple education, and then there's after so, but drilling down just to my context. I'm 	<p>[P1], [P4], [P7], [P9], [P10], [P12], [P14], [P15], [P16], [P17], [P5]</p>

	<p>responsible for uh in the Business School; I would like to use the word influence because my style is not one of individually determining the strategic direction but doing that in the way of co-creation with my heads of department.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... I'm integral in shaping the business strategy as part of the executive team in labelling are part of the executive committee here. In terms of giving input viewpoints talking for the voiceless or those whose voices are not necessarily in the room. Looking strategically, if we plan in the next five years to get to a certain point in terms of why that point is, what is our intent, what is our differentiation factor and what role we play. But I think from my side, it's what we need to do from a people's perspective to get there. • ... look, the roleplay is no different to the role that I had a strategy was playing in any organisation and that is, you become the custodian of the firm's strategic planning and execution processes. You become the facilitator of creating and executing a strategy. So, I always said to people it's not my strategy. You know, it's the firm strategy. I need to own the processes that allow the firm time and space and a robust plan to develop that strategy and to drive the delivery of it and track and monitor and report on it and amend it, or, you know, adjust it as time goes by. • ... my work experience comes from a corporate where I have moved across the ranks from credit manager to CEO and managed the firms in problem-solving and organisational development, HR and strategic interventions. • ... often, you'll find that some of these institutions don't have marketing, they have advertising or promotion, but they're not taking a strategic marketing perspective, which is market research, looking at the customer understanding of your market and internal and external marketing. So yes, that was referred to as the overall business strategy. And because you can't do marketing strategy effectively if it's standing on the outside, it must be a part in into an integral part of the business strategy of the organisation. 	
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4.3.2.6 Theme 6: Strategic Collaborations

Strategic collaborations refer to the process of forming partnerships and alliances with other organisations to achieve shared goals. This approach can significantly contribute to the creation of business agility in the PHEI sector. The currently available data indicate that for institutions to improve their capacity for education and produce significant new knowledge, they must integrate the latest technology created by the 4IR/5IR. This a reminder that PHEI in South Africa must adopt a more pan-African approach to support development and transformation initiatives because there is too much division among HE institutions. The research showed that strategic cooperation is a crucial enabler, particularly regarding agility

and idea co-creation. Strategic collaborations have become vital business drivers for sustainability, growth and long-term success. As McKinsey notes, it is the foundation of business resilience, which has become “a critical requirement for business performance” in an uncertain and unstable world. With the data that has emerged, the researcher asserts that to remain competitive in today’s global marketplace; businesses must be innovative, adaptable, collaborate and transform in this constantly changing. Achieving this depends on the skills and knowledge of employees.

Collaborating with other organisations, PHEIs can gain access to new resources, knowledge and expertise, which can help them to develop new programs and services and respond more effectively to changes in the market or environment. Strategic collaborations can also help institutions to expand their reach and access new markets and customers, which can help them to stay competitive in an ever-evolving and disruptive environment. Additionally, collaborating with other organisations can help institutions to share the risks and costs of implementing new programs and services, which can help them to be more agile and responsive to changes in the market or environment. Furthermore, strategic collaborations can foster a culture of innovation, which can lead to the development of new programs and services that better meet the needs of students and the broader community.

Overall, strategic collaborations can help PHEIs gain access to new resources, knowledge and expertise, expand their reach, share risks and costs, foster innovation and respond more effectively to market or environment changes, lead to the creation of business agility. Table 16 below indicates extracts responses from the participant’s transcripts.

Table 16: Participants' Responses on Strategic Collaboration Theme

No.	Theme and responses	Participants
6	<p>Strategic Collaborations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... operating silos, if you look at the QCTOs, oh, you look at the CHE, we'll get to know UMALUSI threes and the SETAs. All of them operate in silence. There is a need for integration, common agendas and collaboration in the interest of society, providers, educators and you know, students. So there needs to be a real integration and what do you what are we see, you know, we're seeing individuals coming from tertiary education that doesn't have a complete application. • ... now, where it's also important for us to be connected to, for example, locally, is an African Business School's Association, where we are an active participant, similar to the Da Vinci. You know where we are, although everybody competes. Nick Bernadel, I remember using the term co-optician; you know, although we compete, we can also cooperate, especially regarding management education in South Africa. So that is very valuable because, you know, it's a network of people that 	[P2], [P4], [P5], [P17], [P4], [P3], [P6], [P16], [P17], [P8]

	<p>also travels broadly and widely and that's a platform where we also share. You know this. Let's say best practice, but there's an openness to share with the people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ... we have partners in the same industry in different countries and things like that that we deal with and we will compare notes. What the one side, we will provide some of the deliverables we've made. We've done this to a couple of folks in the USA and Europe, where we will send an example to them and say, hey, what do you think of this, where we've got good feedback from other people in our industry. That is not necessarily in our backyard. Still, broader aside and Europe being as strict as it is, it's a good benchmark for us because we can benchmark against that. • ... Da Vinci became affiliated with SAPHE (South African Private HE). As an organisation, SAPHE will often raise issues with the regulator. An association like that will have more clout in getting an answer than an institution approaching the regulator directly. Regarding POPIA, we spent many hours developing policies and implementing processes. • ... so, we have formed ties with universities in Australia, Europe and America. We work very closely with him. We sent students they sent students for over a year. So, collaborations with other educational institutions to assist you and learn from them are extremely important and we found that South Africa prioritise educational institution. So, the rich array with a bunch is also a member. And we work together to assist and support each other, which is another safeguard for us. 	
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4.3 Conclusion

This chapter describes the researcher's analysis of the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews. Most of the data was organised into six major themes using thematic content analysis, including the client-centred approach to business, digital transformation, communication strategy, business adaptation to change, drive strategy and strategic collaborations. In conclusion, combining different strategies and approaches can create business agility in the PHEI sector. A client-centred approach to business, which focuses on understanding and meeting the customer's needs, can help institutions quickly adapt to changing customer demands and increase customer satisfaction and loyalty. Digital transformation, which refers to incorporating digital technologies into all aspects of an organisation's operations, can help institutions operate more efficiently, make data-driven decisions, provide more flexibility, facilitate online learning and enable remote teaching.

A well-designed communication strategy can help institutions to engage with their stakeholders, build trust and reputation, respond to changes more effectively, and stay competitive in an ever-evolving market. Business adaptation to change, which is the ability of an organisation to respond quickly and effectively to changes in the market or environment, can help institutions to remain flexible, innovative, and competitive in an ever-evolving

business disruptive environment. Drive strategy, which is the implementation of processes and systems that motivate and engage employees to work towards a common goal, can help to create a motivated and engaged workforce that can respond quickly and effectively to changes in the market or environment. Strategic collaborations, which refer to the process of forming partnerships and alliances with other organisations to achieve shared goals, can help institutions to gain access to new resources, knowledge, and expertise, expand their reach, share risks and costs, foster innovation, and respond more effectively to changes in the market or environment. When implemented effectively, these strategies and approaches can help PHEIs create business agility and stay competitive in an ever-evolving world of work and markets.

For the researcher to find answers to the issues raised at the start of this study, the next chapter will go deeper into these findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the outcomes of the interviews within the context of the conceptual framework and, where relevant, links the findings to the literature review. The chapter presents the research findings that culminated from the data analysis process. The study's primary aim was to explore the current state of strategic business management practices for business resilience within PHEIs in a developing socio-economic context, with a vision of designing a strategic framework to support PHEIs building resilience by establishing innovative business practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment. The previous findings chapter (four) explained how the broad themes were derived inductively through open axial to selective coding. The researcher collected qualitative data by conducting seventeen semi-structured interviews via MS Teams. The completed data reports will be available on an online repository, to be lodged with the Da Vinci Institute research office, comprising the data audit trail.

As explained in previous chapters, the reader is reminded that the researcher founded the study on a Mode 2 knowledge production framework (Gibbons, Limoges, Nowothny, Schwartzman, Scott & Trow, 1994). In this model, knowledge is seen as a collective and participatory process. Researchers work with stakeholders such as policymakers, industry partners, and public members to produce relevant, applicable, and valuable research in addressing real-world problems. The Mode 2 framework has been influential in shaping debates about the role of research in society and how knowledge is produced and used. It has also been used to critique the traditional academic model of knowledge production and to call for more collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches to research. Overall, the Mode 2 framework is important for understanding the changing nature of knowledge production in the 21st century.

It is crucial to interpose and narrate why the researcher began this section by discussing what makes this study unique rather than the summary of the major findings, as is the tradition. Breaking the tradition and beginning with the summary of key findings in this chapter was deliberate rather than accidental. While the researcher is aware that such a summary undoubtedly offers context to the following debates and arguments, he is equally conscious that the following discussion section will offer such context. It is also important to note that beginning with a study's summary of major findings is not a hard-and-fast rule but rather a traditional guideline (Bavdekar, 2015). Therefore, detailed accounts of the research findings are discussed below.

5.2 Presentation of Research Findings

The researcher generated the selective codes by systematically grouping and organising the open codes into code groups to make sense of the patterns within and across open codes. The data was coded using the comments feature on Microsoft Word (MS Word). These comments were extracted to a table using MS Word Macro. The table was then transferred to Excel for data manipulation and thematic analysis. The researcher followed the following steps: The first step was to have a Macro in MS Word to extract the comments. The researcher used a Macro already created by Wheaton College (Peach, 2022) to insert the Macro on MS Word; the researcher went to the tools section, selected Macro, and then opened the Visual Basic Editor pasted the Macro copied from the link above and saved it. The researcher then individually coded each interview in MS Word using the comments feature and then extracted a table of comments from each interview using MS Word Macro. This creates separate Word document tables with the interview quotation and the page number where each quote is found. Each quote has an identifier. The researcher then transferred each extracted table of comments onto an Excel document and engaged with the data and developed themes. The data analysis resulted in axial codes through emerging storylines to explain further and explore code patterns. This resulted in selective codes (emerging themes) that were considered and distilled to create six main themes, as presented in Table 17.

Table 17: Key Themes Extracted from the Participants' Responses

No.	Themes
1	Theme 1: Client-Centred Approach to Business
2	Theme 2: Digital Transformation
3	Theme 3: Communication Strategy
4	Theme 4: Business Adaptation to Change
5	Theme 5: Drive Strategy
6	Theme 6: Strategic Collaborations

The researcher presents the emergent themes from the data analysis and the associated findings. The themes are presented in chronological order, allowing the reader to understand the progression and development of the themes over time. The findings related to each theme provide insight into the underlying patterns and trends in the data. The results can be used to draw conclusions and make recommendations about the studied topic.

5.2.1 Client-Centred Approach to Business

A client-centred approach to business is one critical theme from the research data gathered that emerged strongly. To create a lasting and memorable customer experience, companies should put their clients at the centre of their core business. This refers to the business leader's ability to put clients at the core of their business to remain sustainable and prosperous. It may also be expressed as customer-centricity. Client understanding should pave the way for client experience transformation, enabling the organisation to develop a deeper comprehension of the client's value as data emerges indicates. This should place an organisation in a position to design a well-informed client engagement strategy based on a deeper understanding of their clients' needs. It should allow the organisation to arm its employees with the right strategy and inspire them to deliver on their promises.

Participant [P1] stated that PHEIs could demonstrate their value and relevance to customers by sharing personal stories that resonate with them. This helps build trust, establish a connection with customers, and helps to differentiate PHEI from its competitors. By sharing real-life examples and experiences, PHEIs can show customers that they understand their needs and are committed to providing solutions that meet their unique requirements. This can help to build customer loyalty and drive long-term growth for PHEI. In addition to sharing personal stories with customers, it is also important for PHEIs to demonstrate a commitment to selflessly serving their customers. This means being willing to put the customer's needs first and going the extra mile to ensure they are satisfied with the products or services that the PHEI provides. By showing a genuine interest in their customers and a desire to help them succeed, PHEIs can build solid and long-lasting relationships with their clients, which can help to drive growth and sustainability for the organisation. Participant [P14] highlights the importance of deeply understanding customers' needs and requirements and responding quickly and effectively. This requires PHEIs to have strong communication and collaboration skills and to be willing to work closely with customers to co-create solutions that meet their unique needs and expectations. By being responsive and adaptable and by working in partnership with customers, PHEIs can create products and services that are relevant, valuable, and effective and that help drive growth and sustainability for the organisation:

[P14], "From a client perspective, an organisation needs to have visibility into their client's requirements and needs to respond effectively and provide products and services that meet their expectations. This requires a collaborative approach, where the organisation and the client work together to co-create solutions that address the client's needs. Taking a client-focused approach to design, organisations can ensure that their products and services are tailored to the needs of their clients and provide value."

Participant [P13] emphasises the importance of being a client and people-focused to build resilience and achieve long-term sustainability. This involves understanding customers' and employees' needs and concerns and being empathetic and responsive. It also consists in investing in the right technologies and platforms that can help to protect the organisation and provide a competitive edge in the market. PHEIs can build solid and resilient organisations that can adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing business environment by focusing on clients and people:

[P13], "To become more client-focused and successful, it's important for organisations to also focus on their people and create a supportive and empathetic environment. This means understanding and addressing the fears and uncertainties of employees and investing in platforms and solutions that will help protect the company and provide a competitive edge. Organisations can create a strong and sustainable foundation for success by prioritising their clients and people."

There is a consensus among the research from the data; one may conclude that the client must be at the centre of the business and that a deeper understanding of the client is necessary to maintain customer happiness. Collaboration between a company and its clients has developed significant marketing power, giving both sides a sense of exclusivity and creating an entirely new offering that appeals to the consumer base. Participant [P2] highlights the importance of empathy and understanding in building resilience and achieving long-term sustainability. This involves taking the time to understand the context and challenges facing customers, employees, and other stakeholders and using that understanding to create a shared vision for the organisation. This requires a cycle of ongoing dialogue and collaboration, where imagination and understanding are continuously refined and improved to make a common ground supporting the organisation's growth and success. PHEIs can build solid and resilient organisations that adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing business environment by focusing on empathy and understanding:

[P2], "You need to develop that empathy appropriately to understand the context and the issues that the target audience that you're trying to deal with or do something else trying to deal with. From that understanding, create the vision. Then you have the cycle and this iterative process between understanding and vision and vision and understanding to create the common ground based on understanding and vision".

In addition, participant [P3] emphasised the importance of developing new business capabilities to create value and build resilience in a rapidly changing business environment. This involves a combination of mindset, practices, and technology; all focused on empowering individuals, fostering innovation, and driving sustainable and transformative change. By

building new capabilities, PHEIs can create unique and differentiated values that set them apart. This can drive growth and sustainability for the organisation and help it thrive in a rapidly changing business environment:

[P3], “Organisations must build new business capabilities to create value and remain competitive. This involves an open mindset focused on sustainability and transformation, human-centred design thinking and change management practices. Combined with technology, these practices and mindsets can help organisations build new capabilities that lead to new results and unique value. Continuously developing and improving their business capabilities, organisations can stay ahead of the competition and provide value to their clients and stakeholders.”

Participant [P6] emphasised the importance of building a business model responsive to customers’ needs. This means starting with a deep understanding of the customers and their unique needs and requirements. Building a business model focused on the client, PHEIs can create relevant, valuable, and practical value that helps drive growth and sustainability for the organisation. This can help PHEIs to remain competitive and adaptable in a rapidly changing business environment. Participant [P6] echoed the same sentiments when he mentioned:

Organisations can better serve their clients and provide value through a client-focused approach. [P6], “In a digital sense, organisations need to start with their clients and ensure that everything they do is responsive to their needs and expectations. This means understanding who their clients are and what they need and organising their business model and strategic pillars around the needs of their clients. It’s important to note that not all organisations serve the same clients, and it’s important to understand the target audience to provide the most value.”

Participant [P10] emphasises the importance of investing in student support and proactively protecting students who may be struggling. This can help PHEIs to build strong relationships with their students and to provide them with the support and resources they need to succeed. Focusing on the needs of their students, PHEIs can create relevant, valuable, and practical value that helps drive growth and sustainability for the organisation. As a result, this can help PHEIs to remain competitive and adaptable in a rapidly changing business environment:

“Organisations often invest heavily in student support programs to provide their students with the best support and protection. These programs can include academic support, such as tutoring and extra help, as well as proactive measures to identify students who may be struggling and provide

them with the support they need. This can include running campaigns and offering additional resources, such as after-class support, to help students succeed. Organisations can ensure their students have the best chance of success by investing in student support.”

In support of P10’s exertion on the value of customer-centricity, Pine and Gilmore (1998) claim that in the experience economy, businesses purposefully and intentionally use their goods and services as a platform to interact with specific customers in a way that produces a memorable experience. The goal is to create distinctive, one-of-a-kind experiences that consumers will remember personally and solely in their minds. In an economy based on experiences, businesses leverage their goods and services to draw customers and boost sales. Organisations and companies enhance sales by developing experiences that result from the interaction between a staged experience or event and the mental state of the specific consumer. Because these experiences are highly personal and provide a treasured memory that customers are willing to pay for, no two customers can have the same experience. Pine and Gilmore first proposed the ‘experience economy’ idea in 1998 (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). To further understand the concept, the Harvard review's examination conducted by Pine and Gilmore's study unpacked how economic distinctions began with the agrarian economy focused on selling commodities (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). The industrial economy followed the agricultural economy, built on goods and services. In this era, goods and services became commoditised, resulting in consumers not focusing on the brand or who made it but instead shifting focus to looking for and securing the best price for the product or service on sale. Experiences have become a distinct economic offering in this era.

Sanat Rao explained how a poll of nearly 2000 business leaders and experts conducted in 2020 had validated Pine and Gilmore's concept of the experience economy in an article titled ‘Winning in the Experience Economy’ in Forbes (Rao, 2021). According to this survey, customer experience ranked first among brand differentiators for 46% of respondents over the next five years, surpassing product and price by 2025. Rao concluded that this proves the relevance of the experience economy, an idea Pine and Gilmore first put forth in 1998. Rao further asserted that technology is the most critical enabler of experience. In the preceding 12 to 15 months of the global pandemic, digitalisation is playing a crucial role in keeping experiences in every consuming area alive. This is especially pertinent in this period. Experienced businesses charge consumers for the feelings they get when engaging with the brand (Newman, 2015). Participant [3] also highlights the importance of a robust communication strategy and processes to support students and make their learning journey seamless and stress-free. This can include quick turnaround times for student queries, clear and concise communication, focusing on reducing anxiety and helping students feel supported and engaged. Focusing on the needs of their students, PHEIs can create relevant, valuable, and practical value that helps drive growth and sustainability for the organisation.

As a result, this can help PHEIs to remain competitive and adaptable in a rapidly changing business environment:

[P9], “We often implement robust communication and coding strategies and fast turnaround times for student queries to help make the learning journey as easy and stress-free as possible for students. This helps minimise anxiety and ensures students have the support they need to succeed. Making the learning experience meaningful and accessible, organisations can help their students achieve their goals.”

In support of this notion, Domino's Pizza allows customers to order their Pizza via text, tweet, or email. In this way, customer needs are met in real-time and with ease. Apple is applauded for creating great futuristic retail stores. The look and feel of these stores are matched by the experience consumers get when using Apple products. A combination of great products and experience has been a recipe for Apple and its growth. In the experience economy, consumers engage using participation and connection. A brand that fulfils a consumer's need will succeed in building loyalty with a generation of digital mobile users who will use the digital platform to share their experience with other consumers. Interaction, listening, co-creation and co-production of products and services with brands and consumers are all part of the experiential change journey that excites consumers, adds value, and drives growth in this ever-changing world of work (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Watling, McCabe, and Seedat (2019) supported the above argument and suggested that South African retailers experience the same pressure as American retailers in a study titled ‘Rethinking Relevance: How South Africa's shops can pivot to digital consumers. Local shops have shied away from making online convenience for customers due to South Africa's delayed and limited adoption of e-Commerce firms. Customers in South Africa have not had a fun internet experience (Watling *et al.*, 2019). The popularity of online shopping in America led to the closure of roughly forty brick-and-mortar stores by companies such as Radio Shack, Sears, Sports Authority, Toys' R' Us, and Payless Shoe Source. Due to the need for online transactions, Standard Bank in South Africa closed 104 of its locations nationwide in 2019. Business Insider South Africa (2019) shows customers appreciate internet shopping for several reasons. It is perceived as more individualised, practical, enjoyable, economical, and, in the eyes of some individuals, more socially responsible. Online stores are working to create shopping experiences that are as rich as possible without requiring customers to drive to a mall and find parking. Keeping their fingers crossed that the item they are looking for is still in stock and available. Today's PHEIs can use this concept because online program offerings can be more accessible for clients and reach a wider audience. Participant [P4] emphasises the importance of prioritising care, kindness, and respect in client interactions. This can help PHEIs build solid and positive relationships with their customers and create relevant, valuable, and practical value. Focusing on care, kindness, and respect, PHEIs can make a positive

customer experience and help drive growth and sustainability for the organisation. This can help PHEIs to remain competitive and adaptable in a rapidly changing business environment.

Participant [P9] highlights the shift in the business landscape, where clients are now seen as the driving force behind the success of an organisation. This means that business leaders and executives are no longer the sole “superheroes” of the business and must work in partnership with clients to drive growth and achieve long-term sustainability. Focusing on the needs and priorities of clients, PHEIs can create relevant, valuable, and practical value that helps drive growth and sustainability for the organisation. This can help PHEIs to remain competitive and adaptable in a rapidly changing business environment. Participant [P3] explicitly mentioned that the digital company transformation is concentrated on putting the client or customer's needs first, and clients are at the centre of any artificial intelligence development. Clients are the digital transformation's soul. Being a client-centred business leader or business allows them to ground the basics, resembling good work ethic and moral code of conduct, argues participant [P1]. It also allows companies to be connected to their clients. Several participants noted that focusing on customers makes a business leader empathetic, humble, and compassionate. This aspect of creative inspiration was the common perspective, not how much you know. The participants further indicated that awareness of your client's needs allows you to read and connect with your clients and the importance of creating a sense of customer belonging and identity. Authentic engagement is more likely if you are aware of your clients, and authenticity arose as an essential capability in the ever-evolving digital era. This was reinforced by participants who emphasised client centrality:

[P11], “It’s important for businesses to engage with their clients authentically and genuinely and to be true to themselves and their values. In today’s world, clients are increasingly looking for authenticity and are more likely to buy from and follow authentic businesses. The days of narcissism and superficiality are over, and clients are looking for businesses they can trust and connect with on a deeper level. Being authentic and genuine, businesses can build stronger relationships with their clients and create value for themselves and their clients.”

South Africa has a greater rate of internet consumption than India. With fifty-eight million citizens, South Africa has a population access rate above 50%. New research findings (Goldstuck, Deibele & Robinson, 2022) indicate that internet retail in South Africa more than doubled in just two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic’s massive increase in demand for home delivery. Online Retail in South Africa 2021, a study conducted by World-Wide Worx with Mastercard, Standard Bank and Platinum Seed's support reveals that the total growth for online retail in South Africa in 2020 came to 66%, bringing the total of online retail in South Africa to R30,2-billion. The most remarkable feature of this sum is that it has increased by

more than R14,1 billion in just two years, according to World-Wide Worx MD Arthur Goldstuck, the project's lead analyst.

Additionally, it is 50% greater than the entire prediction for 2020, which predicted that South Africa's internet shopping would reach R20 billion by that year. The figure comes into the most dramatic context compared to traditional retail. In 2018, R14,1 billion in online retail represented 1.4% of total retail, estimated at R1,07 trillion. Since it started from a low base, online retail has beaten conventional retail growth for the past 20 years, but traditional retail continued to grow yearly until 2019. In 2020, it slumped as a result of the lockdown as well as economic stress and according to preliminary data from Stats SA, total retail sales experienced a 4.2% decline to R1.05 trillion at current prices. The percentage of retail made up by online retail sales came to 2.8%, exactly double the rate for 2018.

Furthermore, the authors further deluded that between the period 2018-2023, online retail sales increased three times faster than in-store sales due to the explosive expansion of smartphones. Consumers in South Africa have stated that the slow adoption of Internet shopping is primarily due to security concerns and unimpressive online experiences. Opportunities offered by companies, for example Amazon, eBay, Apple, Zappos, and Dell can help them learn. To improve their online shopping experience, these businesses gave their customers what they wanted: safe payments, online video enhancements, free delivery, simple return procedures, and same-day deliveries. Retailers, including Walmart and Lowe's improved their online customer experience by giving people the choice of ordering online and picking up in-store or ordering in-store and scheduling a home delivery. Customers of Tesco in the UK can order groceries by speaking their lists into a Google Home app, and a driver will deliver the products.

The number of digitally aware consumers in South Africa is growing. Research conducted by Watling *et al.* (2019) showed that from 2015 to 2018, digitally savvy consumers grew to 12% (up from 10% in 2015), meaning 58% of South Africans (up from 43% in 2015) are 'experimental' users and choosing online shopping experiences as their preferred platform. 'The Failure to adopt new technologies and new ways of doing business traps value' (Watling *et al.*, 2019:8). When Woolworths realised that mobile phones were the preferred shopping channels, they launched their in-app shopping using their integrated lifestyle app and, as a result, achieved a 34% growth in online sales. First National Bank (FNB) achieved a 65% growth in mobile app users, while Capitec Bank saw a 62% increase in the banking app over six months (Watling *et al.*, 2019). Discovery Bank, established in 2019, has no branches and conducts business exclusively online. These are a few examples of organisations creating the delicate touch when offering customer services, creating a personalised memorable experience. Therefore, in light of the above discussion and standards, the author advises PHEI leaders to embrace this new norm and apply it in their space to create a sense of belonging and personalised customer experience. PHEI leaders can build stronger customer

relationships and improve customer satisfaction and loyalty. It is important to remember that personalisation should be implemented ethically and transparently, with appropriate safeguards to protect customer privacy and data security.

Being client-centred means business leaders in PHEI should create an environment that fosters innovation and embraces new ideas from employees across the organisation. Although creation has existed since a very long time ago, since much earlier eras, and has been progressively increasing in relevance, it has become crucial for advancing company strategy. The researcher can argue that management of innovation in PHEIs, therefore, should be utilised as a tool for retrospection, an approach used so that sustainability, growth, and impact on the overall organisation and the communities are served in a meaningful and insightful manner. This view was supported by a participant [P7], who agreed that while innovation is essential, creation must still be tied to the customer's needs. Being a client-centred business enables collaboration and cooperation. Participant [P17] emphasised the importance of teamwork and partnership in trade. This can involve partnering with competitors or other parties in the macrosystem to share resources and maximise market share. For example, in the case of business consulting, management consultants may partner with marketing agencies to deliver a comprehensive solution to clients. Working together and leveraging the strengths of different parties, PHEIs can create relevant, valuable, and practical value that helps drive growth and sustainability for the organisation. This can help PHEIs to remain competitive and adaptable in a rapidly changing business environment. On the other hand, collaboration is about collaborating with other people in the organisation to deliver outcomes:

[P15], "Teamwork is essential for organisations to be successful, and in today's world, where many people are working from home, the need for collaborative tools is greater than ever. Collaborative tools allow teams to work together and share information, regardless of location and can help improve communication and coordination. Investing in collaborative tools, organisations can support their teams and improve their ability to work together, even when not in the same physical location."

The literature supports the idea of a client-centred approach to a business strategy that has emerged from the data. Client expectations and experiences are constantly evolving. However, as shown above, and below, the literature supported the outdated customer experience theory. Client experience, according to Terblanche (2018), is seen as a combination of concrete and intangible elements that clients encounter when dealing with an organisation - what an organisation provides—the total of all consumer relationships or encounters with a business, whether offline or online. The emerging data supported this as we have seen that client experience within education services delivered by PHEIs in SA is the ease of engagement, which is of primary importance, where potential clients are engaged at

various stages and provided with services specifically tailored to their service needs. Recurrent customer satisfaction surveys enable PHEIs to identify potential problems that may arise and adjust their course of action accordingly.

Customer satisfaction is an essential factor in attracting and retaining students in PHEIs. In support of Chheda, Duncan, and Roggenhofer (2017), when customers are content and satisfied with the goods and services, they will buy more goods and services and stick with the business. If clients are happy with the services provided, they are more likely to recommend the institution to others, which can increase enrollment. A positive customer experience can also increase current students' loyalty and retention as they will be more likely to continue their studies at the institution if their needs are met. Therefore, PHEIs must focus on providing high-quality services and a positive customer experience to attract and retain students. This can involve continually gathering feedback from clients, making improvements based on their suggestions, and offering a range of programs and services that meet the diverse needs of students.

In addition, Sigala (2018), controlling individualised experiences and harnessing client capabilities all go hand in hand with shaping clients' expectations. The necessity of collaborating with clients becomes apparent, as emerging data indicates. Shaping prospects involves engaging present and potential customers in public discourse, teaching them, and receiving education in return. It goes beyond standard one-way communication by business development managers or product sales teams (Demangeot & Broderick, 2016). In support, Martnez-Ruiz, Gómez-Suárez, Jiménez-Zarco, and Izquierdo-Yusta (2018) argued that the vision of PHEI in today's world is to improve client experience. Globally, PHEIs have embraced the idea of client experience management, and most PHEIs have started incorporating it into their mission statements. For example, contemporary businesses such as Dell concentrate on providing the best customer experience in the industries they service. Toyota seeks to boost profitable growth by offering excellent customer service and dealer support (Michelli, 2017). In support, Foster (2018) also argues that creating a distinctive customer experience is the key to a business-like Starbuck's success. The importance of the client experience in building brand loyalty, services, and channels for businesses has become increasingly evident (Martnez-Ruiz *et al.*, 2018).

Furthermore, the increasing competitiveness of the 21st-century market has led to a growing emphasis on the concept of client experience, as highlighted by Khader and Madhavi (2017) over the past decade. In addition, Kotler *et al.* (2018) argue that creating value for customers through offering unique experiences is a tactic that is gradually being used. Customer experience has been linked to several organisational advantages, including the development of client satisfaction and loyalty (Hill & Alexander, 2017), influencing expectations (Seligman, 2012), fostering client confidence and brand support (Kompella, 2014), and forming emotional connections with clients (Neukrug, 2015). According to D'Aveni (2010), the concept

of the client experience offers a means to break free from the product-centric approach by providing an additional tool that confers a competitive advantage over rivals. Client experience, such as CRM, has numerous meanings the researcher has previously examined. The customer experience is described by Pasqualini (2019) as an 'experience economy.' Pasqualini (2019) argues that experience is the next step up the value chain in money. Most economists combine experiences and services, but Vogel (2014) argues that experiences have a unique economic value as distinct from services as services are from goods. D'Aveni (2010) asserts that consumers unquestionably seek experiences and believes that more businesses are responding by publicly producing and endorsing these; the experience is classified as a fourth financial product. An experience, according to the author, is an essential contribution like a good, service, or commodity. In the service economy, many businesses offer experiences in addition to their standard products to better market them. However, they disagree that companies must purposefully create captivating experiences that demand a cost to fully realise the benefits of experiences (Rozenes & Cohen, 2017). Additionally, they assert that if businesses wish to avoid becoming commodities, they must advance their goods to the next level of economic value.

The main concerns are when and how businesses can participate in the emerging experience economy. Peppers and Rogers (2016) argue that an experience happens when a business consciously uses services as a point and items as props to engage particular customers in a way that produces a memorable event. Experiences are personal, existing exclusively in the mind of the person involved on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level, as opposed to earlier economic offerings like commodities, goods, and services, which are external to the buyer. Because each experience results from the interaction between the staged event and the individual's mental state, no two people can have the same one (Peppers & Rogers, 2016). The Harvard Business Review article 'Welcome to the Experience Economy,' on the other hand, client experience is described by Oertzen, Odekerken-Schröder Brax, and Mager (2018) as a personal definition of the service process, their engagement and contribution to it through their trip or a series of touchpoints, and how those things make the client feel. Ortzen, Odekerken-Schröder, Brax, and Mager (2018) further argue that the experience and value are solely from a particular client's perspective. They are inherently personal, existing only in the client's perception.

In addition, Peppers and Rogers (2016), a client's service-related experiences might result in various attitudes, including solid and irrational feelings and physiological conditions that go along with them. The primary emotions contributing to the client's experience are joy, surprise, love, fear, fury, remorse, and sadness. These emotions can vary from distress to hopelessness, affection to closeness, or comfort to elation. The physical product or service, along with the emotions elicited before, during, and after the interaction with your business, culminate to form the client experience, as stated by Ponsignon, Durrieu, and Bouzdine-Chameeva (2017). Customers' perceptions of how they have benefited from the company's

service are included in the benefits they gain from using and experiencing it. An additional result of the service will be the client's awareness of or lack of understanding of the assessment offered by the apparent importance of the service, as well as their general contentment or dissatisfaction (Babin, Murray & Harris, 2017). The decisions to repurchase, recommend it to others, or voice complaints are all outcomes of these judgements, whether they are positive or negative. These intentions might or might not lead to action (Babin et al., 2017).

Evans and Cothrel's (2014) data support the notion that a consumer's interaction with a product, a company, or a part of its organisation initiates a response and marks the commencement of the client experience. This encounter is very private and indicates many levels of client interaction (rational, emotional, sensory, physical, and spiritual). The customer's evaluation of their expectations and the benefits from dealing with the company, its goods and services, and its offering at various points of connection or touch affects the experience assessment. The customer experience, according to Loureiro and Sarmiento (2018), is the culmination of interactions with the business, including the brand and frontline workers (in the case of the PHEIs, the business development, admissions, registry, teaching, and learning and operations and finance). Their fundamental conviction is that the organisation's value, which must serve as the focal focus of their efforts, drives how clients perceive their experiences with them. In addition, Chi, Lisic, Myers, Pevzner, and Seidel's (2019) hypothesis of low engagement might result in client unhappiness and customer churn.

The client experience practice includes pre- and post-service encounters; it deals with emotional and functional aspects of quality and incorporates the client's social context (Dale & Sheets 2019). Regarding client experience, business leaders in the PHEI environment must be transparent in their strategy for growth if they are to become profitable with their programmes. Business leaders should have learnt from the past CRM investments, where there was an absence of a distinct documented strategy, standardisation of goals, and expansion of the needed dynamic abilities, that in turn, led to a very high rate of failure (Mohammed, Rashid & Tahir, 2017). Like CRM, adopting customer experience appears challenging because it may involve a long-time horizon, every client interaction point, the emotional element, and practical outcomes. PHEI business leaders will only repeat the errors of earlier process-led change management interventions in marketing if firms establish a clear scope for their programs and articulate a feasible development strategy (Cameron & Green, 2015). Many businesses need help implementing a sizable, complete client experience program since it is difficult to access and not universally desired. In support, Fernandes and Pinto (2019) argue that managing the "holistic" and nebulous character of the customer experience is one of the three main obstacles that most organisations face when trying to control it. Many organisations need help to pinpoint the client experience precisely. Due to their interdependence, business leaders should not manage the difficulties above separately. The main challenges organisations must overcome are determining what client experience is

or what it entails, demonstrating the results of the client experience program (tying it to accomplishment), securing funding, and developing a consistent approach (Fernandes & Pinto, 2019). The main challenge in designing and putting a client experience strategy into practice is the need to define the process and how to measure it.

The fact that most organisations need to approach customer experience from a system-thinking viewpoint is one of the reasons why it is difficult (Buttle & Maklan, 2019). The client experience includes a complicated web of relationships between a company's staff, partners, and customers. The decisions and activities of this group of stakeholders mutually determine the standard and uniqueness of all client relations. Customers have specific requirements when they realise, evaluate, choose, obtain, use, and receive support for a company's services and goods. However, most employees and associates only focus on the channel or purpose they are responsible for rather than seeing their tasks as matching the perspective of customer journeys. Business executives heavily weigh client experience on business development and training and development of frontline staff members, which further complicates the situation. However, the staff working in the background might also have an equal or more significant impact on client encounters. Because internal and external stakeholders need to understand how their roles relate to customer relations, many clients experience efforts that fail or fall short of their full potential. Sigala (2018) argues that to recognise the people, actions, and decisions that inspire the client experience, client experience professionals must work in cross-functional teams. Like CRM, there is no one definition of the customer experience, making assessing its efficacy and establishing clear goals and objectives more challenging. Because the phenomenon involves human emotions and feelings, which are difficult to quantify and predict because they are highly subjective, it is complex (Buttle & Maklan, 2019).

A business could use customer tactics to elicit particular reactions from its target audiences. However, the fact that the experience is subjective or cannot be precisely described and assessed may cause these tactics to fail. The study predicts that organisations will soon stop concentrating on the demands of their clients in favour of what can be considered fashionable. Business executives must therefore realise that the client experience is dynamic and changing, making it harder to quantify. However, the client's perspective must be long-term (Buttle & Maklan, 2019). Chang (2018) adds that the next phase in generating economic value will be the customer experience as the 'experience economy'. Client experience can only be achieved when businesses use their services as platforms and interact with people memorably. Subramaniam, Samdin, Ramachandran, and Kunasekaran (2018), Walt Disney has successfully developed experiences that increase the organisation's economic worth. Previous studies have shown that the client's experience can improve results if adequately understood and applied. Despite the confusion, many organisations prioritise the client experience as a fundamental strategic goal. It encourages the company to engage with its

customers to learn about and comprehend the items they might be interested in (Chang, 2018).

In light of the above discussion, the researcher can conclude that the PHEI business leaders in this ever-changing world have seen a severe shift in customer experience expectations. Therefore, in this era, customers are seen as digital-first and want to be heard and listened to. They have greater expectations of a total experience from the product purchased and various brands' services. Customers use their digital devices to search for better prices, service, and customer experience. This means PHEI business leaders must improve their online presence and create unforgettable online experiences for 'digital-first always' customers in this environment. The greater expectations about customer experience in the experience economy imply that business leaders must guide employees towards changing their mindset and attitude towards customer service. This will require analysing, understanding, and providing for customers' technological and emotional needs to create memorable experiences. PHEI business leaders will have to adopt the role of customer experience designer and guide their teams to create unique customer experiences where both the product and service make a pleasant rational, and emotional impact on customers.

Furthermore, PHEI business leaders need to promote a team environment that encourages employees to design exciting products and create memorable experiences that capture the imagination and make a pleasant rational, and emotional impact on customers. So, from a client perspective, it is the ability to have accurate visibility of the client's requirements and what they need and to get the entire organisational process to respond to the client side on the onset. Being part of the client aspect is also about making sure that PHEIs co-create with clients because their ability to create products and services that first respond to them but respond to the need in the way that they expect is critical to this design. Business executives have also connected customer satisfaction with particular financial results: There needs to be a shared understanding of the right metric to assess customer satisfaction. Additionally, the client experience strategy typically fails to provide "concrete evidence" linking the client experience program with financial results. Participants pointed to a causal relationship between customer experience and outcomes, such as improved customer experiences that eventually boosted customer loyalty and satisfaction. They also recommended that to produce the intended results, a client experience strategy should be viewed as a long-term commitment; a long-term perspective must be adopted while putting one into practice. However, the short-term perspectives of some stakeholders and shareholders are at odds with this.

Developing a client-centred strategy will benefit from understanding the socio-economic dynamics within the PHEI's current and potential client base. This may put the institution in a position to enhance customer satisfaction and improve client retention. Understanding the socio-economic dynamics of clients could also assist the organisation in improving how they

manage clients according to their needs and preferences. A lack of understanding of clients' needs and requirements can result in a poor client-centred approach to business strategy from neglecting clients from certain socio-economic groups. Client interaction is essential as clients need to feel important and cared for. Positive client interactions can help institutions improve client satisfaction, client recovery, employee motivation, and the general operating procedures within an institution (Agolla, Makara & Monametsi, 2018). A well-formulated client interaction strategy will assist in setting the tone for client interaction and engagement for the entire institution. It is vital to note that the strategy alone cannot achieve the desired outcomes.

Business leaders must communicate the strategy to the organisation, so everyone understands the vision. Effective communication of vision helps ensure that all employees know exactly what is expected of them, and they will also know where they fit in during the implementation of the strategy. If an organisation understands its clients, it can provide excellent customer experiences, which usually lead to customer satisfaction. In the same vein, poor customer engagement practices could be a testimony, at least to a certain extent, of poor client understanding. The above implies that client understanding enables the organisation to design tailor-made products and services, leading to satisfied and happy clients. Happy and contented clients buy more products and services and remain loyal to the organisation for years.

5.2.2 Digital Transformation

The emerging data has indicated that new ideas, digital technologies, business operating models and working methods penetrate the marketplace. The ability of people and organisations to embrace change and adapt is imperative when organisations such as PHEIs in South Africa succeed when they proactively listen and respond positively to customers' needs and invest aggressively in technology to build customer loyalty into the future sustainably. This notion is supported by the data from participants [P1] and [P2] in this study, who believe that adopting new technologies and digitalising processes can help their organisation remain relevant and build customer loyalty:

[P2], "An organisation can improve efficiency and provide a better customer experience by automating processes and moving to online applications, for example, in our institution".

Many organisations are moving with the digital times to stay included and caught up. The success of these efforts will likely depend on how well the organisation implements and integrates these new technologies into its operations. The widespread use of the digitisation platform in the 21st century shows a beneficial effect for academics and students in the institute of high learning, thus in line with the 4IR/5IR goals. As much digitisation practice

dominates in HE institutions, some grey areas still need to be well mastered. One participant [P5] mentioned that:

[P5], “Integrated technology platforms that can create visibility and create the ability for us to make data-driven evidence-based decision-making decisions”.

The first of these suggests a focus on systems rather than technology. The idea is to look at something other than individual technologies, such as AI or blockchain. People need to examine how best to govern the new technology as part of a broader system and determine how this system of new technologies will impact other future technologies. One business leader participant [P3] supported this by ensuring everyone had the equipment to do their job correctly. In support of the emerging data, economists Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee argue that in the digitisation era, people will experience more technological changes over the next ten to twenty years than they have seen in the past one hundred years (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2015). In this new world of work era, life operates at a different speed, scale, level of complexity and transformative power, contrasting with previous generations. People worldwide connected, learned, and exchanged information in this period using various media platforms. This sharing and exchange of communication impact the way people see the world, altering consumer expectations and how they now and in the future will choose to engage with brands and organisations.

Thomas Philbeck and Nicholas Davis (2018) claimed that societal norms and national political views toward economic development and international relations would alter in this age in their study ‘The Revolution: Shaping a new era’. Due to these changes, sectors, stakeholder groups, and social norms face technical and ethical issues. The writers refer to four concepts that outline and direct how society, people, and organisations should interpret how people and technology interact throughout a revolution. The second suggests ensuring people use the new technologies to empower rather than straightforward citizens. Organisations and business leaders need to apply principle three: collaborate by design and not by default to increase the probability of having an empowered society. To design the standards, infrastructure, rules, and business models that will define and influence the future, a wide range of stakeholders, governments, businesses, and interest groups must collaborate. If society, individuals, and organisations are to adjust successfully to digital transformation, critical decisions about the future should be collaboratively built by design, with all stakeholders represented. The fourth examines how ethics and values work in digital transformation. This principle implies that the new technology embodies the values of its designers, which could affect the user's desire or challenge the user's values and principles. Therefore, the ethics of technology need to be considered as people collaborate and build, by design, new ways of working in this era. The idea of digital transformation is not only an attempt to represent the past, present, or future, and it should not be. It is a tool to encourage

group action within and across nation-states in a manner that results in a more inclusive, just, and prosperous future by thinking deeply about the dynamics, values, stakeholders, and technology of a world that is changing rapidly (Philbeck et al., 2018).

These principles will require business leaders and employees to develop a systems thinking approach, empower employees to operate with various stakeholders, clients, industries, and interest groups, create a holistic view of business networks, and collaborate across traditional business boundaries. It will also require business leaders to guide employees to manage their values and ethics in the disruptive technological environment. The participants clarified the word 'digital' in the interviews as referring to a period where technology proliferates as opposed to pure technology itself. All the participants in the study experienced 'digitisation' as the impact of automation and the reality of the 4IR/5IR. The participant [P6] mentioned the importance of adopting a marketing approach that considers the changes brought about by 4IR/5IR, also known as industry 4.0 and 5.0:

[P6], "The approach involves considering the impact of digital technologies on the customer experience and implementing automation to improve operations and efficiency. Internalising 4IR/5IR and understanding its implications for their business, leaders can position companies for success in the digital age. This may involve strategic technological investments, training employees on new tools and processes, and rethinking traditional business models to better compete in a rapidly changing market.

There was, however, a commonly held view amongst the participants that one might become redundant unless the technology is integrated into the business. As one participant [P3] stated that the current jobs we have today would become redundant in the future due to automation and the increasing use of robotics and artificial intelligence (AI):

[P3], "As these technologies advance, they can perform many of the tasks currently done by humans, leading to job displacement and a need for workers to develop new skills. However, it is important to note that the extent to which this will happen is difficult to predict. It will depend on several factors, such as the rate of technological advancement and the willingness of businesses and governments to invest in training and retraining programs. While some jobs may become obsolete, adopting new technologies can create new job opportunities in industries that did not previously exist."

This realisation has left many participants in a state of fear and doubt as they fear their relevance in this new world of work. The participants shared a balanced view of the technological changes and developments and discussed advantages and disadvantages. The

benefits were put forward, such as improvements and enhancements to processes and operations; technology creates access to information; technology enables innovation; information travels faster and promotes the ability to use data to gather knowledge and insights. The disadvantages cited were stated by [P9] that technology causes a more significant divide between the rich and poor, and as a result of technology, boundaries are unclear. Work from home enabled by technology is an example of how the boundaries between work and personal life have been blurred. This is seen as both a positive and a negative by some of the participants [P17]. The virtual workplace, where employees work remotely, communicate, and collaborate using digital tools, has become more common in recent years, and the global pandemic has further accelerated this trend. Many companies have implemented remote work policies to allow employees to continue working from home during the pandemic. Some have even decided to shift to a virtual workplace model permanently. This shift has been driven by several factors, including the availability of advanced communication and collaboration technologies, the increased flexibility and mobility of the workforce, and the need to reduce costs and improve efficiency. While the virtual workplace has challenges, such as the need to maintain team cohesion and productivity, it also offers many benefits, such as the ability to attract and retain top talent and the potential to improve employee work-life balance.

During the global pandemic brought about by covid-19, a few see working from home as a massive advantage. At the same time, others have struggled to make the necessary adjustments. A participant lamented the impact of new technology in the same way as social media and the effect thereof on journalism, which has been reduced to propaganda – another disadvantage of technology. The researcher can argue that agility in building a sustainable culture of business innovation in a disruptive environment for PHEIs to survive. Apart from its disastrous effects, the global covid-19 pandemic has drastically influenced several organisations to recognise the importance of embracing agility. This is a crucial ingredient if organisations start developing a sustainable culture of innovation. For some organisations, innovation may have been a relatively daunting concept. While for others, it may have been mentioned in passing without being strategically and purposefully implemented or advanced to its total capacity. Yet, over the last two and a half years, organisations and people have had few options but to embrace the discovery of new ways of being, doing, and leading. Therefore, allowing innovation to gain a foothold in more novel and creative ways may impact organisational growth, sustainability, and operational efficiency. Thus, it is essential for organisations to strategically ensure that the lessons learnt from the global Covid-19 pandemic, such as the need for continuous investment and the development of a culture of innovation, are taken into consideration and implemented.

In support of Van Wulfen (2012), business leaders' creative ideas emerge from chaotic situations when communication occurs directly from the top down. Since there is no time to solicit opinions, most orders and suggestions are notifications. Snowden and Boone (2007)

assert that a crisis should be addressed by a crisis management team based on De Geus's (1988) initial concept. A different team should simultaneously look at possibilities for improvement and order. In addition, Mandelbrot (2013), knowing the "interconnectedness between fractals and chaotic dynamic systems" is necessary to comprehend chaos, such as the global epidemic known as COVID-19. To explore new tools and problem-solving techniques, chaos or complexity theory is based on a fractal framework meaning concerned with what is the case. (Velasqu ez, 2009). It is no secret that the landscape of education is changing. The evolution of technology and the dynamic nature of the workforce have changed how we learn and conduct business.

To survive and succeed in the new world of work, business leaders cannot rely on outdated 20th-century methods of management. Covid-19 shook the world, and in a few months, organisations were forced to shift their practices to accommodate hybrid work, remote teams, and increased flexibility. Innovation, agility, and fast decision-making are now more critical than ever for organisations to grow and enhance performance for PHEIs to survive in this environment. Old management models are not fit for purpose in today's environment, and a new way of managing and leading teams is required. The Cynefin framework can be valuable for business executives facing complex and dynamic situations. Helping them to understand the type of system they are dealing with; the framework can guide the appropriate approach to decision-making and action. The Cynefin framework is a decision-making framework that helps organisations to understand and navigate complex, uncertain, and dynamic environments. It is based on the idea that different situations require different approaches and that it is essential for organisations to be able to identify the type of situation they are facing and respond appropriately. The Cynefin framework can be related to digital transformation in several ways. Digital transformation involves adopting and integrating digital technologies into all aspects of an organisation, which can often be complex and uncertain. The Cynefin framework can help organisations understand and navigate this complexity by providing a framework for identifying the situation they are facing and responding appropriately.

For instance, in digital transformation, an organisation may face a situation where the solution to a problem is known and repeatable. In this situation, the Cynefin framework would recommend a 'sense-categorise-respond' approach, in which the organisation would use established procedures and best practices to solve the problem. On the other hand, an organisation may face a situation where the solution to a problem is unknown or uncertain. In this situation, the Cynefin framework would recommend a 'probe-sense-respond' approach, in which the organisation would experiment, learn, and adapt to find a solution. Overall, the Cynefin framework can provide valuable guidance for organisations undergoing digital transformation, helping them to understand and navigate the complexity and uncertainty of the process.

Encouraging PHEIs business leaders to be flexible and adaptable when making judgments and to change, a mistake that can be costly to a team or organisation, can be avoided. There is no doubt that digitisation has enabled the VUCA world to become a world marked by volatility, uncertainty, chaos, and ambiguity. The world has become more complex and uncertain in recent years, and the pace of change has increased. In this environment, making quick decisions based on the available information is essential. However, it's also important to take the time to consider all the possible implications of a decision and to think carefully before acting. Making rash decisions without thinking them through can lead to mistakes and problems. It's a balance between speed and thoughtfulness. This was a familiar feeling among most participants, such as [P10] when the participant was referring to the concept of a 'VUCA' world, which stands for volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous:

[P10], "In such a world, change happens quickly and unpredictably, and organisations need to be able to respond and adapt quickly to stay competitive. This means that decision-making processes need to be streamlined and efficient, and there may be less time for deliberation and contemplation before deciding. Instead, leaders may need to rely on their instincts, expertise, and available information to make decisions quickly and effectively. This can be challenging, but thriving in a VUCA world is necessary."

The phrase 'think on your feet' refers to the ability to produce solutions quickly and effectively or make decisions in challenging or unexpected situations. It means adapting and responding promptly without extensive preparation or planning. This is often seen as a valuable skill in today's fast-paced world, where change and uncertainty are standard. Thinking on your feet can help you navigate challenges and make the most of opportunities as they arise. Participant [P15] emphasised the need for organisations to be agile and adaptable to thrive in today's rapidly changing disruptive business environment. This may require employees to think and act quickly and be comfortable with making decisions with limited information or time for deliberation:

[P15], "Being 'quick and nimble' can help organisations respond to new challenges and opportunities and stay competitive in a constantly evolving market. This may involve adopting flexible business models, using advanced technologies to improve efficiency and collaboration, and empowering employees to take on new roles and responsibilities."

Participant [P9] expressed the challenges and pressures of working in a technologically fast-paced environment with the constant expectation to be available and responsive: understandably, people might feel pressure to respond immediately in certain situations, especially when trying to communicate with others in real-time. This can be incredibly

challenging when discussing complex or sensitive topics, as it may require more time and careful consideration to address the issues adequately. However, it's important to remember that taking the time to think and talk about problems can be beneficial in the long run, as it can help to ensure that essential issues are adequately addressed and that solutions are found that are fair and effective. It's also important to keep in mind that it's okay to ask for more time if you need it and that it's better to take the time to fully understand and address a problem than to rush to a solution that may not be the best option.

[P9], "In today's digital age, many organisations operate globally and have customers and stakeholders in different time zones. This can create pressure to be available and respond to requests and inquiries around the clock, leading to a feeling of being 'on' all the time."

This can be challenging for employees, leading to burnout and a lack of work-life balance. To address this issue, organisations may need to implement policies and practices that promote work-life integration and support employees' mental and physical well-being. This could include offering flexible work arrangements, training and resources on time management and stress reduction, and encouraging employees to take regular breaks and disconnect from work when needed. The Global pandemic (Covid-19) has significantly impacted mental health, with many people experiencing increased stress and anxiety levels due to the pandemic. The shift to remote work and the isolation that comes with it has been particularly challenging for many people. In addition, the uncertainty and fear surrounding the virus can lead to increased stress levels. The digitisation of work has also contributed to this trend, as many people are now experiencing increased workloads and a constant state of being connected to their work. This can lead to feelings of burnout and can exacerbate existing mental health issues. Individuals and organisations need to prioritise mental health and take steps to address the increased stress and anxiety that come with the digital age. This may include providing resources for mental health support, implementing policies to encourage work-life balance, and promoting open communication about mental health within the workplace. The participant [P6] described the negative impact of working in a fast-paced, high-pressure environment on employees' psychological and physical health:

[P6], "The constant demands and expectations of the workplace can create anxiety and stress, leading to burnout over time. It can affect an individual's ability to function effectively at work and in their personal life and severely affect their well-being."

To prevent burnout, individuals and organisations must recognise the signs and symptoms and implement coping mechanisms to manage stress and promote well-being. This could include mindfulness, exercise, regular breaks, and providing employees access to mental health resources and support. Change fatigue is a term that describes the exhaustion and

overwhelms that can come with constant change. In the digital age, where technology and the way we work are constantly evolving, it is common for people to experience change fatigue. This can lead to feelings of burnout and can hurt both physical and mental health. Individuals and organisations must prioritise self-care and mental health to combat change fatigue. This may include taking regular breaks, setting boundaries between work and personal time, and engaging in activities that promote relaxation and stress reduction. It is also important for organisations to provide support and resources for their employees to help them cope with change and manage their workloads effectively. Another participant [P17] even mentioned that ‘change fatigue is symptomatic in our modern-day digital era’. The coping mechanisms suggested ranged from drawing boundaries between home and work, being available for leisure activities and prioritising personal care. However, as digitisation brings change and uncertainty, many participants spoke about the need to be comfortable and adaptable to these changes. One participant mentioned that the old world of the work of linear steps had given way to a new world of chaos and complexity.

The uncertainty and unpredictability of complex systems; and business leaders needing to take responsibility for their actions are reasons why some businesses fail to work, even when logic is applied. Complex systems need the development of decision-making frameworks that explain the characteristics of a situation and possible predetermined actions (Canney & Bielefeldt, 2015). The researcher discussed design thinking as a higher-order method required from an individual to the organisation in decision-making. This process placed a tremendous responsibility on PHEI as a business to cultivate new explorative thinking patterns during disruptive periods. Much research has argued that one of the solutions is to share knowledge and experiences toward a collective and desired goal. Organisations can adapt to changing conditions and guide business leaders in strategically managing their businesses using available tools and techniques. Due to the ever-changing work circumstances and requirements, complexity becomes a substantial factor to consider. Globalisation has given rise to new markets and customers, broadening reach, said one participant [P5]. As a result, the growth of many offshore businesses is expected. There is, therefore, the need to ‘leverage technology and use data to reach the consumer.’ Participant [P9] discussed the impact of expanding markets, products, and consumers on brand loyalty:

[P9], “With more choices available, consumers are becoming increasingly discerning and demanding, and they may be less loyal to a particular brand. This can make it more difficult for companies to retain customers and maintain market share.”

PHEIs may need to focus on providing a superior customer experience and building strong client relationships. This could involve investing in personalised marketing and customer service efforts, offering high-quality products and services, and consistently delivering on brand promises. By doing so, PHEIs can differentiate themselves from competitors and

encourage customers to remain loyal to their brand. The use of data and technology can help organisations make more informed and evidence-based decisions. Using integrated technology platforms, organisations can gain visibility into their operations and make data-driven decisions that are not reactive but proactive. This can enable personalisation and customisation in various areas, such as marketing and customer service. Using data to understand individual customer preferences and needs, companies can provide more tailored experiences and build stronger customer relationships.

The participants [P9] and [P17] discussed the importance of using technology platforms and data to drive decision-making and create personalised customer experiences. By leveraging advanced technology and data analytics, PHEIs can gain visibility into their operations and the preferences and behaviours of their customers. This can enable them to make more informed, evidence-based decisions and tailor their products, services, and marketing efforts to individual consumers. As a result, customers may be more satisfied and loyal to the brand. However, the participants [P17] and [P9] also noted that innovation is critical to remaining competitive in today's market. This means not only innovating in terms of product development but also in other areas of the business, such as the operating model and customer experience. Continuously seeking new and better ways of doing things, PHEIs can stay ahead of the curve and meet their customers' evolving needs and expectations. Life has developed at least as quickly as its surroundings for more than four billion years. Nature can inoculate itself against environmental risks by constantly creating new genetic material. This is the evident ability to adapt to survive. Markets are similarly highly adaptable. Businesses compete to attract funds, and investors can choose where to put their money. The New York Stock Exchange has performed better than most member companies during the previous 50 years (Harvard Business Review, 2006) 'The Why, What, and How of Management Innovation'.

Participants' consensus [P2], [P6], [P11] and [P14] discussed how technology is transforming the way PHEIs work and do business. They noted that technology had enabled them to convert information and data into insights and knowledge, making more informed decisions and improving their operations. Technology has also increased the speed at which they develop and produce products, enabling them to respond more quickly to changing market conditions and customer demands. Additionally, technology has facilitated the acceleration of knowledge enablement and skills development, allowing them to learn and adapt faster in a rapidly changing world. Technology is crucial in driving innovation, efficiency, and competitiveness in the business world. The participants believed there needs to be a shift from centralised utilities to distributed systems. In this way, resources and capabilities can be shared across the organisation. Society revolves around continuous economic growth, and innovation is critical for the advancement of society. Productivity growth can raise an economy's material well-being, which increases the standard of living, the foundation of any society's long-term prosperity. "It is usually thought that economic growth arises from

improvements to one or both of the two primary components of an economy, i.e., capital and labour," according to economic history (AEC, 2015).

Sharma (2021) argues that economic growth is thus dependent on the development of the labour market or an increase in capital intensity, directly impacting productivity. This was supported by economist Ruchir Sharma (2021) in his recent book *Breakout Nations* as 'a developed market wrapped inside an emerging market' argued that it is essential for economic growth, particularly in developing countries such as South Africa. The author further argues that developing countries rely on innovation as new digital technologies and solutions help fight sickness, hunger, and poverty through initiatives such as innovation has solved social problems sustainably and efficiently, using modern technology like products and services that meet a social need, as connecting farmers to weather technology to help farmers make intelligent decisions about farming and agriculture (Sharma, 2021). Supporting the data of Caprelli (2015), innovation is the foundation of long-term economic growth and prosperity. Innovative ideas lead to new products, services or processes, and this dependency is driven by innovation. Innovative thinking allows individuals to be more creative and effective in the organisation and, in return, the economy. It stimulates teamwork and encourages a free flow of knowledge sharing and information in cooperative learning. The consideration of the broader ecosystem is a significant point for most of the participants. The participants mentioned the importance of systemic thinking, which involves considering the broader context and interconnectedness of various elements in a system rather than thinking in a linear, isolated manner. This type of thinking could help organisations approach complex problems more effectively:

One participant [P7] stated that we "need to build communities because, in community, fascism does not exist." Another [P4] explained, "that needs to realise our co-dependence of the broader society and stop thinking linearly. Systemic thinking is the new way we need to approach our organisations," reflected another [P3]. A participant [P1] mentioned, "The command economy needs to shift to a collaborative economy where we work in collaboration with all stakeholders".

Co-opetition, also known as collaborative competition, is a business strategy in which companies cooperate for mutual benefit while competing against each other in the marketplace. The goal of co-opetition is to create more value for all parties involved and the broader market. This can include sharing resources, pooling knowledge and expertise, or collaborating on joint projects. From a business value perspective, co-opetition can be a powerful tool for creating and capturing value. Working together, companies can achieve results they might have yet to accomplish on their own. This can include entering new markets, developing new products or services, or improving their offerings.

Additionally, co-opetition can help companies to manage risk and reduce costs, as they can share resources and expertise and pool their knowledge and experience. However, co-opetition has its challenges. Collaborating with competitors can be difficult, requiring trust and a willingness to share information and resources.

Additionally, companies must be careful not to lose their competitive edge by sharing too much with their competitors. As such, co-opetition requires cautious planning and execution to succeed. Overall, co-opetition is a valuable business strategy that can help companies to create more value in the marketplace. By working together, companies can achieve results they might have yet to be able to accomplish on their own and reduce risk and costs. However, co-opetition has its challenges and requires careful planning and execution to succeed:

"...no longer is a return on investment only about profits," said one participant. Another [P11] added, "Triple bottom line analysis is crucial. We must strike a balance between our goals and our financial interests. The role that your business plays on society, the environment and your ethics are most important," stated another [P7].

Hence, a participant said good corporate citizenship is essential for any business leader. To understand the science of systems thinking, a PHEI business leader needs to make sense of multiple business options and uncertainties. These uncertainties include the impact of advanced technology, globalisation, educational legislation, stakeholder interests, skills shortages, and cultural changes in a socio-economic context. Russel Ackoff calls for a mess where various problems result in interrelated issues (Gharajedaghi, 2017). As a result, dealing with difficulties and opportunities in the corporate sector may be conceivable, such as in PHEIs (Snowden & Boone, 2007). In support of the above and emerging data Furst-Bowe (2011) argues that systems thinking is based on the concept that all critical organisational processes are dynamically interrelated. Because the sum of its components is greater than the whole, it is impossible to comprehend a component's traits separately from the entire (Geldenhuys, 2016). Instead, understanding the relationships between the various members is critical to organisational effectiveness and achievement (Furst-Bowe, 2011). This comprehensive, integrated approach enables a better understanding of many interactions and non-linear causality (Cabrera *et al.*, 2015), critical for establishing synergies and increasing organisational efficiency and profitability (Almeida *et al.*, 2014).

As mentioned earlier, other changes in the world of work include advances in 3D technology (Xu & Kim, 2018). The lower barriers between inventors and markets with the advent of 3D printing have enabled entrepreneurs to start small companies at a lower cost. An example of a contemporary company operating in this space is Organovo, based in America. It is already building human organs from scratch using 3D printers. This means patients no longer have to

wait on organ lists for transplants. These technologies will completely change the healthcare industry (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2015). For example, in this digital transformation era, sharing surplus or idle resources in urban spaces will result in cost-effectiveness and savings. IoT can connect all shareable physical assets and showcase availability to ensure full utilisation of assets and will result in a shared economy of support and physical space, resulting in a healthier and cleaner environment. In addition, another example is data, and AI can use privately owned motor vehicles more effectively and productively. Connecting IoT to cars and other means of increased productivity in privately-owned vehicles can be identified and accessed effectively by those who need them when the owners are not using them.

Chou (2017) further argues that organisations can also share parking facilities and private spaces connected using IoT with people requiring parking at times complementary to the needs of the parking space owners, saving costs and emptying unused spaces at any time (Chou, 2017). In the case of PHEIs, the focus would be on maximising the use and impact of resources rather than on individual ownership. This could involve sharing resources such as physical facilities, equipment, or expertise to increase efficiency and reduce waste. It could also include adopting new education delivery models, such as online or blended learning, which can make it easier for students to access education on a flexible and as-needed basis. In a disruptive environment, PHEIs may need to adapt to changing market conditions, technological innovations, or shifts in student demand. Adopting a shared economy model could help them to stay competitive and meet the changing needs of their students. For example, rather than each institution maintaining its separate physical campus, they could share facilities and resources to reduce costs and increase access to education. This could involve using technology to facilitate collaboration and resource sharing or developing partnerships with other institutions or organisations to share expertise or resources.

Additional changes include introducing self-driving cars and disrupting taxi driving, trucking and Uber business jobs. When using data, AI will become the ideal personal assistant better than humans. In fast food restaurants, consumers will order directly via a touchscreen interface bypassing the human interface. Also, consumers will not need to enter a store to purchase products or gifts; they can use Amazon or a similar online shopping platform to buy what they want. The travel industry is disrupted with consumers using online media such as booking.com and hotel.com. They can save money by making direct reservations with airlines and hotels instead of relying on a travel agent to arrange their itinerary. In this era, nanotechnology makes the impossible possible, and technology increases and improves productivity, reducing costs. To respond to the changes in the digital age, forward-thinking organisations are positioning themselves to take advantage of the potential growth opportunities of the Internet of Things (Brekelmans, 2016).

Phillips (2017) estimates that businesses that fully commit to AI and invest in human-machine collaboration can boost their revenues by 38% in the next five years and generate higher

levels of employment and profitability. The advent of machine learning poses a threat to work with the advent of automation, robotics, and driverless cars. However, AI also creates new avenues for economic growth. Intelligent systems and environments connected digitally and physically differentiate the 4IR/5IR from the first three industrial revolutions. The technology used in 3D printing, the Internet of Things, and AI has and will continue to build a shared economy that impacts the lives of consumers and ordinary people worldwide. Exponential technology has increased profitability and productivity for companies providing products and services. These changes will alter how people live, work, and engage in the revolution. It would therefore require business leaders to deal with the ever-increasing pace of change, cope with the rapid advancement in technology, challenge existing paradigms, and have a positive mindset for change, creative thinking skills and an innovative mindset that is required in PHEIs environment.

In light of the above discussion, the researcher can, in summary, argue that the digital transformation in PHEIs introduces fundamental and disruptive change with a high velocity that creates a volatile environment with high levels of disruption and ambiguity, in which existing skills become obsolete very quickly and where employees are required continuously to adapt to change and learn new skills sets. With this rapid digital transformation, business leaders in the PHEIs environment and their employees must challenge existing paradigms and develop an openness for change. Challenging a strategic framework that empowers employees to create exposure to challenge existing paradigms and keep a positive mindset for change is imperative to meet the challenges of this digital transformation era. This rapid change has created a continuous demand for new technologies, ways of working, finding new solutions to problems and meeting different customer expectations. Therefore, business leaders and employees must adopt a creative and innovative mindset to meet these challenges. A strategic framework that empowers business leaders in PHEIs to embrace creative thinking skills and an innovative attitude to deal with the ever-increasing pace of change while coping with rapid technological advancement is equally essential to meet the challenges of digital transformation in the HE space.

Furthermore, PHEI business leaders must promote a team environment that encourages employees to design exciting products and create memorable experiences that capture the imagination and make a pleasant rational, and emotional impact on customers. With the advancement of technology, PHEIs business strategists need to facilitate the interpretation and application of data to make smarter, connected, and collaborative decisions that improve an organisation's efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, and profitability. The emerging data has indicated that the need for the PHEI environment requires innovators who will facilitate the process and actions of using digital technology to develop and implement new things, introduce new ideas, new workflow processes, and new products or services that improve existing products and services and reach new customers. Business leaders in PHEIs environment need to function as ambiguity, volatility, and agility mentors such they are

helping individuals and teams cope with ambiguity, volatility and uncertainty and developing agility and the ability to manage their emotions in a volatile environment.

In addition, the business strategists for PHEIs need to be responsible for examining and ensuring rapidly changing technology, who continue to drive technological solutions that are inclusive and fair and create a prosperous future for all without creating even more profound levels of poverty and inequality. They should be able to manage a virtual team of diverse followers who deliver against a common goal and meet organisational objectives whilst working from different locations as permanent, semi-permanent, temporary, part-time, or freelance team members. The PHEIs need to upgrade to technology that is faster and more agile. Improvements in technology would assist the PHEIs with specific services that the Institutions can offer, technology geared up to improve operational efficiency and move quickly into online platforms that can reach many people in different parts of the world. Engage with IT specialists to ensure the Institute has current technologies that meet clients' needs.

5.2.3 Communication Strategy

The lack of information, the insufficient guidance on what to do, and the absence of acknowledgement of any emotional distress negatively impact the individual's and organisational's stress level. A heuristic interpretation of the circumstance is known to be the source of feelings of dread and worry, which raises stress levels in both the individual and the group. Therefore, to tackle this phenomenon, the need for a comprehensive communication strategy emerged strongly from the data to tackle this phenomenon communication strategy emerged strongly from the data. Participant [P2] emphasised that communication is crucial to any successful organisation or group. Effective communication can make it easier for business leaders to guide their followers and achieve their goals effectively:

[P2], "Good communication involves not just giving instructions but also listening to the needs and concerns of the people you lead and tailoring your messages to be relevant and meaningful to them. This helps build trust and a sense of shared purpose, essential for inspiring people to follow the organisation's vision and dream."

Effective leadership and communication are essential for organisations to thrive in today's fast-paced and competitive business environment, as mentioned by participant [P1]:

[P1], "leaders need to be able to manage the present while also looking ahead and creating a vision for the future. This requires strong communication skills and the ability to inspire and motivate others to follow your lead. Communicating your goals and plans clearly and meaningfully

can help create a sense of shared purpose and direction among your team, which can help drive success and achieve your organisational objectives.”

Research has indicated that business leadership is almost exclusively a communication activity apart from real leaders ‘walking the talk’ by delivering what they promise (Rosenbach, Sashkin & Harburg, 1996). Influential leaders communicate promptly and empathically, informing all team members with accurate facts because communication is a two-way process involving talking and listening; listening is an essential leadership skill. As Rynders (1999) observed, listening should be perceived as the highest priority of an active leader. Listening requires a leader to understand that the voice of others is essential before, and he must seek to understand by listening. This shows the importance of a communication strategy fostered by good organisational leadership. In a crisis, communication channels should always be open, and leaders opt to be honest with what they communicate to their employees and stakeholders. Open and effective communication is essential for building trust among team members and fostering a positive work environment. Faith is necessary for business leaders to guide and motivate their teams effectively and for team members to feel confident in their ability to contribute and succeed. One participant [P5] shared these sentiments:

[P5], “Maintaining open lines of communication, leaders can create an environment where team members feel comfortable sharing their ideas and concerns and work together to overcome challenges and achieve their goals. This can help build trust and create a shared purpose for achieving success and organisational objectives.”

Employees and stakeholders must be protected, and honest and transparent communication must be shared. One participant [P3] shared that for the organisation to operate efficiently, information should flow to all levels because operational efficiencies are affected by ensuring those in back-office work, such as manufacturing and supply chain systems, are suitable and able to access information from the factory floor to make the right decisions to increase and improve operational efficiency (Sillitoe, 2018). Beyond the factory floor, business leaders and executives need to collaborate closely when using technology to enhance customer service and experience in selling and after-sales support to products (Sillitoe, 2018). The available literature (Rall, 2018; Sikerbol, 2015; Moors, 2017) clearly illustrates the changes people face in the 4IR & 5IR. These changes are natural and undeniable, and some organisations are already working with stakeholders to achieve business objectives by upskilling workers, sharing clear communication strategies on any change taking place and demonstrating following generational leadership competencies such as cognitive readiness, critical thinking, emotional and social intelligence competencies, including empathy and relationship management – all skills that make up emotional intelligent and employee engagement (Bawany, 2017). Effective communication strategy is essential for business leaders to engage their workforce and stakeholders and to enforce real change. A clear and visible

communication strategy can ensure that all employees and stakeholders know the changes being implemented and understand their roles in bringing about those changes. This was supported by one participant [P9] stated:

[P9], “Engaging openly with everyone can help to build trust and foster a sense of collaboration and cooperation, which can be key to the success of any change management efforts”.

The importance of an engaged workforce strongly emerged from the data. This indicates the importance of enforcing a dialogue between management and employees, resulting in an emerging reality of an engaged workforce. The need for leadership and employee engagement, providing feedback on any matters such as change, should be discussed intensely in an organisation. Providing input and engaging with employees is essential in any organisation. Effective leadership involves listening to, addressing employees’ concerns, and encouraging open communication and collaboration. This can create a positive work environment and foster a sense of ownership and accountability among employees, as stated by participant [P8]:

[P8], “Leaders can tap into their team’s collective knowledge and expertise by engaging with employees and encouraging them to share their ideas and suggestions, leading to better decision-making and problem-solving. In addition, providing regular feedback on any organisational changes or initiatives can help employees stay informed and feel like they are part of the decision-making process. This can help build trust and improve morale, leading to a more engaged and productive workforce.”

The literature supported these views. Elton Mayo, a professor at the Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, emphasised the need to stress interpersonal relationships and workers' social requirements as a critical component in raising productivity in 1933 (Mayo, 1933). Mayo is the founder of the Human Relations Movement in management. The movement emphasised the importance of, amongst other factors, meaningful and satisfying work, the role of relationships in the workplace and wholesome communication in organisations (Lawler III & Porter, 1967). Many of the fundamental principles of the Human Relations Movement still hold relevance today and are rooted in Mayo's thinking. In short, Mayo stressed the importance of balancing the worker's needs with the need for profit in business organisations. Studies have indicated that an organisation can only gain operational effectiveness and efficiency or apply successful and sustainable management strategies by considering its fit-for-purpose leadership, innovation, people, and clear, well-thought-out communication strategy. A study by Du Plessis (2017) argued that these elements function in a finely tuned relationship as each plays a significant role in ensuring the organisation's proper

functioning in achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. As mentioned by participant [P6]:

[P6], "Regular meetings can be a useful way for a business to stay on track and ensure everyone is working towards the same goals. Everyone must be open to making suggestions and sharing their opinions in these meetings. This helps create a collaborative and inclusive environment where everyone feels heard and valued."

The most successful and sustainable organisation uses a combination of training, mentoring, application, and communication efficiency in a culture that encourages organisation-wide dialogue, dissemination of information and the ability to manage the development and maintenance of its agile leadership, business innovation, and people (Paulk *et al.*, 1993; Wirick & Bond, 2005). By being open to receiving advice and opinions from others, a business can be more adaptable and responsive to change, which can ultimately lead to better decision-making and improved outcomes. Another participant [P9] echoed the same sentiments: to ensure effective communication strategy within a team, there are a few key steps that PHEIs can take:

[P9], "First, ensure that everyone knows how to use the tools and technologies available for communication, such as email, instant messaging, and video conferencing. Second, establish clear communication channels and protocols so everyone knows whom to talk to about specific topics and when to expect a response. Finally, encourage open and honest communication within the team, so everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas."

By implementing these measures, business leaders can help create a more effective and cohesive team and in support, Bate *et al.* (1995) proposed that future-proofing people and business models means laying the groundwork for adaptability at its core. It means improving operations for agile leadership, business innovation, and people for now and in the future. The organisation's products and services are ensured to be of high quality by developing enhanced capabilities. High quality products and services increase the organisation's success and sustainability. Research on leadership frameworks (Viscomi 2017; Jarcho, 2015; Zohar & Thembekwayo 2021) supports the data by accommodating the ability of business leaders to manage the communication strategy process in such a way that it challenges employees to perceive the future reality as a challenge that excites and energises them rather than to be de-energised because they perceive communication strategy of change as a threat. The essence here is the value of open and anonymous communication channels, as stated by [P10] that businesses then get to understand what the burning issues are, questions or even become a way of things that they might not be aware that is happening on the shop floor and

across departments. These abilities should enable leaders to facilitate interventions that require breaking down resistance to change by communicating effectively (William, 2019). The participant [P10] suggested that inviting people from different floors or departments to sit with leadership and discuss potential ideas for innovation can be beneficial for a company:

[P10], “involving people from different levels and areas of the organisation, management can gain insight and ideas from a wider range of perspectives, leading to more successful innovation efforts. An example is that one of Vodacom’s successful ‘please call’ app developments demonstrate this approach’s potential impact.”

The ultimate purpose of an innovative and learning organisation is to identify creative exchanges through technology to produce optimal beneficial effects through maybe financial manipulation and economic exploitation (Senge, 1993; Viljoen, 2008). The future challenge is for creative leadership to recognise that many organisations operate in a high-potential learning environment, which provides the necessary stimulus and support for continuous learning and finance generation. Organisations can achieve a technological advantage through the collective proactive participation of knowledge workers. Pretorius, Steyn, and Bond-Barnard (2018) assert several changes in leadership in the years immediately preceding their findings in their paper presented at the 29th Annual Conference of the Southern African Institute for Industrial Engineering (SAIIE). Pretorius *et al.* (2018) observe that, at present, numerous organisations are experiencing challenges resulting from uncertainties, globalisation, the fast-changing business environment, and an increasingly complex working environment. A radical shift in leadership style may be needed to adapt to the new creative networked economy (Jarche, 2013), which has followed the original industrial market economy. Traditionally, leadership has been perceived as a vertical top-down relationship. In the new creative networked economy, a shift towards a shared and balanced approach to leadership has been gaining momentum (Pretorius, Steyn & Bond-Barnard, 2018). The participant [P15] described how important it had implemented several practices to encourage open communication strategy and collaboration within their organisation. Their [P15] open-door communication policy and flat organisational structure facilitate problem-solving and allow issues to be addressed quickly:

[P15], “The weekly meetings at the EXCO level also provide a forum for discussing challenges and finding solutions. Avoiding operating in silos, the company fosters a culture of collaboration and cooperation among its employees, which can drive innovation and achieve business objectives.”

To ensure excellent customer satisfaction and brand management, leadership and employees should ensure proper communication channels and operate freely. Participants [P8] and [P17] emphasised the importance of appropriate communication channels and technology in

providing excellent customer satisfaction and brand management. Investing in upgrading infrastructure, including communication devices and media, can improve service delivery and enhance the customer experience. An effective communication strategy ensures customers receive the high-quality service they expect, leading to greater satisfaction and ultimately driving brand loyalty. This is how businesses can ensure adaptability and survival in an ever-changing marketplace. Innovation could translate into implementing innovative ideas, creating enhanced products, or improving existing services. Participant [P9] expressed their belief in giving employees a voice and allowing them to share their thoughts and ideas:

[P9], “Giving employees a voice, a company can tap into the creativity and knowledge of its workforce and create value from its contributions”.

This approach fosters a sense of empowerment and engagement among employees, which can drive innovation and improve overall organisational performance. Through innovation, organisations can save money and time and provide a competitive advantage and as a result, organisations can differentiate themselves in an already saturated market. Innovation can do things differently from your competitors, whether this is through new products or services. Adaptability is the new competitive advantage achieved through flexible structures and the dispersal of decision-making, coupled with open communication and eradication silos. Another participant [P1] emphasised the importance of ongoing communication and feedback in implementing and evaluating a company’s strategy:

[P1], “Communicating the strategy to employees and soliciting their feedback can help ensure that it remains relevant, appropriate, and clearly understood over time. This ongoing dialogue can also help identify potential challenges or gaps in the strategy and allow for necessary adjustments.”

Engaging employees, PHEIs can increase the chances of successful implementation and achieve their desired business objectives. Studies have shown that an unclear communication strategy that tends to result in a crisis often creates emotional reactions such as frustration, anger, and sadness (Claeys, 2017; Coombs & Holladay, 2012a; Lim, 2017), significantly affecting how stakeholders attribute communication strategy responsibly (Coombs, 2007). The crisis quickly escalates and spreads without giving organisations enough time to respond. Traditional crisis communication techniques frequently employ creative, defensive, and audience-passive assumptions. To steal thunder, one must be as transparent and truthful as possible. Ambiguous messages can result in severe ethical consequences (Yeal Lee, 2020) and diminish the organisation’s credibility in a crisis. Revealing vague crisis information can also create rumours (Yeal Lee, 2020) and is likely to spread suspicion about the intent behind the revelation.

The conventional wisdom, which holds that the first 24 hours are critical in developing and implementing communication response strategies, no longer seems insightful when the response time is essential in influencing the perception of an adverse event. Stealing thunder can be a proactive communication technique for preventing and reducing the impact of a crisis, given the instability of problems in the digital era. It is based on a simple principle: promptly providing honest crisis information throughout the crisis communication process. Moreover, they were conceptualised before the advent of various media sources, for example, the image repair theory or used on a limited scale, for example, situational crisis communication theory. Once crisis information picks up speed in the digital era, the volume of data from various sources can quickly erode strategic communication management mechanisms using ‘stealing thunder’ as a crisis management tactic in the digital age.

In the digital age, environmental monitoring can be an essential first step in preventing a crisis and minimising its impact. When environmental monitoring quickly spots crisis symptoms, organisations can interact with stakeholders and clients by acting swiftly to help them understand the adverse event. The data that emerged from the analysis emphasised the importance of involving employees in the strategic dialogue of the company. Participant [P5] argued that engaging employees in this dialogue process can provide valuable perspectives and insights that can improve the quality of the company’s strategy:

[P5], “future orientation and experimentation with virtual reality (VR) suggests that the company is looking for ways to anticipate and prepare for future developments and challenges. Involving employees in this process and encouraging them to think about different scenarios and potential actions, the company can enhance its ability to innovate and adapt to a changing disruptive business environment.”

Crisis communication strategy management can also leverage technological developments to detect warning signs and monitor potential crises. CRM analytical tools currently available for PHEIs are user-friendly and can be used to monitor organisational risks in the educational business. In support of the emerging data, for instance, in a contemporary business environment, when Pepsi launched a global advertising campaign featuring Kendall Jenner in April 2017, it quickly prompted an online outburst. Social media exploded with negative mentions and sentiments for using Kendall Jenner to address a highly controversial social issue: police brutality. Pepsi detected the crisis sign not only early but also too swiftly action before the firestorm spread. It took one day for Pepsi to make a clear apology and pull the campaign from the market (Victor, 2017), preventing potentially significant damage to the global brand. Participant [P6], in a statement, highlights the benefits of having an agile and responsive organisational structure. The participant suggests that:

[P6], “acting quickly and efficiently in the face of disruptions, such as hacking or customer complaints, a company can minimise the negative impacts of these events and maintain a positive reputation”.

An agile organisational structure can enable a PHEI to respond to changes in the market or competitive landscape more effectively, which can be beneficial for staying competitive and achieving business objectives. Communication strategy management research has emphasised the importance of the organisation controlling the crisis or disruption narrative to minimise reputational damage (Beldad, Laar & Hegner, 2017). Communication managers must understand that providing factual, complete information is essential to controlling the narrative. Controlling the narrative means, ideally, that there is only one complete version of the story. The best way to steal thunder is to do so openly and honestly. Ambiguous messages can have serious ethical consequences (Tyler, 1997) and diminish the organisation's credibility. Participant [P1] suggests that while policies in any institution are essential for providing guidance and setting standards, they should be moderate. The participant argued that policies should serve as guidelines and codes of ethics rather than strict rules that inhibit innovation or creativity:

[P1], “striking a balance between having clear policies and allowing for flexibility and autonomy, a company can create a supportive and empowering environment for its employees, which can drive innovation and improve overall performance”.

One participant shared the importance of the need for organisations to be more transparent in their communication in times of communication will save the brand and gain the consumers' trust. Revealing ambiguous crisis information can also create false rumours (Difonzo & Bordia, 2007) and is likely to spread suspicion about the intent behind the revelation. Participant [P8] emphasised the importance of agile and cooperative problem-solving, clear decision-making processes, and transparent communication for driving innovation and achieving business objectives. By fostering a culture of collaboration and cooperation among employees, a company can enhance its ability to identify and solve challenges quickly and effectively:

[P8], “A transparent decision-making process can ensure that the right actions are taken promptly, while transparent communication can help keep everyone informed and aligned on the company's goals and strategies”.

These practices help create a supportive and empowering environment for innovation within the organisation. For instance, the Samsung Galaxy Note 7 crisis illustrated the importance of being transparent and honest promptly. On 2 September 2016, Samsung announced a

worldwide recall of all Galaxy Note 7 products. The president of Samsung's mobile division made the recall decision less than ten days after the global launch of the products due to several cases of battery explosion (Reuters, 2016). The recall is estimated to have cost Samsung more than \$5 billion, but the company deemed this recall a successful brand management case because it was able to reinstate consumer trust in the brand (Lopez, 2017). Given the product's nature and the market's magnitude, multiple narratives supported by the news media and technological influencers would probably spread in this scenario if Samsung's message about "stealing thunder" had been unclear or incomplete. Stakeholders play different roles by creating and spreading crisis information based on personal narratives. Participant [P5] emphasised the importance of lifelong learning and seeking opportunities to improve oneself. The participant further argues that by taking an interest in areas where one may not have the expertise and learning from more knowledgeable others, a person can become better equipped to handle difficult situations and make critical decisions:

P5], "It is important never to forget one's roots and always to strive to be the best version of oneself. By adopting this approach and leveraging the strengths of others, a person can enhance their abilities and become more successful in their endeavours."

When equipped with the knowledge, stealing thunder can be a proactive communication technique for preventing and minimising the impact of a crisis, given the erratic nature of problems in the digital era. Stealing thunder is founded on the straightforward tenet of swiftly disseminating accurate crisis information throughout the crisis communication process using "stealing thunder" as a crisis management tactic in the digital age. While there is no one-size-fits-all strategy, stealing thunder can be used in many crises. The advantages of being proactive and honest during an emergency can be far greater than the potential risks. The data is collected and analysed; findings and insights show that business leaders can use communication strategy in PHEIs as a crucial business and marketing tool that helps organisations align their communication and produce meaningful, cohesive messages. These strategies outline the communication plan for a specific project and concentrate on internal or external communications. The data also indicated that business leaders in PHEIs' communication strategy typically outline the method for delivering [that is, education] a message to a target audience [clients/prospective learners] while describing the purpose and how to accomplish the tasks and the desired business outcomes. Communication strategies are foundational to any organisational marketing and business strategies or how an organisation can manage any situation.

In light of the above discussion, in PHEIs, besides business leaders 'walking the talk' by delivering what they promise, executives should consider leadership as almost exclusively a communication activity. Influential leaders communicate promptly and empathically, informing all team members with accurate facts. Because communication is a two-way

process involving talking and listening, listening is an essential leadership skill. Listening requires a leader to understand that the voice of others is critical and must seek to understand by listening. As the data emerged observed, listening should be perceived as the highest priority of an active leader. The researcher can conclude from the analysis of the data PHEIs need to be equipped with AI and big data analytics to implement communication systems automatically. The data found that there are two communication strategies which PHEIs can use in this new era: content automation and digital storytelling. Digital storytelling can be accomplished by collaboration between the communication department and advanced technology because it is crucial since leaders can create only some pieces of information through content automation. In addition, it needs to be supported by experts in the field and equipped with skills in advanced technology, such as AI, to support communication strategy implementation in PHEIs. Business leaders in promoting brand consistency need to know that, most often, go a long way in communicating stability, security, and reliability. These qualities usually require frequency. One does not build a good name or brand overnight; it takes time and consistency. Investing and communicating in every little way over time is critical.

5.2.4 Business Adaptation to Change

Several factors can make it difficult to implement organisational reforms. One of the biggest challenges is resistance to change. People often become comfortable with how things are done and may resist efforts to change established processes or structures. In addition, organisational reforms often require people to learn new skills or adopt new working methods, which can be difficult for some employees. Another challenge is that corporate reforms often need significant resources, including time, money, and personnel. Implementing these reforms can disrupt the organisation, and leaders must be prepared to manage the transition carefully. Finally, leaders must have a clear vision of what they want to accomplish with the organisational reforms and communicate this vision effectively to employees. With a clear direction and vision, implementing effective reforms can be easy. Implementing corporate reforms can be complex and challenging, but organisations must remain competitive and adapt to a changing environment (Meaney & Pung, 2008).

Organisational change may arise from an organisation's development, decline, or transformation (Aishu 2020). While one might assume that organisations are enduring structures in a changing society, the truth is that organisations constantly change, taking many different forms. Organisational change occurs in a complex context, confusing navigation (Watson & Spencer, 2016). It is far more complicated than typical human behaviour, so any change effort will likely occur in a complex context that can make navigating confusing if not carefully managed. Several processes and tools have emerged from the data to deal with business adaptation to change. Resilience is one of the solid critical aspects that analysis discerned from the data. Participants [P1], [P3] and [P7] all shared what resilience means to them and their businesses and the environment they all operate. Resilience is the

ability to withstand and recover from challenging situations, and it involves the ability to adapt, bounce back from adversity, and continue moving forward despite setbacks and challenges. In the context of the VUCA world (a term used to describe the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world we live in), resilience is an essential quality for businesses and individuals to possess to navigate the constantly changing disruptive landscape continue to thrive.

A robust critical aspect that also emerged is the need for business leaders to be transdisciplinary, multi-skilled, and hybrid in business, adapting to change. Many participants agreed when they spoke about the need to play several roles: fan, coach, and player. The participants argued that knowing when to play which role is the main trick. Some participants mentioned that the M-shaped leadership involves a leader who delegates tasks and decisions to their team but remains closely involved in key decision-making and strategic planning. In this leadership style, the leader acts as a mentor and facilitator, providing guidance and support to the team while ensuring that the team stays focused on achieving the organisation's goals. This approach can effectively foster collaboration and innovation within the group and promote a sense of ownership and accountability among team members. All the participants acknowledged the ability of successful leaders in digital times to do many jobs, know many subjects, and have exposure to different disciplines and industries. This adds to one's collection of skills. This will enable any leader to wear many hands to manage and adapt to the ever-changing world of work. A similar view was posed by the suggestion [P12] of a paradoxical leader as a leader who can balance different qualities and characteristics in their leadership style:

[P12], "They are both strategic and analytical, which means they can think ahead, make plans, and gather and analyse data to inform their decisions. They are also confident and humble, meaning they have a strong sense of self-assurance but are willing to listen to others and acknowledge their limitations. Additionally, they can take on a leadership role and be a part of the team, which suggests they are approachable and collaborative."

Furthermore, paradoxical are flexible and resolute, which means they can adapt to changing circumstances, maintain their determination, and focus on achieving their goals. This business leader is versatile, adaptable, and can navigate various situations effectively. Ownership and taking accountability are essential aspects arising from the data whenever a business adapts to change. A participant [P11] stated that it is necessary to move from outputs to outcomes and to take personal responsibility for those outcomes. Another participant [P8] emphasises the importance and the value of taking responsibility for your actions and sharing your experiences so that others can benefit from them. Participant [P16] reflected that the need to hold others accountable was necessary, and also, the need to recognise success and hold

people to account in times of success is essential. The importance of ‘being responsive’ was often mentioned during the interviews.

A common aspect that emerged from the analysed data was creativity and the need for “business leaders to be able to co-create and jointly problem-solve.” Here the participants refer to the synthesis of solutions instead of the information dissection; this way, the business will adapt to change and be successful and sustainable. In this case, what is necessary is “allowing people the space to think and the ability to experiment.” Society revolves around continuous economic growth, and innovation is essential to the advancement of society. Suppose people can ideate more in the work environment towards innovative ideas. In that case, this will lead to more cooperative environments, stimulating teamwork and encouraging a free flow of knowledge sharing, which could then, among other things, improve productivity and lead to the innovation of new products, services, or processes. Innovative thinking allows individuals to be more creative and effective, and, in return, the economy can be bolstered with better productivity and innovations. Participant [P3] highlights the importance of creativity and experimentation for leaders and suggests that leaders should refrain from assuming they have all the answers and be open to testing new ideas and solutions. This approach allows leaders to be more innovative and to find solutions to challenges that may not be immediately obvious:

[P3], “Beta testing, in particular, involves testing a product or idea in a real-world environment before it is fully developed. This can help leaders identify potential issues and make necessary changes before implementing a new solution. Being imaginative and beta-testing, leaders can be better prepared to create solutions to their challenges.”

This iterative approach lends itself to agility – another essential aspect that emerged from the data. Participant [P8] defined agility as the ability to be responsive and nimble and that it is necessary to iterate and pivot as changes are needed. Others stated that agility is about being ‘flexible and adaptable,’ therefore, able to make changes in real-time without being stuck in your ways. Participant [P3] highlights the importance of agility in the digital era, which usually leads to an uncomfortable change in many organisations. With rapid technological change and increasing competition, organisations must quickly adapt and respond to new developments and challenges. This often requires changing how the organisation operates, which can be uncomfortable for some people. One-way organisations can promote agility is by adopting agile methodologies designed to enable rapid iteration and continuous improvement. Agile approaches prioritise flexibility and adaptability over rigid plans and processes and often involve regular check-ins and feedback to ensure that the team is on track and able to respond to changes. To facilitate agility, it is also essential for organisations to have a culture that values and supports continuous learning and experimentation. This can involve providing resources and support for employees to learn new skills and technologies

and encouraging them to take risks and try out new ideas. Ultimately, agility requires a willingness to embrace change and be open to new ways of doing things and this usually can be challenging for some organisations. Still, it is essential for staying competitive and relevant in the digital age. The approach is critical in the digital era, where technology and market conditions are constantly evolving, and organisations need to be able to respond quickly to remain competitive:

[P3], “Being agile means being open to new ideas and approaches and not overly controlling or dogmatic. It involves being willing to experiment, try new things, and adapt to changing circumstances to stay relevant and successful.”

When it comes to enforcing effective change in an organisation, the ability of business leaders to influence has become an essential aspect in recent times. Participants said indirect influence is more effective than direct influence, which usually refers to persuasion and conviction instead of coercion and the need for business leaders in PHEIs to be politically savvy. Participant [P8] emphasised the importance of confidence, courage, and fearlessness for business leaders and defined confidence as a belief in oneself and one’s abilities. In contrast, courage is the willingness to take risks and face challenges. These traits are important for business leaders because they help to inspire others and create a sense of direction and purpose within an organisation. Participant [P8] highlighted that a vision is a clear and inspiring idea of what an organisation wants to achieve:

[P8], “It provides a ‘north star for people to follow and helps to create clarity and direction for the organisation. Without a vision, it can be difficult for people to understand where the organisation is going and what it is trying to achieve.”

Therefore, confidence, courage, and a clearly outlined vision are essential traits for business leaders to possess to influence others and guide their organisation towards success. Leaders evaluated only one-third of organisational transformation programs as successful, supporting a recent McKinsey global poll (Meaney & Pung, 2008). The fact that the 3,199 business leaders who responded to the McKinsey survey spent an average of six months planning their company’s restructuring is not a positive sign. The researcher explored the causes of failed business adaptation to change efforts and offered reasons for these projects’ failure.

5.2.4.1 There needs to be a convincing argument for change

It is common for people to feel anxious or resistant to change, especially if they do not understand why it is necessary or how it will affect them. When introducing change in an organisation, business leaders need to take the time to communicate the rationale and

benefits of the transition to all relevant stakeholders. This helps build support and buy-in for the change and helps mitigate any negative feelings or concerns that people may have. One way to communicate the rationale for change is to clearly articulate the problem or challenge the change intends to address and explain how it will help solve it. It is also essential to be transparent about the potential impacts of the change on different stakeholders and to address any concerns or questions that people may have.

In addition to communicating the rationale for change, it is also important to provide support and resources to help people adapt, and this can include training, resources, and other forms of support to help people learn new skills or processes, as well as ongoing communication and feedback to help them stay informed and feel included in the change process. Overall, effective communication and support can help build trust and confidence in the change process and help ensure that people can embrace and adapt to the change successfully.

5.2.4.2 Lack of senior team alignment

Griffith (2020) defines transformation as a comprehensive overhaul of how work is done. Transforming an organisation into a new state entails different leadership requirements than leading a business or function in its steady-state environment. Making progress on various projects or work streams that must be managed in the conventional sense while being brought together in ways that necessitate close collaboration and challenging trade-offs is part of leading such endeavours. Only the senior leadership team can do this job.

5.2.4.3 Neglect of the leadership's duty to guide the process

Alignment among the senior team is required but needs to be more. The team must remain committed to the transformation process (Hughes 2010). It is simple for leaders to pay attention to their duty to actively direct, lead, and oversee the transition, given the considerable competitive and operational challenges that senior teams experience. Accordingly, Hammer and Champy (2003) noted that this is frequently reinforced by the organisation's compensation structure, which encourages a more immediate, operational emphasis.

5.2.4.4 Communicating without actually listening or interacting

Leadership must devote considerable time and effort to developing and disseminating the business case for transformation. They have to do it in a way that involves the workforce in the conversion. But far too frequently, even when a burning platform offers a convincing and clear case for change, it cannot convince people to join. This is because there needs to be more than one-way communication, even when accompanied by the best-supporting resources, to persuade employees to function as change agents. Leadership must be willing

to let things get a little messy to engage workers through intense, genuine engagement and employee participation in the success of the transition.

5.2.4.5 Insufficient Emphasis on cultural reform

Cultural change is always a necessary component of the transition. The phrase "how we do things around here" can be used by leaders to explain culture, which refers to the customs and practices that guide how work is conducted. If that does not adapt in the necessary ways, all the effort to modify strategy, organisation, and systems may be for nought (Schein 1979). However, changing a culture's direction can be difficult. Only by changing people's behaviours can it be changed. Clearly articulating the behaviours required to drive the transformation is the first stage.

5.2.4.6 Insufficient timely, accurate reporting on progress

It is critical to ascertain whether key efforts are developing as expected and, if not, to act swiftly to correct the situation. Similar to a sailboat, the longer it continues, the more difficult it is to update (Griffith, 2010.) Constructing a system to monitor momentum and evaluate development throughout time, as well as mechanisms for informing employees of what has been heard, learned, and is being put into action, is, therefore, necessary if you want to be able to recognise and counteract emerging developments as they arise.

5.2.4.7 Lack of momentum generation and Maintenance

Business adaptation to change initiatives can be challenging and require a sustained effort to be successful. These initiatives often involve significant changes to organisational processes, structures, and cultures, and they can be disruptive and challenging to implement. Armenakis and Wigand (2008) supported this notion by arguing that this process often requires a high level of consistency and commitment from leaders and a clear vision and plan for how the transformation will benefit the organisation. It is also essential to involve all stakeholders in the change process, as their buy-in and support are crucial for the initiative's success. Communicating regularly with stakeholders throughout the transformation process can help keep them engaged and committed to the effort. Finally, it is essential to be prepared for setbacks and challenges during the change process and have a plan to address and overcome these challenges.

5.2.4.8 No concerted effort was made to quicken the transition process

It is essential to consider the transition phase carefully when implementing organisational change. Usually, this phase can be critical for the success of the transformation, as it is when the new organisational structure and processes are put into place. People are expected to adapt to the changes. During this phase, leaders must be proactive to ensure a smooth

transition. This can involve communicating clearly and regularly with employees about the changes and their rationale, providing training and support to help people adjust to the new way of working, and being flexible and responsive to any challenges or issues. It is also essential for leaders to be aware of the potential for resistance to change and be prepared to address this resistance constructively and positively. By focusing on the transition phase and taking a proactive approach to managing the change, leaders can help to ensure a successful transition to the new organisation.

5.2.4.9 Not enough money is spent on helping people succeed

Investing in the skills and development of employees can be a critical factor in the success of organisational change initiatives. When people feel confident in their ability to adapt to new ways of working and succeed in the new organisation, they are more likely to support the change and less resistant. Organisations must identify the skills required for a new organisation and provide training and development opportunities to help employees acquire these skills. This can involve offering formal training programs, providing on-the-job learning and development opportunities, or encouraging employees to seek learning opportunities independently. By investing in the development of their people, organisations can not only help to ensure the success of the change initiative but also build a more robust and capable workforce for the future.

5.2.4.10 Ignoring the Impact of Change on People

It is natural for people to resist change because it can be unsettling and disruptive to their familiar ways of working. The human brain is wired to seek stability and predictability. Change can be perceived as a threat to this stability and can lead to feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and resistance. To effectively manage resistance to change, business leaders must recognise, acknowledge, and take steps to address these feelings. This can involve providing clear and concise communication about the reasons for the change and its benefits, offering support and resources to help people adapt to the new way of working, and being responsive to any concerns or issues. It is also essential to involve employees in the change process as much as possible, as this can help to build buy-in and support for the initiative. Acknowledging and addressing the human side of change, organisations can help to manage resistance and support a successful transition to the new way of working.

In light of the above discussion, the researcher can argue that PHEIs leaders need to play a vital role in bringing about a shift in mindset and creating a change-friendly environment within an organisation. This involves setting a clear vision and direction for the change initiative, communicating the rationale and benefits to employees, and serving as a role model by demonstrating a commitment to the change and supporting its implementation. It is also essential for leaders to involve employees in the change process as much as possible, as this can help to build buy-in and support for the initiative. In addition, leaders can create a

supportive environment for change by providing resources and support to help employees adapt to the new way of working, being responsive to any concerns or issues, and recognising and rewarding employees for their efforts to embrace the change. Taking these steps, leaders can help create a culture conducive to change and improve the chances of success for the transformation initiative.

The researcher advises that PHEI senior leaders must do the following to maintain a consistently favourable environment. Business leaders must create a compelling vision. PHEI strategists must make a clear strategic vision that motivates employees and management to work with a burning passion and points them in the direction of the company's ultimate success, growth, and prosperity. The executives and leaders must empower their people. For leadership to successfully implement change, there must be unwavering support and involvement from executives and staff members at all levels of the organisation. The focus should be on group decision-making and action rather than showing off the status ego, whims, or failing to use one's power and there must be coherence in concept, purpose, and action; it must empower people at all levels, making them feel proud of their recognition and ability to contribute to implementation.

PHEI business leaders must explain the need for change to all individuals in the organisation and people must understand why change is necessary. What inspired the modification? Why does that support change? Before being asked to act, people are keen to know the answers to these questions. Therefore, presenting the justification for the transformation made possible through effective communication is crucial. Unfortunately, most business leaders only speak up after the event or insufficiently because of this; communication gaps grow as those impacted by the change spread the message through unofficial or informal means. Despite holding the meetings, the issue of circulars, the same purport and the philosophy of change remain an iceberg, be brought to the notice in an impressive, compelling, and convincing manner. Lastly, PHEI strategists must encourage leaders to commit to change. It is casual crucial to obtain people's commitment to change. It is because it does more than give people greater authority and make their work more interesting. Interest is different from responsibility. Kenneth Blanchard (2020) asserts, 'When something interests you, you only do it when it is convenient, and when you are dedicated to anything, you accept no justifications and only outcomes.

The data inferred that change is collectively systemic, holistic, and uniquely ordered and on the other hand, organisations are social entities (Ihlen & Verhoefen, 2017) because of that, open systems (Senge *et al.*, 1999), and therefore the data concluded that change is a systemic phenomenon. The systemic construct of change comprises the perceptual and circumstantial dependencies of change as manifested for enhancing continuous change as a sustainable change management instrument. The cost of an unsuccessful company transformation, such as a significant restructuring, expansion into a new market, or integration of an acquired

business, can be extremely high, with lost opportunities, disruption, and change fatigue dwarfing the direct costs of external consulting and internal management time. Therefore, the first step in changing your organisation fundamentally is to comprehend why most transformational efforts fail. The data inferred that business adaptation to change has unique and discrete change experiences based on the individual's perspectives and preferences, which determine how businesses approach and respond to change. The data also indicated that change would function independently when left alone, using their discrete thinking and cognitive perspectives. The functioning of their connection renders business adaptation to change an independence prominence and a determinant of the buy-in to the change while engaged in change occurrences. The fact that the buy-in to a change depends on the individual makes change a personal, unique, and discrete matter that necessitates internalisation and independent self-governance.

However, individuals may decide, at any point during the change process, to avoid going along with the change any further. When the change participants choose not to support the difference further, the managerial leaders play a crucial role by enabling a relationship interdependence amongst change participants. Such organisations require organisational leaders to be cognisant that change participants experience change as unique and discrete, based on individual perspectives and preferences. Furthermore, it is essential to observe the distinction between the two leading players, the giver and the recipient. Managerial leaders, therefore, must ensure that change engagements and communications during the proposed change journey cater to the individual's unique and discrete thinking perspectives and preferences. Change is universal as change happens in all spheres of life and across disciplines; as such, change management efforts should manifest across disciplines. The ubiquitous nature of change and the fact that business leaders can organically induce change is evolutionary, can be by force, can be planned or unplanned, can be expected or is unexpected, is episodic and can be erratic and does not occur linearly are all aspects that have to conspire.

5.2.5 Drive Strategy

Historically speaking, business leaders were seen as straightforward people who always did the right thing leading from the top without cooperation and collaboration. The transition from an industrial market economy to a more connected, creative, and sustainable economy required, among other things, more collaborative employees with more initiative, innovation, creativity, and passion (Jarcho, 2013 & 2015). Much research can conclude that managing PHEIs as a business needs new governance strategies to become more successful, sustainable, and resilient in this era of disruption. Chris Viscomi (2017) noted that in aligning new business innovation strategies and leadership, thinking creatively and including areas not previously considered necessary in older theories would be helpful. There was a commonly held perception amongst the participants that the old way of strategy development and churning

out extensive documents needs to be updated. Participant [P1] echoed that businesses and organisations' strategies must adapt and change quickly to stay relevant and thrive in today's fast-paced world. A rigid, inflexible approach is unlikely to be effective in a rapidly changing environment. Instead:

[P1], "it's important to have a short, relevant, and easily adaptable strategy to respond quickly to changes and stay ahead of the competition. It's equally important to regularly review and update your strategy to ensure it remains effective and relevant."

Participant [P4] highlighted that in today's highly competitive business environment, keeping a close eye on your competitors and understanding their actions is important. This can help PHEIs stay ahead of the competition and avoid being blindsided by their actions. Additionally [P4]:

[P4], "listening to your consumers and understanding their needs and preferences is crucial for developing a successful strategy. Regularly gathering and analysing your consumers' feedback can gain valuable insights into their needs and preferences and use this information to adjust your strategy and stay ahead of the competition."

One participant [P7] described this quick strategy adjustment as the need to pivot and the ability to be iterative is essential. In today's fast-paced world, as defined by [P7], businesses and organisations need to be able to iterate and pivot quickly to stay relevant and successful. This iterative approach suggests that you perfect as you go and learn on the fly:

[P7], "regularly reviewing and adjusting your strategy based on consumer feedback and the competitive landscape. Adopting an iterative approach allows you to continuously improve your strategy and adjust as needed, rather than waiting for a set review period or trying to perfect your strategy before implementing it. This allows you to learn on the fly and adjust as needed, which can help you stay ahead of the competition and respond to changes in the market."

Participant [P12] highlights the importance of market research and customer understanding in developing a successful and driven marketing strategy. By conducting market research and gathering customer feedback, businesses and organisations can gain valuable insights into their target market and develop strategies tailored to their customer's needs and preferences. This can help companies to stay ahead of the competition and increase their chances of success. Additionally:

[P12], “failing forward’ means learning from your mistakes and using those lessons to improve and iterate on your strategy. This allows you to enhance and adapt continuously rather than being held back by past failures.”

Prominent authors such as (Kotter 1992; Collins 2002; Underwood 2004; Miller & Le Breton Miller 2005; De Waal 2012) and numerous independent researchers in the field agree with the widely held sentiment of the American Management Association (2007) that today's businesses face unprecedented challenges. Business leaders are confronted not only by the rapid changes in technology, the growing demand for expanded social responsibilities, intensified competition, and the massive effect brought about through globalisation but also by the necessity to think and act more strategically. These must be effectively managed to keep up with many challenges to ensure business success and sustainability. Furthermore:

“Situational analysis and scenario planning are equally important when developing a strategy”, said another participant [P14].

Another vital element of a strategy is clarifying your organisational purpose, as mentioned by a few participants. These participants were all in agreement about how clear the strategy of a business needs to be:

“Your why or purpose has to be crystal clear,” a participant [P15] asserted. “Understanding why you exist and having a clear vision helps galvanise around purpose. Understanding the why helps you tolerate and understand the 'how' of your strategy,” qualified another [P17].

Participant [P17] is part of a management team and highlighted that their role involves influencing the organisation’s strategic direction:

[P17, “Part of managing my portfolio would be to influence the direction of the strategy. When we set the organisation’s strategic direction with EXCO, often referred to as the C-Suite, which refers to the organisation’s executive committee or top leadership, my approach to strategic direction is collaborative, involving co-creation with heads of department. This suggests my values for teamwork and input from others in setting the direction for the organisation.”

Participant [P5] sees strategy as a dynamic and ongoing process rather than a static plan or document and believes that strategy should evolve and be responsive to environmental changes. [P5] also emphasised the importance of actively managing and monitoring the strategy to ensure it remains relevant and practical and this approach to strategy emphasised

adaptability and critical thinking in order to navigate complexity and stay ahead of the competition:

[P5], “Strategy is not necessarily something that you finish in a year. It is an emerging process; you are the role that applies, trying to create it for that as the vision and then managing it throughout the time evaluated and monitored. It is not just the words on a document. It becomes an organic practice for the business to ensure that even though there might be complexities, work through that in terms of probing and critical thinking and ensuring it stays alive.”

The data that emerged from the analysis emphasised the importance of clarifying roles and responsibilities regarding strategy. Participant [P9], in particular, emphasises the role of the leader in communicating the vision and ensuring that others are involved and engaged in the process. This approach helps to foster a sense of ownership and collaboration, which can be crucial for the success of the organisation’s strategy. By clarifying roles and involving others in the process, leaders can ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals and that the strategy is aligned with the organisation’s broader vision and goals:

[P9], “I become the custodian of the firm's strategic planning and execution processes. You become the facilitator of creating and executing a strategy. So, I always said to people that it is not my strategy, it is the firm strategy. I need to own the processes that allow the firm time and space and a robust plan to develop that strategy and to drive the delivery of it and track and monitor and report on it and amend it, or, you know, adjust it as time goes by.”

In addition to the sentiments of the participant [P9], participant [16] echoed that:

[P16], “As the chairperson and CEO of the organisation, it is my responsibility to communicate the organisation’s vision to those I lead, involve them in the process, and ensure they feel ownership of it. I am the driving force behind the strategy, but we work as a team to ensure everything is done collaboratively.”

Organisations develop business strategies that are typically supported by short-term goals or objectives. These goals are then broken down into smaller tasks and assigned to different teams responsible for implementing processes, making process changes, and implementing systems that contribute to the overall plan. So, the role is at the forefront of implementing those products regarding the organisation’s strategy. They view strategy as closely tied to the organisation’s people, processes, and technology. They see their roles as visionaries and

facilitators, helping bring forward ideas and involve the team in the strategic planning process. This approach focuses on having a motivated and engaged workforce and aligning the strategy with the organisation's core pillars. Applying the team and getting their input, this leader can help ensure the system is well-informed and aligns with the organisation's broader goals. One participant [P10] mentioned that trying to align all pillars of the organisation is very important: This participant emphasised the importance of having a clear vision and aligning the organisation's approach with that vision.

[P10], "I try and always be the visionary of the business in aligning it to pillars, starting with people because I believe that you can't have a strategy if you don't have people and the right people start with a highly motivated and excellent workforce, internal processes, and technology; how does that translate into that strategy? Customers and then, of course, finance. The role that I play usually would be to bring forward the idea and align it to those four pillars, but then get the team to want, almost to say voice, and add to what you need to eliminate, reduce, create, and improve."

In the face of the above, every business leader has the enormous task of realising the goals of their organisations by achieving outstanding performance in their line of business. These company leaders are under tremendous pressure to respond skillfully to the growing complexity of constantly altering trends and developing situations. It is, therefore, not surprising that there has been this awakening of landmark books in search of excellence, success, and sustainability. *Built to Last* by Jim Collins and Jerry Porras (1994), *Good to Great* by Collins (2005), *In Search of Excellence* by Peters and Waterman (1982), and *Survival of the Smartest* by Mendelson and Ziegler are a few of the most excellent sellers in the industry (1999). Furthermore, PHEIs driving their strategy they should bear in mind that in the 4IR/5IR and their impact on future careers and collaboration across different professions. Marwala (2021) emphasises that career paths are fundamentally changing to hybrid careers. This means that jobs will no longer be structured around isolated skill sets and that collaboration between different skill sets will become more common. This discussion should emerge or start with PHEIs and their industrial counterparts. From a business perspective, it means that PHEIs should produce leaders that will enable them to manage virtual teams in flexible structures and collaborate across boundaries of skill sets and tear down the silos of parochialism.

PHEIs that invest in a robust strategy and creative brand agile leadership strive to build meaningful, socially significant brands and inspire innovative and co-creative business models and culture. As a result, these institutions and businesses concern themselves deeply and intrinsically with the performance of every single link along the entire value chain and stakeholder network that will ensure a sustainable competitive advantage. The current study

seeks to understand how leadership strategies are employed in business resilience within private HE institutions in a developing socio-economic context.

5.2.6 Strategic Collaborations

Strategic collaboration in business is a term used to describe a partnership or alliance between two or more organisations working together towards a common goal or set of plans. In today's rapidly changing business landscape, strategic collaboration has become increasingly important for organisations to share resources, knowledge, and expertise to remain competitive and agile. One of the key benefits of strategic collaboration is that it enables organisations to be more agile and responsive to changing market conditions. As a result, organisations can pool their resources and expertise by working together to quickly identify and respond to new opportunities and overcome challenges and obstacles that may arise. This has been very useful in fast-moving industries or markets, where the ability to adapt quickly can be the key to success.

Strategic collaborations and partnerships can be powerful ways to create value and achieve superior outcomes. In addition to enabling agility, strategic collaboration can facilitate the co-creation of ideas and innovations. Institutions and organisations can combine their unique perspectives, skills, and experiences to generate new ideas and solutions that they might need help developing. By bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise, collaboration can help to create new ideas and approaches that would not be possible through individual effort alone. This can lead to developing new products, services, or business models to help organisations stay ahead of their competitors and be relevant in a rapidly changing market. In short, strategic collaboration is an essential enabling aspect for organisations that want to remain agile and competitive in today's volatile business environment working together; institutions can share resources, knowledge, and expertise to quickly identify and respond to new opportunities and co-create new ideas and innovations that can help them stay ahead of the curve. Working in ecosystems and leveraging partnerships can be beneficial for several reasons. It allows institutions to share resources, expertise, and ideas, creating more innovative and effective solutions. It can also reduce costs and increase efficiency by enabling partners to pool their resources and expertise. Additionally, working in eco-systems can increase the reach and impact of a project or initiative, as partners can help to expand their network and extend their reach to new audiences.

Strategic partnerships are integral to any ecosystem, allowing individuals and organisations to work together to achieve a common goal. Strategic collaborations are essential for creating value in an ecosystem and driving progress and growth. Most PHEIs can leverage each partner's unique strengths and expertise by collaborating with others, producing superior products/programmes and desired outcomes. Additionally, collaboration allows for the

injection of diversity into the production process, which can lead to more innovative and effective solutions. As participant [P5] mentioned stated:

[P5], “We work in eco-systems and think about leveraging partnerships in the eco-system to create value. The programmes or outcomes produced also seem superior when done in collaboration, and sufficient diversity is injected into the production.”

In support of that data, Jarcho (2016) emphasised that strategic collaboration efforts will only succeed if done by cooperative people. This suggests that people should be allowed to share freely with direction from a leader and expectation of direct reciprocity. Scharmer (2016) noted that the social divide is caused when collaboration does not happen due to the separation between the self and others. In contrast, in modern work ecosystems, the emergence of social entrepreneurs plays an essential role as businesses are developed to serve society (Nhoh-Tiong, 2012). The data that's become obtainable indicated that African private HE institutions must mainly adopt the new technologies created by the 4IR/5IR to increase their capacity for education and generate valuable new knowledge. Participant [P2] emphasised the importance of collaborating with other institutions, both within the African continent and around the world, to share knowledge and expertise and promote the growth and development of HE:

[P2], “Forming alliances with other universities and engaging in student exchange programmes, institutions can learn from each other and expand their reach and impact. Collaboration with such institutions in other regions can also provide valuable opportunities for students to gain international experience exposure and broaden their perspectives.”

To contribute to the development of Africa as a whole, it is essential for HE institutions to embrace a pan-continental perspective and to engage in collaboration and partnerships with other institutions. Another participant [P1] echoed the same sentiments supporting the data by highlighting the benefits of collaborating with international institutions and the value of sharing knowledge and expertise:

[P1], “Working with institutions such as Pennsylvania State University and the University of Johannesburg, an institution can learn from its engineering faculty and develop new concepts and ideas. This collaboration allows institutions to expand their knowledge and capabilities, leading to the development of superior products and outcomes.”

Collaboration with international institutions also provides valuable opportunities for students and faculty to gain international experience and broaden their perspectives. Teamwork is

essential to driving progress and innovation in HE because it would be unaffordable to create many new physical institutions; the institutional system needs to scale up its provision, which collaboration can only do by utilising modern technology and moving online. In particular, with the introduction of 4IR/5IR, most PHEIs can use the internet to gain access to international partnerships that could increase knowledge production and global teaching capacity and. accordingly to the available data, African PHEIs must adopt the new technologies created by 4IR/5IR to increase their capacity for education and generate valuable new knowledge. To contribute to development efforts, the rest of Africa must embrace a more pan-continental perspective, as there is excessive separation across HE institutions. Smart deployment of strategic collaboration thinking can strengthen institutional resilience and independence in PHEIs in South Africa. Participant [P17] emphasised the importance of innovation and collaboration with diverse captains of industries when he mentioned:

[P17], “The use of blockchain technology by the University of Johannesburg to verify patents is an example of how institutions are adopting new technologies (4IR/5IR) to improve their processes and operations. In this case, blockchain allows for a more secure and transparent way to verify patents, which can help protect intellectual property and promote innovation. This type of innovation and collaboration is important for institutions to stay relevant and competitive in today’s rapidly changing world of work.”

Furthermore, individuals and organisations need to establish networks and build relationships through memberships, affiliations, and informal connections to stay informed about developments in their field and facilitate collaboration and engagement. Such networks can be very helpful in preventing institutions from being caught unaware and provide valuable learning and growth opportunities. For instance, Prof. Marwala (2022) stated that incorporating cutting-edge technology for producing solar energy and conserving water may strengthen the infrastructure an article titled ‘African PHEIs can be more competitive through 4IR/5IR technologies. Marwala further hinted that doing so would increase the institution's viability, establishing a more secure foundation for HE while saving millions. Participant [6] highlighted the importance of creating such platforms and opportunities for individuals within an organisation to share their ideas and experiences:

[P6], “Institutions must foster a culture of innovation and creativity by providing a platform for open communication and collaboration. This can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the institution and can lead to the development of new and innovative solutions.”

Additionally, institutions need to understand the experience of every function within the organisation to think differently and to identify opportunities for improvement and growth. Creating a culture of innovation and collaboration can help PHEIs to become “innovation factories” that drive progress and development within their institutions rather than just supporting other organisations. While participant [P16] highlights the benefits of collaboration and the importance of thinking outside the box to drive innovation and growth:

[P16], “partnering with other organisations and institutions, it is possible to learn from each other and leverage each other’s strengths and expertise. In this case, our institution collaborates with a university in Abu Dhabi, using the University of Zambia as an ICT hub to expand its reach and create new learning and growth opportunities.”

By thinking outside the box and collaborating, organisations can open up new possibilities and drive progress and innovation. In support of this data analysis, Marwala (2022) suggested that utilising strategic alliances also plays a significant function in assisting institutions to boost their performance as knowledge producers supporting national development, backed by the newly emerged data. Strategic collaborations between universities become essential in filling these knowledge gaps because there is a clear need to adapt and create new technologies appropriate for the purpose. A strategic collaborations approach fosters multidisciplinary, although many institutions still need to offer studies that breach conventional disciplinary boundaries. The solutions proposed as part of the 4IR/5IR tend to require input from different domains. For example, creating an automated speech translator requires coordination between computer scientists and linguists; therefore, strategic collaborations ushers in an era of multidisciplinary. To promote a greater pan-African engagement at an institutional level, participant [P4] stated that although there are many connections with institutions in West Africa and Eastern Africa, the South African HE system is lacking and should be more connected to the rest of the African continent. Data that emerged from the analysis [P12] emphasised the importance of collaboration and networking to become more competitive and to drive the continent’s agenda in the age of 4IR/5IR:

[P12], “joining organisations such as the likes of the South African Association of Business Schools and affiliating with organisations like SAPHE, institutions can extend their reach and influence and collaborate with other institutions to address issues and challenges facing the HE sector”.

Strategic collaborations and networking are essential for PHEIs to thrive and avoid isolation, which can lead to stagnation and decline. By working together and leveraging each other’s strengths and expertise, institutions can drive progress and innovation and become more competitive in the global market. Marwala (2022) criticised the absence of knowledge-

production collaborations between South African academics and their peers on the continent in support of the emerging data. Using 4IR/5IR technology, African HE can be more competitive. Researchers generally collaborate with peers from other institutions in South Africa rather than elsewhere on the continent, but it is not necessarily the case. This would seem to indicate that intra-African collaboration should be pretty straightforward. This is supported by Serrat (2017), who states that modern organisations emphasise people and processes and form collaborative networks to harness technology, manage data, and use information. Innovation has been highlighted as an essential skill in previous research. As such, scholars have postulated that invention mitigates the risk of short-term chaos by creating an overall, long-term sense of direction (Dolan & Garcia, 2017). Authors have recently cited that a culture of innovation and collaboration is necessary for a digital context (Harrat *et al.*, 2015; Katsamba, 2021). Participant [P5] highlighted the importance of fostering a culture of innovation and creativity within an organisation and the role that intrapreneurship can play in driving this process:

[P5], “encouraging employees to act as ‘intrapreneurs’ and to think creatively and independently, organisations can capture their ideas and allow them to become innovative solutions”.

To create an innovative environment, organisations must provide employees with a collaborative framework that supports and fosters them in developing their ideas. This can create an eco-systemic workforce empowered to drive progress and innovation within the organisation. Fostering a culture of innovation and creativity is essential for organisations to stay competitive and drive growth and success. Strategic collaborations in this ever-changing world of work describe influential business leaders wanting others to win alongside them. These leaders understand the importance of cooperation and interdependency when creating a winning culture in their organisations and community. Senge (2018) argues that the role of leadership in organisations is to draw value, innovation, and even greater productivity from followers who, together with their leaders, work towards a common goal. Senge (2018) believed that collaboration across boundaries inside and outside the organisation is required to succeed in the future. "

The only way to support people in developing new capabilities over time is to build learning communities where people inspire and help each other become part of a more extensive collaboration network. This collaboration allows people to sustain the efforts needed to learn something in a new way" (Senge, Schneider & Wallace, 2014). Senge avers learning organisations are possible because human beings are learners. The author further defined a learning organisation as one that can learn faster than its competitors, creating a space where people continually expand their ability to produce the desired results, that is, an organisation where new thought patterns are fostered, and collective desires are liberated. People continuously develop the ability to learn and grow together (Senge, 2018). PHEI business

leaders must understand the importance of building long-term relationships and a reputation over time. This networking allows leaders to be influential, and as a business leader, there is that need to collaborate for success and ensure future sustainable growth. When people collaborate, knowledge is shared and transferred, creating a sustainable competitive advantage and collaboration is crucial for an organisation to survive. Against this background, strategic partnership is seen as encouraging two or more parties who may or may not have worked together previously to create networks of people and organisations working jointly towards common goals.

Strategic collaborations with other educational institutions assist with learning from others, which is extremely important and is found to be a priority in PHEIs and lacking. Collaborations enforce peer reviews between institutions; for example, an international university conglomerate can visit another institute, for instance, at least every five years. In this way, institutions learn and support each other. Partnerships with organisations such as Amazon, Huawei, Cisco, and Microsoft will enable students to learn soft skills such as assertiveness, communication, adaptability, anger management, and how they deal with things that pull them down. So, business leaders in PHEIs must indicate the importance of upskilling the skill's professional and academic development and the need to create a platform to share ideas. There is a massive problem with needing a platform to share ideas. They need to understand the experience of every single function in the organisation, and only when they know that experience will they think differently about it.

In addition, collaboration and cooperation arose in the data as an essential enabling capability, especially regarding being agile and the co-creation of ideas. As previously mentioned, collaboration work within an eco-system, and thinking about leveraging partnerships in the eco-system will enable one to create value. The researcher can conclude that PHEIs, a product or outcomes are superior when done in collaboration, and sufficient diversity is injected into the production. Collaboration efforts will only succeed if done by cooperative people, which suggests that people should be allowed to share and expect direct reciprocity freely. The emerging data indicates that a social divide is caused when collaboration does not happen due to the separation between the self and others. In contrast, in modern work ecosystems, the emergence of social entrepreneurs plays an essential role as businesses are developed to serve society.

Furthermore, one gets a sense of the alignment between collaboration and influence. A business leader's ability to influence emerged as an essential capability in this study. In this study, the participants alluded to the importance of indirect influence, such as persuasion or conviction, and the ability of leaders to be politically savvy. For example, due to the changes and complexity of the RUPT or BANI world, leaders in the PHEI environment need to endure and bounce back from obstacles such as the global pandemic and socio-economic upheavals. The data suggested that, with the increasing pace of business and changing business

landscape, traditional leadership models should evolve to equip modern leaders with the resilience necessary to manage a business in the RUPT or BANI world. Bloch *et al.* (2016) build on this by stating that mindfulness is a practice that supports stability since it helps leaders to face challenges better by looking for the best in everyone through empathy arising from listening and focused attention. The ability of business leaders to be conscious of themselves and others is closely aligned with mindfulness, giving rise to social consciousness as another important capability reflected in this study. Public and private HE institutions (HEIs) must collaborate to bring about positive change in the education landscape. Transformational leadership is essential in driving this change, and PHEIs have recognised this importance in their institutions. However, excluding PHEIs from broader transformational efforts has hindered collaboration between public and private institutions. This highlights the need for cooperation and partnerships between these two types of HEIs to achieve fundamental transformation.

5.3 Proposed Resilience and Agility Building Framework

To ensure PHEIs remain successful and profitable in the face of disruptions, the researcher developed a Resilience and Agility Building Framework (RABF) that promotes innovative business practices. This framework comprises six strategies and five strategic or operational functions, including learning and design, learning operations and governance, business development and growth, business operations, and global research dialogues. This framework enables PHEIs to identify and evaluate potential strategies effectively, make strategic decisions, and adapt to the rapidly changing educational landscape. Figure 14 below illustrates the RABF and its six procedures and five operational functions.

The RABF provides a clear and consistent decision-making framework that supports PHEIs in remaining focused on their goals, promoting agility, and delivering high-quality educational experiences. A strategic guidance framework is essential given the various disruptions that PHEIs can face, such as economic downturns, technological changes, student demographic shifts, and regulatory bodies. This framework is critical during times of uncertainty, such as the global pandemic caused by Covid-19, highlighting the need for educational institutions to adapt quickly and effectively to disruptions.



Figure 14: Resilience and Agility Building Framework (RABF) (source: author presentation)

As illustrated in Figure 14, implementing a Resilience and Agility-Building framework within their institutions is essential for clients seeking to enhance their ability to withstand business disruptions. This framework should begin with developing a clear strategy that outlines how to drive the institution towards its objectives, with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, both internal and external. Once the process has been established, the institution must create a clear, concise, transparent communication plan. This plan should detail the channels through which the system will be communicated to all stakeholders, and must be visible, and accessible. As the institution shares the strategy, it must be aware of potential disruptions and prepared to adapt to changes. All parties should clearly state and understand the measures for handling troubles. Effective communication is the cornerstone of any successful strategy, as an institution’s dreams, agenda, and hopes to depend on its ability to communicate effectively.

Communication is the most powerful tool of influence that leaders possess, and an institution cannot hope to influence if it cannot communicate effectively. Therefore, developing effective communication skills is critical for anyone who considers themselves a leader. However, more than learning to communicate effectively is required; it is essential to understand the purpose of communication. Most human communication is intended to achieve one of two objectives: persuading someone to take a specific action or change their perspective on a particular issue. To accomplish either of these objectives, effective communication is crucial. Influencing and persuading others is critical to achieving institutional goals and success. It is essential to adopt a client-centred approach to business

and incorporate a digital transformation strategy as they complement each other and impact the success and growth of the institution, particularly in the face of disruptions. Collaboration is essential in all stages, from strategy development to implementation, to ensure all relevant stakeholders are involved, including clients.

The second layer of the framework represents the functions or departments within the institution. Business leaders must tailor the strategy to each function or department's objectives and goals to achieve resilience and agility during disruption. By implementing this framework, clients can bolster their institution's ability to withstand business disruptions, ensuring long-term success and growth. Therefore, PHEIs face numerous troubles, and several strategies can be employed to navigate these challenges. One such method is developing strong partnerships and collaborations with other organisations and institutions. Associations provide valuable resources and support that can help institutions navigate disruptions and identify new opportunities. For instance, PHEIs can partner with businesses to offer student internship and job placement opportunities or collaborate with other educational institutions to share resources and expertise. Another strategy for PHEIs is adopting and integrating digital technologies and infrastructure. PHEIs can invest in online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and other digital tools to support remote learning and collaboration. By adopting transformational digital technologies, PHEIs can improve the quality and accessibility of their educational services and better meet the needs of their students and other stakeholders.

Furthermore, building solid financial foundations is critical for PHEIs. This includes diversifying sources of revenue and ensuring that the institution has adequate reserves to weather economic challenges. This can help PHEIs remain financially stable and resilient in disruption.

5.4 Integrating TIPS in Management: Applying Business Innovation Strategies

In light of the discussion above, it is evident that the integration of management of technology, innovation, people, and systems is critical when building and proofing future-fit organisations. The findings of this investigation pointed out that the world of work is changing fast with the exponential increase of technological advances and that leaders and organisations need to change at a similar rate to remain resilient and relevant. This exponential change is only made possible through deliberate ideation and innovation of not only the product, but all other components of the organisation can be innovated upon, such as the configuration, the culture, and the systems. Furthermore, agile leadership and people need more relevant capabilities to build and manage these organisations. In that case, they may become casualties of change and disruptions such as the global pandemic and socio-economic nature. Hence, agile leaders and organisations need a growth mindset, a holistic perspective and an eco-systemic mindset of the macro system and its inter-relationships as

they navigate the winds of disruptive change and build sustainable and thriving organisations into the future.

Briefly, society revolves around continuous economic growth, and business innovation is essential to the advancement of society. Innovative thinking allows individuals to be more creative and effective, and, in return, the economy can be bolstered with better productivity and innovations. Suppose people can ideate more in the work environment towards innovative ideas. In that case, this will lead to more cooperative environments, stimulating teamwork and encouraging a free flow of knowledge sharing, which could then, among other things, improve productivity and lead to the innovation of new products, services, or processes. Business innovative practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment.

Leaders could start by assessing the organisation's current strengths and weaknesses in each area and identifying areas for improvement. Leaders could then develop a plan to address these areas, which could involve implementing new technologies and systems to support innovation and collaboration, providing training and support to team members to help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in a rapidly changing environment, and setting performance goals and metrics to track progress. Regarding technology, leaders could focus on adopting new technologies and systems that can help support innovation and collaboration within the organisation. For example, this could involve implementing new software and systems to support online learning or investing in new technologies to support research and development efforts. Management of business innovation, meanwhile, could be funded through a range of initiatives, such as setting up an innovation lab or incubator, encouraging collaboration and idea-sharing among team members and providing training and support to help team members develop new skills and knowledge.

To support future-proofing people, business leaders could focus on providing regular training and development opportunities to help team members stay updated with the latest trends and developments in their field. This could involve offering workshops and seminars, providing access to online learning resources, and mentoring and coaching support to help team members develop their skills and knowledge. Finally, to support systems, business leaders could focus on implementing new processes and systems to support collaboration and innovation within the organisation. This could involve implementing new project management tools and systems, for example, or adopting new technologies to support communication and cooperation among team members. Integrating the TIPS managerial framework in a PHEI in a disruptive environment will require adopting new technologies and systems, fostering innovation and collaboration, upskilling and reskilling, providing training and support to team members, and implementing new processes and procedures to support these efforts. This may require significant investment in time, resources, and training, but the long-term benefits of a more innovative and adaptable organisation are likely substantial.

5.5 Conclusion

The chapter presented the research findings from the data analysis process in detail. The data analysis resulted in axial codes through emerging storylines that were explained further and explored code patterns. The emerging themes were considered and distilled to create six broad main themes. The six main themes developed and discussed are a client-centred approach to business, digital transformation, communication strategy, business adaptation to change, drive strategy and strategic collaboration. The findings of this study indicate that there are several key challenges and opportunities facing PHEIs in the area of strategic business management and building resilience in a disruptive socio-economic environment. These include the need to adapt to a rapidly changing business environment, the importance of developing agile solid leadership and management skills, and the need to leverage technology and innovation to drive growth and sustainability. One key challenge identified by the study participants was the need to adapt to a rapidly changing business environment characterised by increased competition, disruption, and uncertainty. Many PHEIs need help to keep pace with these changes and need help to remain agile and responsive to market forces. This can hurt their ability to build resilience and achieve long-term sustainability.

Many PHEIs are facing an agile leadership gap, with a need for experienced and skilled managers who can navigate the complexities of the business environment and provide strategic direction for the organisation. Despite these challenges, the study identified several critical opportunities for PHEIs to build resilience and achieve long-term sustainability. These include the potential to leverage technology and innovation to drive growth and improve operational efficiency and the opportunity to develop new skills and competencies that can help PHEIs adapt to the changing business environment.

Overall, the findings of this study highlight the need for PHEIs to focus on strategic business management and building resilience to remain competitive and achieve long-term sustainability in a rapidly changing business environment.

The next and final chapter will conclude by summarising key findings, lessons, and recommendations. Most importantly, it will demonstrate how the results from the semi-structured were applied to the conceptual framework to create a strategic framework to support PHEIs building resilience by establishing innovative business practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

To excel in today's rapidly evolving and disruptive business landscape, which the 4IR or 5IR revolutions have catalysed, business leaders and employees must remain adaptable and innovative to stay competitive. This entails welcoming novel technologies, acquiring new skills, and being receptive to new working methods. This thesis culminates in a synopsis of the phenomenological case study's research findings. The researcher examined the study's outcomes with other pertinent data to construct a Resilience and Agility-Building Framework (RABF). This chapter condenses the research findings in the context of the research questions and sub-questions, culminating in the study's conclusions. The research limitations are acknowledged, and suggestions are provided for further investigation. Finally, the chapter concludes by exploring potential avenues for future research.

To thrive in the disruptive business environment, PHEIS must adopt digital technologies and tools to enhance operations, boost productivity, and improve customer service. Such digital tools could include automation, data analytics, and other technologies that could simplify procedures and enhance decision-making. Furthermore, developing new skills and competencies is critical for business leaders and employees. This includes acquiring technical skills related to specific technologies and soft skills such as communication, collaboration, and problem-solving.

Ultimately, the ability to innovate, adapt to change, and leverage the opportunities presented by the 4IR/5IR revolutions is critical for businesses to thrive in this changing landscape. Business leaders must also embrace new working methods, such as remote and flexible work arrangements, to attract and retain talent and remain competitive in the global market. This could also help businesses create new opportunities for economic growth and job creation. This chapter presents the study's essential findings, including a hypothetical private HEI just to illustrate the successful practical implementation of the Resilience and Agility Building Framework (RABF) for clients seeking to enhance their ability to withstand business disruptions. It concludes by highlighting critical lessons learned and providing recommendations for the survival and growth of PHEIs.

6.2 Key Findings and Recommendations

The detailed description of themes and the discussion of findings reflects the manner and extent to which the six themes have addressed the research problem, aim, objectives and questions.

6.2.1 Summary of Key Findings

This study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the strategies and practices employed by Private HE Institutions (PHEIs) in a specific socio-economic context to manage their businesses and identify potential areas for improving their resilience and agility. It is important to note that the study did not aim to evaluate the companies themselves but sought to gather data to inform the development of a framework for strategy. The study developed a Resilience and Agility-Building Framework (RABF) based on insights from the lived experiences of the PHEI participants interviewed.

The RABF framework will assist PHEIs in adopting innovative business practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment, enabling them to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing landscape while contributing to their local community's overall development and success—the research design employed interpretive approaches, utilising a phenomenological case study methodology within a qualitative system. The study analysed data from interviews with seventeen research participants, prioritising reviewing the transcribed interviews conducted with the research participants to inform the understanding of the phenomenon and context. The empirical study identified six common themes that were relevant to the research questions, and the summary of key findings is as follows:

A *client-centred approach to business* in PHEIs involves prioritising the needs and preferences of students, clients, and other stakeholders in decision-making and operations. This approach recognises that the Institution's clients are the primary drivers of its success and that meeting their needs and expectations is essential for long-term sustainability and growth. To implement a client-centred approach to business, PHEIs should focus on gathering and analysing client feedback to understand their needs and preferences. This can involve conducting surveys, focus groups, and other research methods to gather input from students, clients, and other relevant stakeholders. The Institution should also establish clear channels for clients to provide feedback and suggestions and try to respond to these inputs promptly and effectively. In addition, a client-centred approach to business involves being responsive and flexible in meeting clients' needs. This can include offering a range of academic programs and services that cater to different types of students and their needs and being willing to adapt and modify programs and policies based on client feedback keeping in line with the regulations of the regulatory bodies. Therefore, PHEIs can build strong relationships by prioritising clients' needs and creating a positive experience for students and other relevant stakeholders.

Institutional transformation in PHEIs refers to **integrating digital transformation** into all Institution aspects, including teaching and learning, research, finance, administration, and communication. The goal of digital transformation is to improve the quality and efficiency of educational services and to enable institutions to serve their students and other relevant stakeholders better, which gives them a competitive advantage. There are several critical elements of digital transformation in PHEIs. One key aspect is developing and implementing digital infrastructures, such as online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and digital libraries and being aware that new consumers drive growth while repeat customers determine sustainability. Analytics is such a key factor for the brand that knowing customers' needs is critical. To date, the most effective strategy is customer interaction and internal CRM. The quickest and most reliable method of return on investment is personally reaching out to clients and communicating with them clearly through a sale or within the information. This critical element of data and analytics support decision-making and improves institutional performance. This can involve using data to track student outcomes and performance, assess the effectiveness of educational programs, and identify improvement areas. Finally, digital transformation often shifts towards a more student-centred approach to education, focusing on personalised learning and using technology to support student engagement and achievement. Overall, digital transformation in PHEIs can help institutions to improve the quality and accessibility of their educational services and better to meet the needs of their students and other relevant stakeholders.

A comprehensive, robust **communication strategy** for PHEIs in a disruptive environment should focus on effectively and transparently sharing information with all stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, clients, and the broader community. The strategy should also focus on maintaining strong relationships and fostering trust and confidence in the Institution. To develop an effective communication strategy, the PHEI should first identify the key stakeholders it needs to communicate with and consider their needs and preferences when developing communication plans. The institution should also establish clear channels for communication, such as email, social media, and website updates, which are accessible and easy to navigate when looking for information. It should use these channels to regularly share information about the institution's operations, policies, and initiatives. In a disruptive environment, the institution must communicate transparently and responsively. This can involve providing regular updates on the institution's response to any disruptions and being available to answer questions and address concerns from stakeholders. The institution should also listen to stakeholder feedback and incorporate it into its decision-making processes. By effectively and transparently communicating with stakeholders, PHEI can maintain trust and confidence in the institution and support its resilience in a disruptive environment. A business caters to customers, consumers, clients, or whoever benefits from the output. The best way for sustainable growth and success of a comprehensive communication strategy is to continuously focus on customer problem-solving or feedback and improve their service and

successful experience with what you offer them. This builds continuous consumption, trust, value, and growth.

Adapting to business change is essential for PHEIs to survive and thrive in a disruptive environment. To adapt to change, institutions should focus on being flexible and responsive in their operations and decision-making processes. This can involve implementing agile and adaptable organisational structures and processes and being open to new ideas and approaches. One key area of business adaptation for PHEIs is adopting and integrating digital technologies. Business leaders can develop a framework that coordinates choices and actions to accomplish top-level corporate objectives and changes by explicitly stating measurable business objectives and cascading progressively specific goals to successive layers of subordinates. Individuals may identify the goal components for which they are responsible and can compare their performance against them, which causes decisions and actions to align. By adopting digital technologies, institutions can improve the quality and accessibility of their educational services and can better meet the needs of their students and other stakeholders. Another critical aspect of business adaptation is the development of solid partnerships and collaborations with external parties. This can involve partnering with other educational institutions, either private, public, local, or international, to share resources and expertise or to collaborate with businesses and other organisations to provide student internship and job placement opportunities. Partnerships and collaborations can provide valuable support and resources to help institutions navigate a disruptive environment. Business adaptation to change is essential for PHEIs to survive and thrive in a disruptive environment. Business leaders can achieve this by being flexible, responsive, and open to new ideas and approaches. Institutions can adapt to changes in the market and continue to provide high-quality educational services to their students.

Drive strategy for PHEIs in a disruptive environment should focus on building resilience and adaptability to navigate the challenges and opportunities the disruption presents. This can involve several key components. First, the drive strategy should focus on building strong financial foundations, including diversifying sources of revenue and ensuring that the institution has adequate reserves to weather economic challenges. This will provide a solid base for the institution to build on as it navigates the disruption. Second, the drive strategy should focus on developing and implementing digital technologies and infrastructure, such as online learning platforms and virtual classrooms, to support remote learning and collaboration. This will enable the institution to continue providing high-quality educational services even if in-person instruction is impossible. Thirdly, the drive strategy should build strong partnerships and collaborations with other organisations, such as businesses, government agencies, and other educational institutions. These partnerships can provide valuable resources and support to help the institution navigate disruption and identify new opportunities. Finally, drive strategy should focus on flexibility and adaptability in operations and decision-making. This can involve implementing agile organisational structures and

processes and being open to new ideas and approaches. By building resilience and adaptability, PHEIs can navigate a disruptive environment and continue to provide high-quality educational services to their students.

Strategic collaborations for PHEIs in a disruptive environment help institutions navigate the challenges and opportunities of any business disruption. These collaborations can take many forms, depending on the specific goals and needs of the institution. One common type of collaboration is partnerships with other educational institutions to share resources and expertise. For example, institutions can collaborate on research projects, joint degree programs, or other initiatives that leverage the strengths of both institutions. These collaborations can help institutions expand their reach and provide students with broader educational opportunities. Another type of strategic collaboration is partnerships with businesses and other organisations to provide student internship and job placement opportunities in a real-world context. These partnerships help institutions to provide real-world experience and career development opportunities for students and can also help to build relationships with potential employers and other relevant stakeholders. In a disruptive business environment, PHEIs may also want to consider partnerships with government agencies or other organisations that can provide support and resources during times of crisis. These partnerships can help institutions weather financial challenges and other disruptions and provide valuable expertise and support for navigating the trouble. Overall, strategic collaborations can help PHEIs to navigate a disruptive environment and continue to provide high-quality educational services to their students. By partnering with other organisations, institutions can access valuable resources and expertise that can support their operations and help them adapt to market changes and evolving the new world of work.

The section below will now focus on recommendations for PHEIs and a summary of a few potential offers for the survival and growth of PHEIs.

6.2.2 Recommendations

The recommendations section in the final chapter of this thesis presents practical suggestions for stakeholders in the field to apply the research findings and insights gained throughout the study. These recommendations are based on the conclusions drawn from the research. They are intended to guide stakeholders in implementing effective strategies and practices to enhance their organisation's resilience and agility in a disruptive environment.

The recommendations section highlights the study's most significant findings and presents actionable steps organisations can take to navigate and thrive in a rapidly changing educational landscape. Overall, the recommendations section provides valuable insights for stakeholders seeking to increase their organisation's resilience and adaptability and stay ahead of the curve in a dynamic and uncertain environment.

Business leaders can take several key steps to implement a client-centred approach to business and digital transformation into the learning design function in PHEIs.

1. First, the institution should gather and analyse student, client, and stakeholder feedback to understand their needs and preferences. This involves conducting surveys, focus groups, and other research methods to gather client input.
2. There are several strategies PHEIs can use to encourage students and clients to complete surveys: by surveying as short and straightforwardly as possible. Students and clients are more likely to complete a survey if it takes less time or effort. The institute should be able to explain the purpose of the survey clearly and how the results will be used. This can help both the clients and students feel more motivated to participate.
3. Offering incentives for completing the survey could be as simple as a small prize or a chance to enter a drawing. Follow up with reminders. If you don't receive a high response rate, consider sending gentle reminders to encourage people to complete the survey. PHEIs should make the survey accessible. If sending the survey online, use a platform that is easy to use and accessible to everyone.
4. Finally, by showing appreciation to those who complete the survey. Thank your clients and students for their time and feedback and let them know their input is valued.

Business leaders can use data and analytics to track student outcomes and performance and identify improvement areas. The institution should also establish clear channels for stakeholders to provide feedback and suggestions and try to respond to these inputs promptly and effectively. Second, the institution should adopt a student-centred approach to learning design, focusing on personalised learning and technology to support student engagement and achievement. It can also include providing various educational programs and services that cater to different types of students and their needs. Third, the institution should invest in digital infrastructure and technologies to support remote learning and collaboration. This can involve implementing online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and other digital tools to enable students to access educational services remotely.

Overall, implementing a client-centred approach to business and digital transformation in the learning design function of a PHEI can help the institution better to meet the needs of its students and other relevant stakeholders and to improve the quality and accessibility of its educational services.

PHEIs can reappropriate several strategies from contemporary businesses, and these strategies can help PHEIs to improve their operations, enhance their services, and better serve their students and other relevant stakeholders.

1. One strategy businesses employ is using data and analytics to support decision-making and improve performance. PHEIs can adopt this strategy by using data to track student outcomes and performance, assess educational programs' effectiveness, and identify improvement areas.
2. Another strategy businesses employ is the development of solid partnerships and collaborations with other organisations. PHEIs can reappropriate this strategy by partnering with other educational institutions to share resources and expertise or collaborating with businesses and other organisations to provide student internship and job placement opportunities.
3. A third strategy businesses employ is adopting and integrating digital technologies to improve operations and enhance services. PHEIs can adopt this strategy by investing in digital infrastructures, such as online learning platforms and virtual classrooms, to support remote learning and collaboration. Businesses employ many methods that PHEIs can reappropriate to improve operations and better serve their students and other stakeholders. By adopting these strategies, PHEIs can enhance the quality and accessibility of their educational services and navigate challenges in a changing environment.

Various factors, including technological change, economic shifts, political instability, and natural disasters, can cause disruption. In the private HE sector in South Africa, these factors can impact the demand for educational services, the availability of resources and funding, and the ability of institutions to provide high-quality education to students. The New World of Work, characterised by a shift towards flexible and remote work arrangements, can manifest in the PHEI sector in South Africa in several ways. For example, the rise of online and distance learning can create opportunities for institutions to offer flexible and accessible educational services to students. However, it can also create challenges for better-equipped institutions to support remote education and collaboration.

Another way the New World of Work can manifest in the PHEI sector in South Africa is through changes in the labour market and the rise of new industries and occupations. This can create opportunities for institutions to provide relevant and in-demand educational programs and training. Still, it can also create challenges for institutions adapting to market changes. Institutions adapting to these changes can capitalise on new opportunities and better serve their students and other stakeholders. Overall, the disruption caused by the New World of Work can positively and negatively impact the PHEI sector in South Africa. PHEIs can stay resilient and profitable while delivering on the promise of an exceptional educational

experience by focusing on these critical areas. They can build resilience and establish innovative business practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment.

Various disruptive forces will likely impact the PHEI sector in South Africa. The New World of Work will require business leaders in their strategies to adapt to these changes and continuously update their skills to remain competitive in the job market.

In a nutshell, herewith is a summary of a few potential recommendations for the survival and growth of PHEIs:

1. ***Invest in technology and innovation***: To remain competitive and provide high-quality educational experiences to students and clients in the rapidly changing education landscape, PHEIs should invest in technology and innovation. This can include implementing new technologies and systems to support online learning, investing in R&D initiatives, and providing training and support to faculty and staff to help them adapt to the changing environment. The adoption of new technologies can also disrupt traditional teaching methods and the skills needed in the workforce. For instance, the widespread use of online learning platforms and digital tools in classrooms can alter how students learn and how educators teach.
2. ***Foster collaboration and partnerships***: PHEIs can benefit from collaborating and forming partnerships with other institutions, businesses, and organisations to share resources, knowledge, and expertise. This could involve forming strategic alliances with other PHEIs to offer joint programs, share facilities and resources, or partner with businesses and organisations to provide students with internships and other experiential learning opportunities.
3. ***Focus on student success***: PHEIs should prioritise and make it a key focus of their operations. This could involve providing support services such as tutoring and mentoring, offering career development and job placement services, and working to improve student retention and graduation rates. By helping students succeed, PHEIs can enhance their reputation and attract more students.
4. ***Develop a strong brand and marketing strategy***: PHEIs can benefit from developing a solid brand and marketing strategy to differentiate themselves from competitors and attract potential students. This could involve creating a clear, compelling brand message and identity, developing marketing materials and campaigns, and using social media and other digital channels to reach potential students.
5. ***Be adaptable and flexible***: In a disruptive environment, PHEIs need to be versatile and flexible to respond to changes in the market and the needs of students. This could involve regularly reviewing and updating programs and curricula, offering flexible learning options such as online courses, and experimenting with new approaches and technologies to stay ahead of the curve. In the PHE sector in South Africa, the New World of Work may manifest in several ways, including the emergence of new

industries and the shifting demand for specific skills, increasing the prevalence of part-time, temporary, or contract work. The PHEIs should take advantage of this new trend in the increasing use of technology in the workplace which may require workers to have new or different skills for the new markets. This will mean the growing importance of lifelong learning and the need for workers to update their skills continuously.

The section below presents a hypothetical implementation of the proposed framework for strategic business management practices that promote business agility and resilience in PHEIs. To illustrate the successful practical implementation of the Resilience and Agility Building Framework (RABF) for clients seeking to enhance their ability to withstand business disruptions. A hypothetical Private HE Institution known as “Tech-R” will be used as a recommendation. The following **CASE STUDY** outlines the application of the RABF within Tech-R.

Tech-R Background and Executive Summary of the Institution

Tech-R, a PHEI focused on technology, faced declining enrollment and increased competition in the industry. The rapidly changing world of work also challenged the institution to remain relevant and competitive. Tech-R implemented several strategic initiatives to overcome these challenges to boost its business agility and resilience. These strategies included a client-centred approach, digital transformation, effective communication, the ability to adapt to change, a focused drive strategy, and strategic collaborations. These efforts allowed Tech-R to understand its target market better and offer programs and services that better meet the needs and demands of its students. As a result, the institution was able to attract and retain students, improve the student experience, and achieve growth, sustainability, and operational efficiency. Implementing these strategies has positioned Tech-R as a leader in the technology education sector and sets a strong foundation for future success.

This case aims to provide critical insights on how to build a resilient and agile business, using Tech-R as a step-by-step guide. In this business case, as a business consultant, the researcher will present a practical guide on how a hypothetical PHEI named "Tech-R" can enhance business agility and resilience. Using this fictional example, the researcher will illustrate the effective implementation of strategies to boost Tech-R's ability to adapt and overcome disruptions in a rapidly changing business environment. By applying the resilience and agility building framework (RABF), Tech-R can gain a competitive edge and promote its overall business agility and resilience.

Tech-R Objectives

Tech-R has three main objectives: attracting and retaining students, improving the student experience, and achieving growth, sustainability, and operational

efficiency. By attracting and retaining students, Tech-R aims to ensure that it continues to have a solid student base and maintains its reputation as a top institution. Improving the student experience is also crucial for maintaining a positive reputation and providing students with the best possible education. Finally, by striving for growth, sustainability, and operational efficiency, Tech-R ensures that it can continue to deliver on its mission and provide students with the resources they need to succeed. These objectives work together to create a comprehensive approach to achieving success for Tech-R and its students.

Tech-R Challenges and Problem Statement

Tech-R, a technology institution, has been facing a decline in enrollment and increased competition in the industry. This has prompted the institution to take action to remain competitive. Realising the importance of understanding its target market's needs, Tech-R has recognised the need to adapt to the rapidly changing world of work. By gaining a deeper understanding of its target market, Tech-R hopes to offer programs and services that better meet the needs and demands of its students. This, in turn, will help the institution attract and retain students and improve the student experience, ultimately leading to growth and sustainability.

Tech-R Practical Contributions and Solutions adopting the RABF

In the following section, a hypothetical PHEI called "Tech-R" will illustrate the effective implementation of strategies to boost business agility and resilience in the face of disruptions. This fictional example will serve as a step-by-step guide practical guide, highlighting key points on how Tech-R can promote business agility and resilience by applying various strategies and gaining a competitive edge in the rapidly changing business environment. Table 6.1 acts as a user guidebook manual, providing strategic direction for PHEIs like "Tech-R" on implementing themes or strategies effectively to achieve growth, sustainability, and operational efficiency despite business disruptions. Tech-R focused on several key budgetary considerations to improve its financial performance. Cost control is one of the most important factors to consider.

Tech-R reviewed its current expenses and identified areas where the institute can save costs. This included negotiating better deals with suppliers, streamlining processes, and reducing unnecessary costs. Revenue generation is also critical to Tech-R's success. The institute focused on increasing its revenue by expanding its customer base, developing new products, services and programs, and increasing its sales and marketing efforts. This included diversifying its product portfolio, entering new markets, and leveraging technology to improve customer engagement, retention and student experience. To ensure the company is on track, Tech-R regularly analyses its profitability and identifies areas where the institute can improve. This included enhancing its pricing strategy, reducing production costs, and increasing efficiency.

Table 18: Tech-R Resilience and Agility Building User Manual

Strategy	Dimensions
<i>Client-Centred Approach to Business:</i>	<p><i>We prioritise understanding our client's needs and tailoring our approach to meet those needs.</i></p> <p><i>We strive to build long-term relationships with our clients by constantly seeking feedback and making improvements.</i></p>
<i>Digital Transformation:</i>	<p><i>We are investing in technology to improve our efficiency and offer new services to our clients.</i></p> <p><i>We are leveraging data to gain insights and make data-driven decisions.</i></p>
<i>Communication Strategy:</i>	<p><i>We have a clear and consistent message across all communication channels.</i></p> <p><i>We engage with our clients and stakeholders through various channels to ensure they are informed and up to date.</i></p>
<i>Business Adaptation to Change:</i>	<p><i>We continuously monitor the market and adapt our approach to stay ahead of the competition.</i></p> <p><i>We encourage a culture of innovation and experimentation to discover new opportunities</i></p>
<i>Drive Strategy:</i>	<p><i>We have a clear vision and mission that guides our decision-making.</i></p> <p><i>We set ambitious goals and actively work towards achieving them.</i></p>
<i>Strategic Collaborations:</i>	<p><i>We partner with other businesses, organisations and institutions to expand our reach and capabilities.</i></p> <p><i>We actively seek mutually beneficial collaborations aligning with our goals and values.</i></p>

Firstly, a client-centred approach to business is crucial for PHEIs to adapt to the new world of work and to create business agility in the sector. As a business consultant, the Resilience and Agility Building Framework (RABF) provides a practical example for clients such as Tech-R looking to bolster their ability to withstand business disruptions. For instance, Tech-R, a technology-focused institution, faced increased competition and declining enrollment and struggled to keep up with the rapidly changing world of work. They recognised that to attract and retain students, they needed to better understand the needs and wants of their target market. To address these challenges, Tech-R's leadership team conducted extensive market research to identify the skills and knowledge employers in the technology industry were looking for in graduates. Based on this research, Tech-R redesigned its curriculum and implemented new programs and initiatives such as online courses, online certification programs and boot camps to help students gain the skills and experience needed to succeed in the job market. Tech-R established

a robust communication strategy to keep students informed about the latest industry trends and developments in technology. Additionally, the institution created a Student Advisory Council to regularly discuss student needs and concerns and recommend to the institute's administration and management to improve the student experience. Furthermore, Tech-R implemented a personalised learning platform that allows students to set their own learning pace and access a wide range of digital resources, improving student engagement and success rates and allowing the institution to offer flexible and affordable degree programs to a wider audience range of local and international students.

To adapt to the new world of work, Tech-R also began incorporating digital transformation in its operations. This investment in technology enhances the student learning experience, improves online delivery and student services, and creates new opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience, conduct cutting-edge research, and develop new products and services. The institute prioritises digital transformation by investing in new technologies and training its staff to use them. This allows the institution to offer more flexible and accessible learning options, such as online courses and virtual reality labs. The institution partners with a leading edtech company to develop a mobile app that allows students to access their course materials, communicate with their faculty and classmates, and track their academic progress. The faculty is also trained on how to use the app to enhance their teaching and engage their students. In addition to these efforts, Tech-R focuses on developing soft skills, as many industries are looking for talent with strong problem-solving, communication, and critical-thinking skills. The institution has implemented programs and initiatives such as workshops, seminars, and internships to help students develop these skills. The curriculum also includes soft skills training and opportunities for students to practice and apply these skills through group projects and internships.

In addition to these efforts, Tech-R established a robust communication strategy to keep students informed about the latest trends and developments in the technology industry. The institute implemented effective communication systems and protocols to ensure timely and effective communication with students, faculty, and staff. This includes a centralised communication platform where students can access information and resources and regular meetings to voice their concerns and provide feedback. To ensure sustainable growth of the institution, Tech-R put in place policies and procedures to ensure efficiency and effectiveness while ensuring compliance with industry standards and regulations. The institution also launched a social media campaign to promote its programs and services and create community among its students and alums.

Additionally, the institution established a 24 or 7 online chat service to give students quick and easy access to information and support. Regarding the business context, Tech-R should know the economic, technological, and competitive landscape. This will help it identify new opportunities and potential threats and

make informed decisions supporting its long-term success and how to communicate and what to communicate to the relevant stakeholders. The economic landscape, which includes changes in consumer spending patterns, government policies, and market conditions, should be regularly monitored and communicated to all relevant stakeholders. Tech-R should also stay abreast of technological advancements and trends that could impact its business, such as the development of new technologies, the rise of e-commerce, and the growth of mobile usage. Understanding the competitive landscape, including the strengths and weaknesses of competitors and their market strategies, is also important for Tech-R's success.

To further adapt to business change and ensure business continuity, Tech-R established a dedicated task force that regularly monitors industry trends and assesses the potential impact on the institution. This allows the institution to pivot and adapt its offerings and operations quickly. The business continuity team develops plans and procedures to minimise the impact of potential disruptions, such as natural disasters or pandemics, on the institution's operations. They also conduct regular drills and simulations to test the effectiveness of these plans. Additionally, the institute focuses on providing experiential learning opportunities. Tech-R established a robust internship program where students can work with industry partners and gain real-world experience. They also offer service-learning opportunities, where students can apply their knowledge and skills to address real-world problems in their communities. This approach not only helps students to develop practical skills but also helps to build relationships with industry partners and create new revenue streams for the institution. Tech-R should conduct a market analysis to understand its target audience better, including their needs, preferences, and behaviours. This will help it create products and services that meet its customers' needs and position itself as a leader in its market. By considering these budgetary considerations, understanding the business context, and conducting a market analysis, Tech-R will be well-positioned to improve its financial performance and achieve long-term success.

Drive strategy is a crucial aspect of any institution's operations as it helps to ensure that the institution stays on track to achieve its goals and objectives. To ensure the success of its drive strategy, the institution needs to regularly review and update its five-year plan to ensure that it is aligned with the changing business environment. This includes periodically assessing the institution's progress towards its goals, identifying improvement areas, and making necessary adjustments. Developing strategic partnerships with other institutions and organisations is critical to the drive strategy. In this case, the institution has partnered with a leading research university to create a joint program that allows students to earn dual degrees and gain valuable industry experience. This enhances the student's educational experience and helps build relationships with other institutions and organisations in the industry. The institution also establishes several industry-specific advisory boards to provide insights and guidance on the latest trends and

best practices in their field. These advisory boards comprise industry experts with a wealth of knowledge and experience in their respective fields. They provide valuable insights and guidance on the latest trends and best practices, which helps the institution to stay ahead of the curve and remain competitive.

Another critical aspect of the drive strategy is engaging in strategic collaborations with companies and organisations in the industry. These collaborations allow the institution to share resources and expertise with other organisations and create opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience, conduct cutting-edge research, and develop new products and services. This not only benefits the students but also helps to create new revenue streams for the institution. Additionally, the institution has established a strong marketing and sales strategy to promote its programs, services, and research opportunities. This includes creating a strong brand, developing effective marketing campaigns, and building partnerships with key stakeholders to promote the institution. By focusing on these key areas, the institution can reach the right audience and effectively promote its programs and services. In a nutshell, the drive strategy of the institution is focused on achieving its goals and objectives by regularly reviewing and updating its five-year plan, developing strategic partnerships, establishing industry-specific advisory boards, engaging in strategic collaborations, and promoting its programs and services through effective marketing and sales strategies. The institution also adapts to the new world of work by being flexible, innovative and strategic. By incorporating data-driven decision-making, providing lifelong learning opportunities, focusing on digital transformation, personalisation and flexibility, developing strategic partnerships, and prioritising sustainability, they can ensure growth, sustainability, and operational efficiency in the face of business disruptions.

The institution also fosters innovation and entrepreneurship among its students and faculty. They have established an incubator and accelerator program to provide resources and support for students and faculty who want to start businesses or develop new products and services. This includes access to funding, mentorship, and networking opportunities. Additionally, they have a series of workshops and events to educate students and faculty on the basics of entrepreneurship and business development. This approach not only helps to foster innovation and creativity among students and faculty, but it also helps to create new revenue streams for the institution. Tech-R established a Global Research Network to foster international collaborations and partnerships among faculty and students. The network organises regular conferences and workshops to promote cross-cultural exchange and collaboration and provide opportunities for the institution's faculty and students to share their research and learn from leading experts in their field and foster the spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Furthermore, the institution places a strong emphasis on creating a strong and positive reputation. They understand that a strong reputation is crucial for

attracting students, faculty, and funding. The institution regularly researches how the public perceives it and then uses that information to develop and implement communication strategies to improve its reputation. This includes leveraging the success stories of students, faculty, and staff to promote the institution and engaging with key stakeholders, including alumni, donors, and industry partners, to build relationships and promote the institution. Overall, the institution's strategies focus on creating a dynamic and adaptive institution responsive to the changing business environment. This includes developing strong partnerships, fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, creating a strong and inclusive culture, promoting its programs and services, and building a positive reputation. By focusing on these critical areas, the institution can ensure sustainable growth and success in the face of disruptions and challenges. In summary, the strategies implemented by Tech-R led to successful student attraction and retention, improved student experience, growth, sustainability, and operational efficiency. These efforts also gave Tech-R a competitive advantage in the dynamic business environment by increasing its agility and resilience.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the practical strategies implemented by Tech-R serve as a model for PHEIs looking to boost their business agility and resilience in the face of disruptions. The client-centred approach, digital transformation, communication strategy, business adaptation to change, drive strategy, and strategic collaborations can provide a roadmap for PHEIs to improve their operations and remain competitive in the rapidly changing educational landscape. Tech-R's success highlights the importance of being adaptable, innovative, and student-focused in the current environment. It is a valuable example for other PHEIs looking to achieve similar outcomes. Therefore, in today's rapidly changing business environment, PHEIs must adapt their business strategies to stay competitive and meet the evolving needs of their students, industry partners, the workforce and the greater community at large. Business leaders at Tech-R were willing to constantly evaluate and adapt their strategies to stay ahead of the curve in an ever-changing world of work.

6.3 Recommendations for Further Research

This study has some limitations that future studies could leverage for further research. It is important to note that research findings typically only apply to the specific population and context in which the study was conducted. Since the survey was born in a South African context, the findings may only apply to some developing socio-economic contexts. It would be necessary to conduct additional research in different countries and contexts to determine the results' generalisability.

Some potential areas of future studies include the potential for PHEIs to cause unintended consequences in disrupted systems and the role of public-private partnerships in supporting

PHEIs in these contexts, additionally, examining the ethical implications of PHEIs in disrupted environments, such as the allocation of limited resources and the potential for unequal access to care.

6.4 Return of Investment and the Unique Contribution of the Study

Fitz-Enz (2010) defines Return on Investment (ROI) in a people-centric context as measuring the financial value generated by employees compared to the organisation's investment in them. However, Phillips (2007) suggests that measuring ROI in a people-centric environment should also consider non-financial values, such as employees' contribution to stakeholders in social communities and clients and the organisation's internal clients. In the current study, the researcher's primary measure of ROI is not limited to financial profitability margins. Instead, it focuses on the potential increase in collective human co-creation and strategic collaborations. Thus, the study aims to contribute to personal and professional value levels and sponsoring organisation and social value levels. In this regard, the ROI in this study is evaluated based on its unique contribution to fostering human co-creation, lifelong learning, and strategic collaborations within these different dimensions of value.

As indicated, the study aimed to make a unique and novel contribution to the body of organisational learning knowledge and, more specifically, to excel in today's rapidly evolving and disruptive business landscape, which the 4IR/5IR revolutions have catalysed, business leaders and employees must remain adaptable and innovative to stay competitive. This entails welcoming novel technologies, acquiring new skills, and being receptive to new working methods. Agile leaders and organisations need a growth mindset, a holistic perspective and an eco-systemic mindset of the macro system and its inter-relationships as they navigate the winds of disruptive change and build sustainable and thriving organisations into the future. To ensure PHEIs remain successful and profitable in the face of disruptions, the researcher developed a Resilience and Agility Building Framework (RABF) that promotes innovative business practices. The RABF provides a clear and consistent decision-making framework that supports PHEIs in remaining focused on their goals, promoting agility, and delivering high-quality educational experiences

Moreover, the study's unique contribution extends to the sponsoring organisation, which will implement the RABF. The organisation, the institute of management of technology and innovative learning provider in South, Southern Africa and the African continent aims to develop agile, aligned and engaged managerial leaders who co-create innovative ecosystems and influence the co-creation of sustainable societies. As an innovative organisation, it seeks to effect change through learning initiatives that unleash co-creation, strategic collaborations and adaptability potential, thereby contributing to its clients' adaptive quotient. The study's intentional lifelong learning philosophy aligns with and strengthens the organisation's vision. Thus, the study's significant contribution lies in its ability to apply a learning approach that

promotes and supports the organisation's mission. This approach will not only enhance the sponsoring organisation's ability to develop agile and adaptive leaders. Still, it will also enable the organisation to make a positive social impact by promoting humane and sustainable societies.

A social-level contribution this study has made is in the positioning of the gift of South Africa and Africa continent, its humanness. Briefly, society revolves around continuous economic growth, and business innovation is essential to the advancement of society. Innovative thinking allows individuals to be more creative and effective, and, in return, the economy can be bolstered with better productivity and innovations. Suppose people can ideate more in the work environment towards innovative ideas. In that case, this will lead to more cooperative environments, stimulating teamwork and encouraging a free flow of knowledge sharing, which could then, among other things, improve productivity and lead to the innovation of new products, services, or processes. Business innovative practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment.

6.5 Conclusion

There are several strategies used by modern commercial enterprises outside of education that PHEIs can use to ensure growth, sustainability, and operational efficiency amid business disruptions in a socio-economic context. These are as follows as seen from the study as such institutions should prioritise adaptability and flexibility in its operations, policies, and decision-making processes. This will allow institutions to respond quickly to changes in the market and adapt to new challenges. Identifying and addressing potential risks and challenges early on, developing contingency plans to mitigate their impact on the business, building a robust and flexible business model that can adapt to changing market conditions and customer needs developing a solid and engaged workforce through training, professional development, and effective communication and collaboration. Changes in the labour market usually shift the demand for specific skills, or the emergence of new industries can disrupt the PHEI sector by changing the types of programs and courses offered. Institutions that are building strong relationships with customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders and providing high-quality products and services that meet their needs and expectations. The institutions should develop strong partnerships with other organisations, such as businesses, government agencies, and other educational institutions. These partnerships can provide valuable resources, support, and expertise to help the institution navigate a disruptive environment. by focusing on innovation, continuous improvement, and staying ahead of the competition through market research, product development, and strategic partnerships.

Institutions that are investing in technology and digital transformational tools to improve operational efficiency and productivity and to enhance the customer experience. The institution should invest in technology and digital infrastructure to support online and remote

learning and other remote collaboration and communication forms. This will enable the institution to continue providing high-quality education to students even if in-person instruction is impossible. Business leaders are also required to promote the digital native mindset. This means having a passion for technology and innovation and the attitude to bring the organisation and your employees to embrace new ideas. This also means that business leaders need to know at what level of digital prowess and knowledge their team members have thoroughly assessed their current skillset and digital capabilities. Effective financial management is crucial for maintaining a strong financial position, including cash flow management, cost control, and risk management. To build a strong financial foundation, institutions should focus on diversifying their sources of revenue and maintaining adequate reserves to withstand economic challenges. Some specific ways to accomplish this include seeking grants and other funding opportunities, implementing cost-saving measures, and carefully managing investment portfolios. Additionally, it is essential to regularly review and update financial plans and budgets to ensure that the institution is on track to meet its financial goals and has the resources needed to fulfil its mission.

In conclusion, this thesis has highlighted the importance of proactive, flexible, and adaptable approaches for PHEIs to survive and thrive during disruption. The strategies and frameworks presented, such as building partnerships, adopting digital technologies, and focusing on financial stability, offer practical solutions for PHEIs to increase their business agility and resilience. Embracing business innovation and committing to ongoing improvements, PHEIs can better navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by disruptions and ensure long-term sustainability. The insights and recommendations in this thesis contribute to PHEI management and offer valuable guidance for practitioners seeking to enhance their institution's ability to withstand business disruptions.

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Annexure A: Ethical Clearance

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Reference: 01022
Date: 07 June 2022

Ethical Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the Doctorate Research of the student named below has received ethical clearance from The Da Vinci Institute Ethics Committee. The student and supervisor will be expected to continue to uphold the Da Vinci Institute's Research Ethics Policy as indicated during the application.

Proposed Title: Private Higher Education Institutions and the New World of work: A Strategic framework for resilient business management in a disruptive environment

Student Name: Raymond Toga

Student number: 11369

Supervisor: Dr Mario Landman

Co-Supervisor: N/A

Period: Ethics approval is granted from 2022/06/07 to 2024/10/22

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'HB Klopper', written over a horizontal line.

Chairperson: Research & Ethics Committee

Prof HB Klopper

Executive Dean: Research and Institutional Partnerships

Annexure B: Thesis Language Editing Confirmation



Exalt – Excel - Exceed

Dear Raymond Toga

06 May 2023

Thesis language editing confirmation

I am writing to confirm that proofreading and language editing on your thesis has been completed. As an experienced editor, I have carefully reviewed your document to ensure that it is free from errors and meets the highest standards of academic writing. During the editing process, the thesis was reviewed line by line, checking for spelling, grammar, punctuation, and syntax errors and reviewed for clarity and coherence. Improvements were suggested where necessary to ensure that your ideas are presented in the most effective way possible.

Thank you for choosing our editing service and wish you all the best in your academic endeavours.

Sincerely,

Dr Claudia Sigamoney PhD
(IPMF, PEG)

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Annexure C: Semi-structured Interview Guide

Research Topic

Private HE Institutions and the New World of Work: A strategic framework for Resilient and Agile Business Management.

Qualitative interview introduction

Length: 45-60 minutes

Primary goal: This study explores the current state of strategic business management practices for resilience and agile within PHEIs in a developing socio-economic context. The purpose is to design a strategic framework to support PHEIs building resilience by establishing innovative business practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment.

Verbal Consent

Do you consent to participate in this interview?

Verbal consent was obtained from the study participant.

Verbal Consent was NOT obtained from the study participant.

Background Information to the study

Overview:

Participants selected for this study must have worked in their current place of employment in HE for at least five years. During this time, you should have experienced specific disruptions in HE that would have affected your institution. I am interested in your views and experiences regarding these disruptions and how the institution you work for responds to them. Participants in this study include Business Leaders, Industry Consultants, Financial Managers, IT specialists, Quality Assurance Managers, Instructional Designers, Curriculum Designers, Business Development Managers, Business Strategists, and Team Leaders within PHEIs. The participants are divided into the following categories:

Strata 1: Middle Management [Manco] level

Strata 2: Senior Management [EXCO] level.

Strata 3: Industry Consultants – includes retired or semi-retired who either held an executive or business leader position or consulted within an Institution.

Background Questions

1. What role do you play in shaping business strategy for an institution?
2. What are your professional credentials?
3. What is your working experience?

Exploring the lived experiences of the research participants

4. Which kind of disruptions did you face as an institution over the last five years?
 - a. How did you respond as an institution?
 - b. How are you safeguarding your institution from further future disruptions?
 - c. What disruptions do you foresee, and how do you prepare for them?
5. What role did business innovation practices play in current and potential future strategies to remain sustainable, operationally efficient and enhance business growth amid business disruptions?
6. Reflecting on particularly successful strategies, how did you accomplish the following?
 - a. maintaining the quality of academic delivery (service)
 - b. ensuring cost-efficiency in delivery
 - c. business growth in terms of development, diversification, and increased market share
 - d. meeting the demands of quality assurance and regulatory bodies
 - e. maintenance and enhancement of a meaningful student learning experience
7. What are the main processes and tools available for PHEIs to respond to business disruption?
8. Highlight the primary considerations in formulating a business strategy and implementation plan for PHEIs amid business disruptions?
9. Is there anything further you would like to add?

Thank you for your participation!

Annexure D: Written Invitation to Participants to Participate in Research

Date:

RE: Private HE Institutions and the New World of Work: A Strategic Framework for Resilient and Agile Business Management.

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT,

My name is **Raymond Toga**, and I am doing research under the supervision of **Dr Mario Landman** towards a Doctorate in Management of Technology and Innovation (DMTI) at the Da Vinci Institute. We invite you to participate in a study entitled: **Private HE Institutions and the New World of Work: A Strategic Framework for Resilient and Agile Business Management.**

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study explores the current state of strategic business management practices for resilience within PHEIs in a developing socio-economic context. The purpose is to design a strategic framework to support PHEIs building resilience by establishing innovative business practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY?

Participants selected for this study must have worked in their current place of employment in HE for at least five years. During this time, you should have experienced specific disruptions in HE that would have affected your institution. I am interested in your views and experiences regarding these disruptions and how the institution you work for responds to them.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves participation in an interview that will be approximately 45 - 90 minutes long, and it's about your lived experiences exploring the business management status-quo or overall strategies for business resilience. You will be able to check the interview transcript, the written data, and how you will use this in the research report.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?

Participating in this study is voluntary, and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without providing a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

The primary aim of this study is to explore the current state of business management status quo or overall strategies for business resilience and agility within PHEIs in a developing socio-economic context. After that, design a conceptual framework to support PHEIs building resilience by establishing innovative business practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

Potential risks are a possible inconvenience to Business Leaders, Industry Consultants, Financial Managers, IT specialists, Quality Assurance Managers, Instructional Designers, Curriculum Designers, Business Development Managers, Business Strategists, and Team Leaders within PHEIs. This is regarded as low risk as these are generally non-vulnerable adult participants, and non-sensitive information includes any risk from others identifying the person's participation in the research.

WILL THE INFORMATION I CONVEY FOR THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

You have the right to insist that your name will not be recorded anywhere and that no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research. The Institutions will be anonymised, and the researcher will use a pseudonym to prevent any connection to you from the answers you give in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Your responses may be reviewed by people responsible for ensuring that research was conducted properly, including the transcriber, external coder, and the Research Ethics Review Committee members. Otherwise, records identifying you will be available only to people working on the study unless you permit other people to see the documents.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

The collected data will be sorted electronically and confidentially (in a password protected folder) on an external drive with a copy supplied to my supervisor at the Da Vinci Institute: School of Business Leadership for at least five years after submitting the thesis unless otherwise requested by the Institute. Future use of the stored data will be subjected to further Research Ethics Review Committee and approval. After this time, hard copies will be shredded and deleted.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. The feedback procedure will entail member checking of transcripts and how this is used in the research report.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee at the Da Vinci Institute: School of Business Leadership. The participants can obtain a copy of the approval letter from the researcher if they wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you want to be informed of the final research findings, don't hesitate to contact **Raymond Toga** at [**11369@davinci.ac.za**](mailto:11369@davinci.ac.za). The results are accessible for the duration of the study and a year after the investigation is completed (until approximately 2023).

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please feel free to contact **Raymond Toga** at [**11369@davinci.ac.za**](mailto:11369@davinci.ac.za). Should you have any concerns about how the research has been conducted, you may contact Dr Mario Landman at [**mario@davinci.ac.za**](mailto:mario@davinci.ac.za).

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet and participating in this study.

Raymond Toga
Doctoral Candidate

Annexure E: Consent/Assent to Participate in the Study

I _____ confirm that the person asking my consent to participate in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunities to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree with recording the data using an audio recording device and the researcher making notes during the interview. I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname

Participant Signature

Date

Raymond Toga
Researcher's Name & Surname

Researcher's signature

Date

Annexure F: Example of Letter Requesting Permission to Research at the Site

Date:

RE: Private HE Institutions and the New World of Work: A Strategic Framework for Resilient and Agile Business Management.

Address 1

Dear Dr XXX,

I, Raymond Toga, am doing research under the supervision of Dr Mario Landman towards a Doctorate in Management of Technology and Innovation (DMTI) at the Da Vinci Institute: School of Business Leadership. We invite business leaders to participate in a study entitled: **PRIVATE HE INSTITUTIONS AND THE NEW WORLD OF WORK: A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR RESILIENT AND AGILE BUSINESS MANAGEMENT.**

This study explores resilient business practices in South African Private HE in a developing socio-economic context. Understanding the factors influencing these business strategies will enhance resilience in disruptive environments. This study sought to understand the current state of business strategies in the South African Private HE Institutions and design a conceptual framework to support PHEIs building resilience by establishing innovative business practices that promote agility in a disruptive environment.

Participants selected for this study must have worked in their current place of employment in HE for at least five years. During this time, you should have experienced specific disruptions in HE that would have affected your institution. I am interested in your views and experiences regarding these disruptions and how the institution you work for responds to them. The study will entail semi-structured interviews.

Potential risks are a possible inconvenience. This is regarded as low risk as these are generally non-vulnerable adult participants, and non-sensitive information is involved. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. The feedback procedure will entail member checking of transcripts and how this is used in the research report.

Yours Sincerely,

Raymond Toga
Doctoral Candidate

Annexure G: Example of Transcribed Interview

INTERVIEW 1

What is your work experience and professional credentials?

I have over three decades of experience in the technology industry, having worked in various capacities for several big banks in South Africa, such as technology, strategy, and client retention and management. I hold a BSc from a British university, a master's in technology and Innovation, and several certificates in mentoring, digital transformation, and its impact. Currently, I am serving as the Chief Information Officer and Chief Digital Officer at Huawei, and I previously served as the Chief Technology Officer for Microsoft in South Africa and across the continent.

What role do you play in shaping business strategy for an organisation?

As the head of the Business Intelligence Unit, the organisation's strategy office, I play a crucial role in shaping the business strategy. The process starts with a SWOT analysis and conceptualising how the organisation will respond to internal and external factors. The focus is on a purpose-driven strategy rather than a mission and vision statement. The purpose is formulated through a 14-month process of understanding the industry and its verticals, with the goal of giving the organisation a competitive advantage in the market. I also play a role in creating the platforms that support the delivery and implementation of the strategy, both in the formulation and delivery phases and moving into the tactical and operational aspects of strategy.

Which kind of disruptions did you face over the last 5 years & how did you respond?

Over the last 5 years, one of the major disruptions that our organization faced was the changing business model of professional services, where clients are moving away from the traditional billable hour to focus more on specific outcomes. This shift has resulted in the need for us to reconsider our approach to serving clients, as our focus needs to move beyond just providing legal opinions to helping businesses understand and prevent risks in the market. We have also been grappling with the war for talent, as our legal and technology professionals have received offers from companies with much higher salaries. Additionally, the impact of technology on the legal profession has added to the challenge, as it has changed the supply and demand dynamics of the industry. To respond to these disruptions, we have had to reconsider our people's value proposition and approach to work engagement.

How are you safeguarding your organisation from further future disruptions?

As a professional services organization, our first priority is to ensure that our talent is aligned with our purpose, which is to be sustainable and transformative through our work and actions. To achieve this, we make sure that everyone in the organization can connect to and find themselves in our purpose. Our strategic delivery is based on four pillars: clients, people, platforms, and economic outcomes. Our focus is on delivering above-average market value, starting with having real visibility into our clients' requirements and co-creating with them to respond to their needs in the way they expect. For our people, we balance hygiene and other environmental factors to improve work-life balance and prevent burnout. We also prioritize mental well-being and psychological safety to create a positive work environment. Our platform focus includes building a business platform with a consistent experience for clients, regardless of their location, as well as diversity and inclusion, broad-based black economic

empowerment, and technology platforms that enable us to make data-driven decisions. We believe in digitizing the entire legal process through the use of cognitive services and artificial intelligence to make more informed decisions. Ultimately, our financial outcomes serve as a lag metric for the success of our efforts in the client and people spaces.

What disruption do you foresee, and how do you prepare for them?

As the leader of my organization, I always keep a watchful eye on potential disruptions that could impact on our business. Currently, the trend of remote work and increased flexibility in work arrangements is a major shift that we are prepared for. To ensure that our employees feel trusted and can deliver their best work, we have implemented a performance management system that prioritizes engagement and fosters positive relationships. This includes focusing on our purpose and engaging our employees around it, promoting experimentation and learning, and encouraging strong relationships between team members. Our leadership methodology emphasizes the importance of leading people and managing work, with a clear distinction between the two. By focusing on performance management and individual competence, we aim to stay competitive in the market and exceed expectations.

What role did business innovation practices play in your current and potential future strategies to remain sustainable, operationally efficient, and enhance growth amid business disruption?

Central, right. So, we think about two forces that business leaders must balance based on the organisation's life stage and clip harness; Tedtalk has this conversation about balancing exploration and exploitation. The balance, so we considered the balance of exploration, the ability to create new novel approaches. Therefore, the application of invention or innovation, as you put it, is essentially the growth engine because based on an organisation's ability to balance exploration and exploitation, the short term, and the long term, the internal and the external, is the fundamental driver of growth. Because I mean, based on what I see and know, in professional services, for instance, firms like you know, like professional services firms, over 10 years 70, up to 70% of the income, essentially is derived from innovation. So, when you look back three years, top money spinners are things that didn't exist three years ago. So, we see innovation and the application of innovation as central to that. So, because of that, we have completely reorganised our organisational architecture in order to create a capability that focuses on innovation of the client process, innovation based on data and fundamental innovation, based on being able to allow people agency to apply their knowledge in novel ways to create improvements both in effectiveness as well as in efficiency.

Reflecting on particularly successful strategies, how did you accomplish growth in terms of development, diversification, and increased market share?

Right. So, for us, it starts with diversity and inclusion and, you know, our philosophy is that inclusion has three legs. The first one is leadership. The other one is talent, and the other one is culture. And so those work together based on trust to create inclusion. A friend of mine always says that diversity is being asked to the dance; inclusion is actually dancing. So that ability allows people to apply their capability and to apply it in a psychologically safe context where they can fail forward. It's not just about failure, but the ability to fail forward gives us the ability to apply our human capital in, in absolutely, you know, the most innovative ways that key processes that we think about the way we manage change organisations, whether that is whatever change is a process change, technology change, our organisational structure of change, we have a definitive methodology that we teach all

managers and leaders. We consistently then apply that change approach so that, as a leader, I can talk to my team about the nature of changes and how we will reverse that change. And once again, based on research from Harvard Business Review, every organisation has to excel in three boxes, manage the present, and create the future. Still, the important thing is a decision about selectively forgetting the past because by selectively forgetting the past, we can create the bandwidth from the present into the future. And also, you know, our perspective has now changed the process. We don't try and set platforms because that might be effective in the first, second or third chance. And eventually, people don't come from the platform. So, we think about the push and pull factors, essentially pushing people from the current state to the future state. And we believe that some of the two elements are about co-creating a future vision. So, if you think of the acronym VUCA, bookended by two Ds of disruption, it is characterised by Brooker. Still, the other day I looked at VUCA about diversity and inclusion. But now, when we think about the acronym VUCA, it is fundamentally not another part, the problem of hookah butter medicine. And so, from a Human Centered Design Thinking point of view, we start with understanding, and we believe that you need to have deep empathic knowledge. You need to develop that empathy appropriately to understand the context and the issues that the target audience that you're trying to deal with or do something else trying to deal with. And from that understanding, create the vision and then you have the cycle and this iterative process between understanding and vision and vision and understanding in order to create the common ground based on understanding and vision. We know that people can act with clarity in VUCA because they can act with clarity. After all, we've taken the time to create the right and consistent common platform of understanding from which we create a vision plan and act with clarity. We can release individuals and allow them agency over their actions in alignment with this vision and understanding. We can therefore develop organisational agility. So that becomes medicine for VUCA becomes a way that we think about change and how we usually solve our clients' problems internally and externally. And our ability to not only solve problems and to typically provide solutions is the basis from a process perspective. You know that we, you know, that we think about that. So, we've talked about the pieces that the people aspects, we spoke of the process aspects in chains; we talked about the methodological approach from a human-centred design point of view. And then we think about the enabling technology because we think about capabilities; the way we think about this, there's a business model. There's an operating model and the transition point between the business model and the operating model of our business capabilities. So, if we want to create new value, we need to build new business capabilities. And when we think about business capability is a mindset plus a practice. So, what is the mindset? Our mindset is that we are open. Our mindset is that we want to be sustainable and transformative. So, you know, that's the first you know, our practices are then, of course, human-centred design thinking the way we manage to change the way we empower people to be innovative, the way we think about individuals having agency of bringing their best at work. So, mindset, plus practices in brackets multiplied by technology is what we think of building a capability and a new builds new capability. Then leads to new results and, therefore, unique value.

...in terms of maintenance and enhancement of a meaningful customer experience (service).

Of course, you know, because once again, in a digital sense, we start inside out, yeah, we start with our clients, everything that we do organisationally, in terms of our strategic pillars. Is responsive to the client. So, suppose you think about our business model. In that case, the client sits at the top right then and then it's an understanding of who our clients who because we don't serve everybody like we say we are so prominent corporate high net worth individuals. Still, do we then understand the value

propositions that came to solving the needs or dealing with the problems that those clients have? And if those are the value propositions, what capabilities do we need to borrow to realise those value propositions to deal with those client needs. and of course, these three then can result in an economic outcome. We know that they are cost drivers, and they are drivers of profit. And when you look at those four business model components, they encapsulate how we think about our business model. And if you think about our operating model, that drops from an operational perspective. Let me get into it because there's always a component of the operating model that I cannot remember in the active model discussion. Of course, it starts, it starts with the business capabilities. and those business capabilities are going to value streams because that value stream gives us the ability to understand how to diversify our revenue base. And then, these business capabilities are built on the financial process resources, technology, resources, and hardware. Since and of course, all of this sits on top of governance. And so, from a governance point of view, when we think about governance, it's the ability to make sure that we don't act on behalf of someone that might conflict as ethically that might bring us into conflict, of realising the sustainable development. Goals. So, as we think about the Sustainable Development Goals, it's about sustainable livelihoods because we do mergers and acquisitions, like start off with those sustainable livelihoods. Then we incorporate the aspect of education of our use our teams. Still, Perotti of the communities that we find and work in, we think about energy rights and how we think about energy and waste, and how to make sure that we can create an energy environment which is accessible which is responsible. And of course, on top of energy, we then think about all infrastructure; how do we make sure that our client's business contributes to creating infrastructure and economic infrastructure for the entire country, and how do those things work together to create the proper economic infrastructure? And then, of course, on top of all of this, we think about the democratisation of learning. We think about the democratisation of access because then that democratisation, we are then able to offer people economic opportunity, once again, that they feel that they believe they have agency.

What are the main processes and tools available for business to respond to disruption?

So, one of the critical processes and tools available for any business to respond to any business disruption? Exactly like so. So, one of the things that we know in, in in, you know, from Tim Collins in his range of books, Good to Great both two laws, you know, and I think there's one I think, I think there's one book Great by Great by Choice, or something like that the two aspects discipline people discipline, discipline, process, discipline, action, right. And so, he talks about the I think he calls that the breakthrough, you know, the flywheel that leads to leads to breakthrough let me remind myself in terms of the approach, he talks about the fact that sort of, it's not a net one, I'm just trying to find just one thing I won't be I won't be long. I'm just trying to find that. Okay, I'm just opening up the strategy document to remind myself of those aspects,' so in the flywheel, he talks about how organisations go from buildup to breakthrough. And so, the first part is disciplining people. Explain for us in terms of our strategic Plus client and then people, and I've talked about the process, but he suggests two components are part of discipline people. He talks about level five leadership at first. And so often, we are concerned with constantly the competence of individuals, but it is usually finding the right individuals and then ensuring that they are on board. And the sponsor of level five leadership. If you refer back to how we think about Ubuntu and service-defined leadership, you know those aspects. Still, he talks informally about self-disciplined thought, and this ability to have the organisation understand the market and, through our swoat and swoat analysis, confront the brutal facts are absolutely crucial and that ability. There's this concept called the Stockdale paradox, where the individuals who survived

personal walk-ins when the pragmatists weren't optimists or pessimists but pragmatists. And then there's this concept around the hedgehog concept, which is a Venn diagram of these interlocking circles, which is essential, you know, the, you know, the way we think about strategic competitiveness is what is the organisation or what is the thing that you're passionate about? What can we do best, the best in the world? And the third one is What drives our economic engine? And when those three circles overlap, you know, that's where that's the sweet spot, that's the hedgehog concept. But he says that we research this ability to be consistent and to go over, you know, periodic aspects of view. But this ability to be consistent and to be compatible with your purpose is one of those fundamental things that lead to break through and then in discipline talks about this culture of discipline, I think, part of this issue and I was one of the things I love about studying it, Da Vinci that we talked about this concept of managerial leadership, but once again, the leadership portion is about leading the people and managing. The last act aspect is about what they call, you know, tech, technology accelerators. And if you look at the War World Economic Forum research, they talk about the three factors that make organisations' future fertile: critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration. And so, if you think about your Innovation process, how we work in concert, how we bring in diversity and inclusion, to improve our decision making, not explain the way different but to find a way to incorporate the difference. And then, of course, the ability to use different technologies so that we can slip we can create conversation like there's a quote by a gentleman called motor to an Anderson who talks about dialogue. I want to see if I can find that quickly. Anderson talks about the nature of conversation in strategic conversations that create value and says; those organisations are linguistic structures, built out of words and maintained by conversations; even problems taking on communication, like failures of mechanical systems, are always in technology because technologists can be explored in terms of things seven questions asked and conversations never begun or left uncompleted alternative explanations not discussed. So, we see diversity and inclusion as that fundamental ability to create the discussion based on trust to create that inclusion.

In formulating a business strategy and implementation plan, what are the primary considerations? Stands to in the outer world know yourself if that's the basis for competitive strategy, right? If I know myself and my enemy, if I understand the unique selling points on which they can compete, then I know how I can counteract that. But of course, there's this concept of emergency strategy because irrespective of what you do, you must have a systemic approach. Because understanding a systemic approach and the fact that you intervene in a system and that intervention both has positive and negative consequences or unintended consequences, we have to understand that this strategic process is also emergent. And then, of course, you know, this fundamental understanding is the most significant predictor of an engaged client is an engaged employee. And so, from work done by the meaningful brand index, if my organisation is purposeful, and my people believe in their purpose, and at the agency apply that purpose, they will be engaged at work, and an engaged employee will translate to a loyal, loyal client and service profit chain. Huge. I mean, so much literature, I think, from Oxford University on them. And I think the other aspect is understanding metrics like they are lead and lag metrics, financial or lag metrics, treat them as such. Leverage, once again, understanding where to act on the system becomes the ability for us to understand how to leverage and multiply. Because in a digital context, I believe it's about multiplication and not addition. So, what multiplies efforts, networks multiply, people multiply, assets multiply, and of course, potential multiplies efforts for heavy synthesis? I don't think this insistence thinking is because of the complexity of the environment. A systemic approach is highly prized because it is always about the synthesis, not individual variables.

And in understanding the synthesis that we are, we become empowered to make decisions in a complex or chaotic context.

Having to reflect on everything that we have discussed, would you like to add something?

Yeah, in conclusion, I think it's important to understand the role of technology as a multiplier and the importance of creating ecosystems that enable innovation and growth. It's also crucial to maintain a balance between exploration and exploitation, and to approach business with a mindset of doing good, which will lead to both transformative and sustainable success.

INTERVIEW 2

What is your working experience and professional credentials?

Okay, I have been in the industry for many, many years, so after a B Com degree have paid a properly legal degree HPI which is honours in Business Administration with an MBA degree. And then, I did a PhD on the management of change. I worked for Cecil as the group company secretary and commercial executive. When we bought Cecil to ancestral tree and started at Cecil with commercial explosives, a byproduct from ammonia. New Company, who was a very, very interesting competitor to ACI at the time we had 95% of the market, and that's what mining explosives then sessile always wanted me to do the International Technical beta negotiations, but when I did my doctorate on the management of change, was also in that period of turmoil in South Africa and so on. And I thought, but I want to assist in decreasing price, so I left them for Development Bank. We assisted communities with loans and so on. I filmed a defection myself out of my position as general manager, joint, telco, senior general manager, human resources and like to become the managing executive, divestitures, and outsourcing. When Delcom was sold to international companies, we all left them. I continued to as my consulting business and then became the executive team for the technical Pretoria for the faculty that asked me to join them and subsequently, I ended up with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor operations at the university of endo and barber and, and then for the past six years of the word retirement I joined Belgium campus as Director of Education and liaison.

What role do you play in shaping business strategy for an institution?

Very interesting. Public education to private education has the best of two worlds. So, understand public education, understand privatized education. If you look particularly at the needs of South Africa, the needs of Africa didn't look at the nature of the world. It is quite evident that HE does not meet what the world requires. So, if you look up the national development plan in South Africa, if you look at schedule 2063 of Africa, what Africa requires, and the sustainable development goals of the United Nations, it is clear that this must fit in many of the HE institutions. We have a number of colleagues who were blinkers on. This is what I've studied. This is related now, and I've been doing this for the past 20 years. So why to bother you know, instead of seeing the strength of working across faculties across institutions and religion jointly contribute to people who see things similarly, the and I think that what we've discovered in what my route of discovery, HE is that in public HE, the situation is my parents wanted me to go and study I enrolled it and accept me that faculty so I must enroll so I go to another faculty that they follow that one they go to another faculty so I ended up in something that I wanted to. Still, because the family supports me, I must get a qualification. So, I do get a qualification. And then I discover I'm not employable because there's no need for this skill set. And we see it, particularly in the field that we are in the news. Gov looks at the world. I don't know whether you've read the Korn Ferry report of 2018, but the future of work and what he said are interesting. Korn Ferry, look at the world of work in 2020 at the world of work in 2030. And in 2020, I had a diagram of society participating countries. They looked at three sectors, the financial sector, the technological sector, and God even remembered what they are the manufacturing, financial and technology, those three sectors and he discovered that if we don't have sufficiently trained colleagues available, the world will have an economic loss of income of \$5 trillion right then dissected those See you can also see it for South Africa. How the position is worsening. In the ICT sector, where we are, the loss to the economy of the city will be one comma \$8 billion. And that's just because you don't have people to do the job. And this was critical when I worked for Cecil, for example. We both go to Cecil three, and then individualized

Cecil, for instance, shut down the block for a week to do extensive maintenance to the block. And then it takes them a week to start up the plants again, and they do the thing. A couple of years ago. They went through the service organizations, and much to their shock and dismay, they could not get the plants to run again. And when they did do the investigation to find out what the problem was? Why do we have these hiccups? Suddenly, they discovered there's not a single master welder in South Africa. All the monster welders integrated they work internationally and so, and this is what we've discovered here. On the campus where I am currently, if you don't provide students that they must be able to fly when they die when they enter the world of work. For instance, Liberty told us the other day the only thing we have to teach our students when they join Liberty is how to work the coffee machine. The rest they can do and, but you sit with public education, focusing on care and definitions and give you a broad overview of law large number of things that are so even reminded it's of nervously using. I visited the Wilson State University of Moscow. For example, I spoke to the executive dean of ICT Day he said I'd got 250 doctoral students. of those 250 doctoral students. Fifty of them are busy with a second doctorate, and they said you know what the shocking thing is, the industry cannot use one of them. Because they focus in detail on this mint little thing. And they don't see the connection and the necessary architecture to build something quiet and which is usable. So, where I am in our institution, we've adopted the notion of knowledge valorization. So, knowledge valorization is the commercialization of what you've done. So, for instance, if your doctoral is not knowledge memorization, you do a doctorate for the sake of being a doctoral and when it's done, it's done. It's on the shelf, in the Fall setting, and it's no use. And I think that Sunday's two things in HE. I think the first is to become more practical, and the second is to become more urgent. The urgency for me is critical because the. Know, let's compare education in South Africa and Zambia. In Zambia, the school system, primary and secondary education is of a higher level than what you will find in South Africa. But they haven't been interesting, yet we talk. We are so involved in looking at things like, for instance, public education talks about the decolonization of the Arctic. But if you're in Zambia, they talk about Afro-centric regulation. And those are two different points of departure. The one is coming from the positive, and the other is going into the negative. So, as we've seen, too good to be the best, it's available in Africa, great examples. Let's also populate our curricula where, if you look at decolonization, what can we destroy? What can we take away and all that sort of stuff? It comes from a negative mindset. So those are just a few. I don't know whether that is relevant at all for what you want, but there are suggested resorts.

So how are you navigating or preparing your students for that future new world of work?

Oh, absolutely. I mean if you look at a presentation here that I can share with you briefly. But let me sort it out. I'll have to search for that, but that is true for many guys. If you look at, for example, how we taught people in the past, in mechanical cars, you suddenly have electrical costs and the internet of things. I mean, by the year 2025, You will have about linkages in of those 25 trillion things linked to other items and so on. And people are not prepared for what we do; for example, we have our fourth year's internship yet, and every quarter we call the mentors and call the interns and say to them, what if we invest in what we have now been. Still, we'll enhance your experience in the price and the world of work. I mean, we never had a cloud before cloud computing. Many people haven't got a clue about Cloud Bees. And many people didn't understand the concept of cleverness. And now you've got a cloud engineer, which wasn't the before. Look at the aerial and navigation engineers you have on these tribes fighting in Ukraine and Russia that have jobs that didn't exist before; you had pilots. Now you've got pilots sitting behind a computer. And, and, and this is if you don't predict the future, I mean nobody

saw COVID coming. The city contacted us and what we did is we said to the guys, okay, when he told of March 2020 with gaps with give, we give you a week. Then you go online and start lecturing your students online, where the whole team from Microsoft assists us on how to work on MS Teams that most of the guys did not know about before, and suddenly become an online expert and trial. And error and how you have everyday practical online and then use it was a situation where students need to write sector write exams and tests. Then you discover, but they crept because they said with all the material next to do now you develop a site browser where you lock down an external computer, and it can only happen is you know those, and lectures were not taught in the past. So, the ability to facilitate a situation where the student that you create in the world of work is somebody that understands the necessity of change and how to deal with change. I've also always used a pilot's situation, so when you start flying, you're done. I don't know how little Yoda is. Now you start your tastes and so on and so on. Now, you know, how little you know, you start becoming reasonably competent. And you know what you must know. And after a while, you've got 20,000 flying hours. So, you know better than the computer on the plane. So, you don't know how suddenly you fell back without knowing. And we must be in that sort of S curve, that when you start losing knowledge, you must be able to throw yourself in a new gasket to learn that knowledge. So that's true that I mean suddenly you had mechanics that do diesel and petrol engines that I must my tiny electric cars. How the heck do you do that? You know, and they must suddenly have jobs that didn't exist before. 4G 5G telephone loss Yeah, how to learn that. How to maintain for instance, in the posture cars getting out and they service petrol pumps at service stations. Now you serve as an electric charge station. You know, and it's these sorts of things that I think when we develop students nowadays, you give them a good amount of theory. You give them a good amount of practical experience, but then you have to provide them with work or life skills. So, they know how to deal with things and what is coming.

Which kind of disruptions did you face over the last five years, & how did you respond?

Well, the swift pace of technology that we had, and the fact that we in the past we had for the past 20 years where curriculum and the curriculum was changing reasonably slowly. And now, the change in curriculum is picking up speed as technology picks up speed. So, in the past, for example, if you look at data and help people use it, you know, you had a lot of time to analyze and deal with it. Now you said with things that just cannot work in that way anymore. And you have to analyze data in the fastest possible time. And, and that's something we had to deal with and learn quickly how to deal with those sorts of things. And the issue that is important for us is a combination of a person, the future of the work and for us as an institution to be an enabler to make that linkage to the guys and make them it is one thing to make people employable. That's a different thing to make sure that those people stay employed. And that's the way they sell continuous learning. The critical thing comes in that we make sure that people can deal with it then you look at cybersecurity, for instance, the attacks that you have, I mean every 24 minutes, they send us cyber-attack vehicles developed in the world. And help you stay ahead of that. For example, they've got 5000 People in Microsoft 3000 that work with them, the blue and red teams. The blue team are the ones that develop new things. And the red team are the ones that act to ensure that they provide a safe sort of platform, and you have to be on top of that, you know, at all-time hostility attacks. People are getting crazy; you know how to deal with all these things. So yeah, interesting.

How are you safeguarding your institution from further future disruptions?

First, we've got some, some absolute first; we protect our data. And we put that in the cloud, and we see what sort of security. Secondly, and this is what we have done now. For example, we've introduced an advanced diploma in cybersecurity and a postgraduate diploma in cybersecurity risk management. So, you have to be able to identify risks. On the one hand, you have to identify residual risks, which are serious, that will affect your institution. You have to have a balanced scorecard to understand how I deal with my people, my processes, policies, and procedures, how I serve my market, and if I have proper policies, have good quality people, and I've got the right marketing strategy. Your finances are guaranteed, and that's where the balanced scorecard concept comes from. You must be able to identify critical gaps in your institution. And you have to be able to read the market. And, I mean, these curveballs, that Ukrainian war that nobody foresaw, and the effect that that will have on petrol prices and food security, and that is where we work and the other thing which we feel nobody knows everything, the whole issue around collaboration as well as now critical. So, we have formed ties with universities in Australia, Europe, and America. We work very closely with him. We sent students they sent students for over a year. So, collaborations with other educational institutions to assist you and learn from them are extremely important, and we found that South Africa prioritize education institution. So, the rich array with a bunch is also a member. And we work together to assist and support each other, which is another safeguard for us. Another setback for us is we do peer reviews; we've got an international university conglomerate to visit us every five years. And this is what we do it, and that significant funding they had was that our peak is at the same level as that you find in Europe and, in several cases, more advanced. And I mean, that's the benchmark you want to have. So, we learn from people at the Pennsylvania State one with an ICT institution, but the faculty we work with at Pennsylvania State University is the engineering faculty. So that we can come up with the engineering concepts, we provide ideas, and together we were concerned we can complement the work that we do with the University of Johannesburg for your standards on aquaponics and hydroponics. The University of Johannesburg has done a fantastic thing. Although instruments from a particular faculty, they couldn't find linkages in virtually all the other faculties. So virtually all the other faculties are assisting this faculty of art design and culture, focusing on the design side. They had, for example, that target for the students, and I told them competition Okay, guys, develop a small household and aquaponics system. Design it and look at those 20 systems that are utterly different from the others. And then they selected the four best ones and so on. But that's how you just need to get your students and the people you're going to nurture into the world of work to be very, very clear and adaptable.

What role did business innovation practices play in your current and potential future strategy to remain sustainable, operationally efficient and enhance growth amid disruptions?

What we've done is one, two, we want to learn as much as possible. So, first of all, we've entered into an agreement with you xi, which is a reasonably large education could have been in South Africa. They acquired a stake in our institution together where they just opened a university in Abu Dhabi, the University MBA. We will use Zambia we want to use to develop Zambia as the ICT hub of Africa and together with them because I've got something testicles over there and say, sorry, you need to I think the big thing is to think out of the box. The second thing is to try and focus on getting away from tech protection. So, to learn to turn protection. The other one is that we have an anchor on the three national development plans, the agenda 2063 of Africa, and sustainable development goals. If you have that as sort of a guiding factor, I think you can go wrong because cutting food is a huge issue.

Water is a huge issue. Technology is a huge issue. And those slides are important to try and see when you can't look into the future and start from here. I always say to the guys when I show them some slides, give them the course by the grace of the gods from the 26th 1960s, and tell them you cannot see the future with your knowledge of 9060. You must look at what's going on and what you want to look like in 2050, so it's not a 26 and 1960 Push forward. It's a 2050 Pull ahead. Yeah, I think so. I believe that we can on an annual basis. We have facilitation from international institutions to assist us with what they see. Then we have an internal risk assessment. We have our workshop to determine what we want our education to be in South Africa and Africa. And then we bring them all together in our faculty, for example, and say, okay, this is the KPIs. These are the five KPIs critical KPIs for the faculty. These are the strategic gaps. We've got a model that we also determined with the strategic gaps on the faculty to attain that. And then, we focus on those and close those gaps. So that when we do the next round, we are better off than the previous.

Reflecting on particularly successful strategies how did you accomplish maintaining the quality of academic delivery, meeting the demands of quality assurance and regulatory bodies.

Okay, we've got an excellent relationship with regulatory bodies, such as QCTs, looking after all the citizen vocational training. We had regular interaction with I just the other day; I had a long discussion with Dr Dlamini and recent law from CAG. Even this morning with an engagement with the Department of HE, the parameter the education side effect that they didn't find the electricity bowl and that level of Education, Department of Education sitting in the dark, and to meet in the parking lot, for example, to get our documentation, but that's hopefully just once of sort of occurrence. And so, we focus on the staff, the faculty staff; we have the focus here. So, the first one is academic development. So, we continuously sit in and make sure that academic development is sometimes standard; the second one is in certifications. So, we've renewed the agreements with Amazon and needed payments with Huawei, Cisco and Microsoft, CompTIA, and our students. Our staff must also complete set certificate certifications, whether in networks with it, cloud with it, and any others. That is irrespective of us, but they must do certifications and soft skills. So, assertiveness, communication skills, adaptability skills, anger management, how they deal with things pull them down and so on. So, we put a lot of focus on the skill's professional and academic development, and the three must work together. Last, there are no certifications, and I do some sensitivity training or something like that—every year. Everybody goes to all three details research. That's how we prepare them. Then what we do is we also have information sessions. There's so much research done in the world that we have workshops where you discuss the research and say, okay, this is the research; these are the jobs that will fall away. These are the new jobs that will come in that are emerging and coming to the fore. How do we have to deal with it? Keep in mind that we still struggle with some of the banks, like some of the large banks that still deal with mainframes and things like that, you know that we also have to cover. So, we must do some old technology training to deal with our people. And then, as far as the institution is concerned, we said 2030 2040. What is the world going to look like? And then we talk about the curveballs, like the current rates, you can go and that sort of thing. And we say that every institution must have a robust enough strategy to stand in any of these impact factors that tried to hit gold, and this is if you can have a robust strategy that can cater for many of these factors. You should be okay.

...and then has this managed to increase your market share?

Absolutely. Just to give you an indication in 2021. Our first-year intake was 256 first-year students this year; it was 450. It has increased quite a lot. This year in the middle of those who fought on the road

for 2023. They were double what they had in the previous year simultaneously. And I think it comes down to the fact that parents had seen, first of all, that when you're an adult on campus, you had worked even before you completed your studies, and secondly, that they've seen that we are keeping up with the times that we know what's going to happen healthily and we prepare the kids.

...in terms of maintenance and enhancement a meaningful student experience.

Oh absolutely. You will also see that our students wear a uniform, and you can save that goodness that's primary school stuff. Why do you guys do that? And that is simply so that when a student from the Shakopee students from the centre comes here, that is not an issue anymore. And if it's the other thing you will also find is how we prepare them for industry. If you walk into a final class at our institution, the lecture will stop, the clouds will rise, and they will greet you, and why will they greet you because the guy who just entered this lecture hall might be a future employer. That's a sort of respect, culture, respectful culture, that pretty Montegrappa

What main processes and tools are available for PHEIs to respond to business disruption?

Scanning the environment is extremely important to see the impact on your institution. Secondly, this is what we call a triangular trial approach to training. We have a student that uses the tuition industry but is interested in one from the student. What does the industry want from us? Why do we want the student, so we've got a development project between these three pillars, which works exceptionally well for her? So, we determine what the industry requires and what sort of student it requires and then bring them together. So that's our sustainable development concepts that we work on a process that we work on, and then we build on each one of those. And then other processes that are important for us. It's really clear key performance areas that we adjust based on the faculty changes in the faculty plan. So that we can monitor the progress of our lecturing staff, none of the lecturing staff must be able to sit still and articulate. You will find that there is always an equitable workload and suddenly not work too hard, and others don't work at all—that sort of thing. Certainly, must be a weighing of that as well.

What are the main primary considerations in formulating a business strategy and an implementation plan for PHEIs amid business disruption?

I would; I would say, first of all, strong relationships. With regulatory bodies is important for us. Not so that we understand them, but they also understand us, and this is what CAG, for example, also said, if you guys think they think we need to pay attention to, please talk to us. So, I think the regulatory side is important to take care of, and politics have to be managed at all times. The second one is to read the environment and see whether the environment needs what we are at this moment, providing and if there's a gap, the prefix again. And the third one is that we look at our staff to see what quality of staff we have and are the staff, the excellent staff for the future and what the future needs and required. And finally, in your processes and you're marketing. If your processes or gate to less bureaucracy, you were able to make fast decisions. What is nice about Zambia is that if we take one to start a new qualification, we go to CSV and map it to approve or disapprove. In Zambia. The branch is different. Once you've submitted all the documentation and are happy that you've submitted documentation, you can start lecturing immediately. The gaps they find in your submitted documents assist you so that they have the time. So, the one is, is a proactive approach. For example, the other one we have in South Africa is effective because many different things also come into play. I think we need to be very careful when we employ people. And I think the assessment of people that you bring

on board to become part of your team needs to be done sparingly. We've also used it. The other thing is when people come into the institution we have; we've got three months. That show we call it roadmap that we give somebody when he joins us and they must go and meet with the CEO okay, what are you doing and how come you're doing that? So, the owner's CFO, the finance HR, caught them, making our appointments, and sitting with those people. So, the gap in becoming effective in the institution will also want to be reduced. So, we've got a very intense three-month induction program. We understand the institution's culture, how we work here, and the importance of teamwork and lysing, buddy. That's, that's political to both of us. And then our relationship with industry, peers and international peers, and the industry and universities. We feel this is necessary. The ability to manage and to and to get them to buy you. You have a vision. Your vision is a dream. And I mean, people only follow that dream if you've got proper leaders, and followers will only follow readers if you communicate to them appropriately. And communication is not like giving instructions, so communication must be meaningful to them. And when that's meaningful to them, they will commit people to provide you with results. And if you've got good results, you have to reward them, but reward them in ways that if I look at one of the DHL, for example. The way that I record the people is not to give them more money. They named the aircraft after the children of employees. So, if you've got a triple seven flying around the world and your kid's name is what do you belong to when you work out for the company.