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Business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation: Strategies for promoting start-up success in Botswana and South Africa.

By

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my late father, Sekgwe Percius Moagi, late sister, Clare Kgopiso Moagi, mother, Monica Moagi, and my sisters: Annah Nnaso Maruatona, Tsholofelo Cecilia Moagi, Maria Lopang Moagi and Meriam June Trim.

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Abstract

Start-ups have made a significant contribution to global economic growth. Research has revealed, however, that start-ups continue to fail during their early years of operation. Earlier research on start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) has focused on failures rather than successes. Furthermore, there has been little research done in South Africa and Botswana on how start-ups use business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation to achieve success.

Botswana and South Africa differ drastically in terms of size of population and GDP, however, they have some aspects in common such as trade relationships and regional integration. Both are members of Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC). Amidst the increasing levels of poverty, unemployment and inequality, South Africa looks to start-ups to create more jobs and contribute towards poverty alleviation. Similarly, Botswana is also faced with the problem of unemployment, particularly among the women and youth. Start-ups in the two countries are considered vital in creating employment and improving the livelihood of people.

The aim of this concurrent mixed method study was to investigate business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation as strategies for start-up success. The researcher therefore does not intent to make a comparison between the two countries but instead find out if start-ups in Botswana have the same experiences as their South African counterparts. The study drew theories from the literature on business networks, innovation and entrepreneurial branding. A historical background for the three strategies was also presented to understand how they have evolved over time. To develop a theory based on qualitative data analysis, a strategic theoretical conceptual framework was proposed. The study concentrated on start-up owners and managers who were actively involved in the day-to-day operations of the business. A survey was conducted with 212 Botswana start-ups and case studies were conducted using online and face-to-face structured interviews with eight South African start-ups as part of a mixed methods research approach. The quantitative data were analysed with SPSS. A structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the hypotheses.

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The following findings were revealed: The impact of business networks on start-ups' success was negative and insignificant, supporting Ho1. The impact of innovation on start-ups' success was positive and significant, rejecting Ho 2. The impact of entrepreneurial branding on start-ups' success was positive and insignificant, supporting Ho 3. Therefore, the proposed innovative branded networks contribute to the success of start-ups. In addition, qualitative data were analysed thematically using the grounded theory approach. The findings revealed that the three strategies contributed positively to the success of start-ups in Botswana and South Africa. According to the qualitative analysis, innovation is at the heart of business networks and entrepreneurial branding, and it motivates the development, enhancement and growth of the other two strategies. However, to compete in the market, participants used the three strategies as marketing tools.

Keywords: Botswana, business networks, branding, entrepreneurship, innovation, mixed method research, South Africa, start-up success.

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Chapter 1: Background and orientation of the study

1.1 Introduction

Small businesses and start-ups are critical to the global success of every economy. They are thought to help with job creation in the United States and Finland (Sedlácek & Sterk, 2017:177; Wallin, Still & Henttonen, 2016:5), innovation and growth in China (Chen & Ku, 2016:659), poverty reduction in South Africa (Atiase, Mahmood, Wang & Botchie, 2018:644), and economic diversification and citizen empowerment in Botswana (Botswana Government, 2011:1). Supporting the growth of start-ups is therefore of the utmost importance to policy makers of any country, to ensure expansion and growth of economy.

Entrepreneurship is considered a vital tool for poverty eradication in developing countries (Soluk, Kammerlander & Darwin 2022:1); economic growth (Stoica, Roman & Rusu 2021:1); structural change.and creation of new markets (Acs and Virgill 2009:23; Kruger & Stein 2020:1656). Developing economies, therefore, invest in perfecting their markets by mitigating the barriers to entrepreneurship and market challenges (Schaumburg-Müller, Jeppesen & Langevang 2010:4). The debate on developing entrepreneurship is therefore underpinned on five issues, namely, entrepreneurship and economic growth; access to finance; formal and informal relationships; training and education on entrepreneurship; and targeted interventions.

In Africa, entrepreneurship is perceived to bring hope to the countries' economic development (Morris 2002:5: Ajide 2020:2) and the continent has what it takes to succeed entrepreneurially (Adusei 2016:209). For decades empirical evidence has supported the contribution of entrepreneurship to economic growth (Baumol 1968:65; Acs & Virgill, 2009:24; Olutuase, Brijlal & Yan 2020:279). However, there are researchers who deny the relationship between entrepreneurship and economic growth. They claim that policy makers struggle to promote economic development through entrepreneurship (Hessels & Naudé 2017: 1) and that entrepreneurship makes

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an insignificant contribution to economic growth (Schramm 2004:105), but rather wastes taxpayers' money (Audretsch & Robinson 2016:37).

Entrepreneurship research in Botswana and South Africa has been a topical subject for decades. However there has been limited research conducted on the success strategies of start-ups. Amidst the increasing levels of poverty, unemployment and inequality, South Africa looks to start-ups to create more jobs and contribute towards poverty alleviation (Nxazonkea & van Wyka 2020:597). With a declining gross domestic product (GDP), from 4.7 % in 2020 to 1.9% in 2022 and 0.9% in 2023 (World Bank 2023), job creation in South Africa remains a challenge. The unemployment rate is high, estimated at 32.6% (World bank 2023). It is therefore critical for the government to strategically support the start-ups (Swartz, Scheepers & Toefy 2022:2).

Botswana has been experiencing a decline in GDP, from 9.8% in 2021 to 5.4 % in 2022 (Statistics Botswana 2023). A decline in GDP motivates job losses and increases unemployment. Though extreme poverty had declined from 23.4% in 2002/2003 to 6.4% in 2009/2010 and 5.8% in 2015/2016 (Statistics Botswana 2021), the country is challenged with high unemployment, particularly among the women and youth. In 2022, unemployment rate was high, estimated at 25.4% (Statistics Botswana 2023). Unemployment robs people of the opportunity to work and earn income, and eventually impoverishes them (Motsatsi 2019:3). Start-ups are therefore vital in creating employment and improving the livelihood of people (Fauzi, Antoni & Suwarni 2020:106).

Research on entrepreneurship has focused mainly on small, medium and micro enterprises, however, with less emphasis on start-ups. The interest of researchers has been on the following areas: entrepreneurship training and development (Themba & Josiah, 2015:17), entrepreneurship, higher education and government policies (Pansiri & Yalala, 2017:55; Thobeka, 2019:2), youth development (Sentsho, Maiketso, Sengwaketse, Ndzinge-Anderson & Kayawe 2007:79; Diraditsile & Maphula 2018:837; Odeku & Rudolf, 2019:1), women entrepreneurship (Sibanda 2020:1; Rametse & Huq 2014:109; Brixiová, Kangoye & Tregenna 2020:37; Meyer 2019:26), financial

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assistance (Khanie, 2018:2), social entrepreneurship (Littlewood & Holt 2015:526) and technology and innovation (Bubou, Siyanbola, Ekperiware & Gumus, 2014:921). These research findings form the foundation of this study.

Botswana and South Africa differ drastically in terms of size of population and GDP, however, they have some aspects in common such as trade relationships and regional integration. Both are members of Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC). Amidst the increasing levels of poverty, unemployment and inequality, South Africa looks to start-ups to create more jobs and contribute towards poverty alleviation. Similarly, Botswana is also faced with the problem of unemployment, particularly among the women and youth. Start-ups in the two countries are considered vital in creating employment and improving the livelihood of people.

Four critical areas support the undertaking of this study. The first is that extensive research has shown that more start-ups fail than succeed (Dahl & Reichstein, 2007:497; Watson, Hogarth-Scott, & Wilson, 1998:217) and this is unlikely to change during the fourth industrial revolution (Yoon, Thin, Thao, Im & Gim 2018:105). Secondly, most research has focused on the determinants of failure or collapse instead of on the success of start-ups (Hechavarría, Matthews & Reynolds, 2016:137). Thirdly, limited research on the success of start-ups has been conducted in Botswana and South Africa. Lastly, literature confirms the importance of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation in motivating the success of start-ups. Businesses join networks to share resources, which applies especially to start-ups, whose main challenge is limited resources. Additionally, adopting a branding strategy to grow start-ups is a highly recommended strategy by marketing researchers. Furthermore, research conducted on business networks and entrepreneurial branding mentions innovation. This study aims to investigate business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation as strategies for the success of start-ups. It is against this background that the researcher was motivated to undertake this research to contribute to new knowledge about start-up success.

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The study was conducted in Botswana and South Africa. Though there are large disparities between the two countries in terms of population size and economic status, the researcher wanted to add value to the research as well as establish a broader perspective of the three aspects of study in Botswana and see if they can be applied in the context of South Africa.

1.2 Background of the study

This section provides the background of the study. It starts by defining start-ups and outlining the factors that leads to the failure of start-ups. Finally, it highlighted on the previous start-up research conducted in Botswana and South Africa.

Different researchers define start-ups in different ways. However, in this study, Luger and Koo's (2005:19) definition will be used. According to them, a start-up is a business entity that "did not exist previously during the given time period (new)… begins hiring at least one paid employee during the given time period (active) and is neither a subsidiary nor a branch of an existing firm (independent)." Based on this definition, this study concentrated on newly established and active business ventures that have been in operation for nought to five years and have hired at least one employee, to determine whether business networks, innovation and entrepreneurship branding are part of their success strategy.

1.2.1 Factors that lead to the failure of start-ups.

Even though the objective of this study is to investigate the success strategies of start-ups, it is equally important to highlight the factors that lead to their failure. Several studies have investigated barriers to growth in start-ups (Saemundsson & Dahlstrand, 2005:113) and many factors came into play. Atsan (2016:436) and Keats and Bracker (1988:41) have grouped these factors into internal and external factors. Several researchers have identified a number of internal factors that contribute to the failure of start-ups such as: 1. small size of the business, 2. poor location, 3. cheap merchandise, 4. lack of or poor management skills (Gaskill, Van Auken & Manning 1993:19;

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Zacharakis, Meyer & DeCastro, 1999:8), 5. the tendency to take excessive risk (Hayward, Shepherd & Griffin,2006:160), 6. poor or lack of financial planning and 7. an inability to compete in the market. Conversely, external factors are associated with unfavourable government policies or a lack of implementation of good government policies (Edmunds, 1979:19); a lack of financial resources (Cardon, Stevens & Potter, 2011:83) due to the reluctance of financial institutions to risk financing new ventures (Liao, Welsch & Moutray, 2008:5). Hence, start-ups should preserve the limited resources they have or can have access to, since they are critical for their growth (Aspelund, Berg-Utby & Skjevda, 2005:1337).

1.2.2 Previous research on start-up success in Botswana and South Africa

The contribution of small businesses in South Africa cannot go unnoticed. In 2019 they contributed R2,3 trillion (22%) of the total turnover, compared to R10,5 trillion (10%) contributed by Medium sized businesses (Statssa 2023). However, South Africa has the highest small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMES) failure in the world (BusinessTech). Within the five years of operation, 70-80% of small business collapse (University of Western Cape). Start-up failure rate in South Africa stood at 42% in 2020 (Statista 2023). Statistics show that SMMEs enterprises continue to increase over the years. n 2016, a total of 13 891 were active and the number increased to 22 498 in 2022 (Statistics Botswana 2023). Despite the growth in the number of active SMMEs over the years, research shows that their failure rate is high. In 2019, the failure rate for small businesses in Botswana stood at 80 per cent (Botswana Government 2019). Based on the statistics provided in South Africa and Botswana, the researcher found it critical to engage in this study, to contribute new knowledge on the strategies for the success of start-ups.

Limited research has been conducted in this area in the two countries in question. About two decades ago, significant research on small medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs) was conducted in Botswana and South Africa. These studies focused on the contribution of the enterprises to employment growth, the training of human resources in SMMEs and the role of information communication technology in SMMEs

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in terms of business incubation. However, limited research has been conducted on the success of the enterprises. The few studies conducted in Botswana on the success and failure of SMMEs indicate that their marketing activities were critical to their success (Temtime & Pansiri, 2004:1; Temtime, 2004:36). However, they remained silent on business networks and innovation. It is therefore imperative for this study to be conducted in the two countries to add new knowledge on the strategies that promote the success of start-ups.

1.3 The importance of business networks

Start-ups are faced with tough competition from existing firms. Research has shown that only a few of them are able to survive the competition, hence they tend to seek network collaboration with other existing firms (Huang, Lai & Lo 2012:316). Wegner, Costa e Silva and De Rossi (2018:27) describe a business network as a key organisational strategy firms should employ in order to develop innovations and access new local and international markets. Similarly, a network is defined as a set of nodes and the set of ties representing some relationship, or lack of relationship, between the nodes. Nodes are actors such as individuals, work units or organisations (Brass, Galaskiewicz, Greve & Tsai, 2004:795).

Start-ups establish business networks to strengthen competition and develop and pool strategic resources to build a greater market share (Håkansson & Ford 2002:134). They develop innovations to keep up with the disruptive changes in the market and this motivates them be creative and break into new markets (Wegner *et al.,* 2018:27). They take advantage of innovation tools such as social media to build, enlarge and strengthening their networks (Cartwright, Davies & Archer-Brown 2021:120).

Additionally, they create, tap into and share knowledge and information with stakeholders (Heck & Vervest, 2007:30; Håkansson & Ford, 2002:134; Heidari, Yazdani, Saghafi & Jalilvand, 2018:677) and strengthen the connections of participating stakeholders in an effort to build more sustainable businesses (Albrecht, 2013:642). Moreover, collaborating firms can contribute positively to improved policies

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and better methods of governance leading to sustainable development projects (Heidari *et al.,* 2018:677). The reviewed literature reveals the positive effect business networks have on start-ups; however, the findings do not provide us with evidence of the success of start-ups. The researcher therefore undertook this study with the intention of addressing the identified gap.

1.4 Entrepreneurship branding

The branding of small businesses has been an area of interest for researchers for decades. Branding is no longer perceived as a strategy exclusive to large enterprises. Some researchers have proposed branding strategy for both small and large enterprises (Wong & Merrilees, 2005:155; Ojasalo, Na¨tti, & Olkkonen 2008:93; Sharma, Sharma, Rajput, Mehra & Gulati, 2023:3), whereas other researchers have made calls for brand studies specifically on start-ups for establishing business identity, building internal structures, acquiring customers and gaining access to resources (Zheng, Li & Na, 2022:1; Petkova, Rindova & Gupta, 2008:322; Wong & Merrilees, 2005:155).

Branding is a vital activity for start-ups. Therefore, start-ups or new ventures run the risk of collapsing if they fail to establish their brand in the market within a relatively short time frame (Ngoc & Tien 2020:3308). It is therefore critical for start-ups to invest in branding right from the outset. Some small businesses lack understanding of the real meaning of branding and may even fail to recognise that they are a brand (Merrilees 2007:403). Due to their size and lack of resources, most start-ups are unable to keep up with the market demands. However, networking with other established businesses to tap on their resources such as branding, technology, Knowledge, skills and competence could contribute to their competitiveness and their success (Zheng, Li & Na, 2022:1; Human & Provan, 1996:1)

The researcher therefore investigated entrepreneurial branding as a strategy for determining the success of start-ups.

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1.5 Start-ups and innovation

The success of start-ups across the world is attributed to innovation (Okrah, Nepp & Agbozo, 2018:230). Researchers from different fields, such as economics, information technology, business management and education, emphasise the importance of embracing innovation to have a competitive advantage. Start-ups that fail to innovate run the risk of losing their market share, decreasing productivity and efficiency, increasing staff turnover and having less chance of success (Swaminathan 2019:83).

Innovation is described as a critical tool in controlling the markets and protecting them from competition (Shqipe, Gadaf & Veland, 2013:10). Business innovation is usually driven by a smart entrepreneurial idea, identifying the needs of a new market and satisfying the market needs with creative ways of delivering consumer value to the target market. Empirical research shows, however, that innovation has both a positive and negative impact on start-ups. On a positive note, innovation is assumed to ease access to and stabilises the markets and facilitate the acquisition of resources (Ullrich & Vladova, 2016:35; Bereznoi 2015:15); motivates the provision of high-quality products and services that meet the needs of customers and fosters growth (Swaminathan, 2019:83). Innovation plays a key role in enhancing the start-up uniqueness. Engaging in business networks, therefore, enables start-ups to access resources they need for their innovation activities (Pomegbe, Li, Dogbe & Otoo 2020:165). Furthermore, innovation contribute positively to brand equity and start-up competitiveness (Ponnam, Sreejesh & Balaji 2014:523).

Some researchers perceive innovation as a challenge to start-ups success due to the rapid change of customer needs that are difficult to keep up with (Hyytinen, Pajarinen & Rouvinen 2013:564; Swaminathan, 2019:84). Additionally, innovation is perceived as misleading to start-up owners. They tend to perceive their business idea to be innovative, which lures them to invest more resources in the business with the expectation of getting high rewards, but end up realising the opposite (DeTienne, McKelvie & Chandler, 2015:262).

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1.5.1 From product innovation to business model innovation

Blaug (1963:13) classifies innovation into process and product innovation. In their quest to increase revenue and increase sales, start-ups are moving away from product innovation to business model innovation. A business model demonstrates the way start-ups develop, carry out and maintain value (Osterwalder, Pigneur, Bernarda & Smith, 2015:9). Business model innovation is defined as a "designed, novel, nontrivial changes to the key elements of a firm's business model and/or the architecture linking these elements." (Foss & Saebi 2017:201) According to Chesbrough (2007:12), every business has a business model; it does not matter whether they express it or not. This implies that small businesses and start-ups may not be aware of their business models.

Business model innovation is not the responsibility of one person in the organisation (Chesbrough, 2007:16). This is perceived as a challenge for the start-ups since the business is usually the sole responsibility of the owner or manager. Though organisations that adopt business model innovation are more likely to out compete those that use the old business models (Bereznoi, 2014:15), the sustainability of the business model remain uncertain (Sosna, Trevinyo-Rodríguez & Velamur 2010:384). Changes in the market can make existing business models obsolete, and therefore it is critical for businesses to employ successful business model innovation. Academics and practitioners are increasingly using business models to promote value creation and competitive advantage (Chesbrough, 2010:356; Zott, Amit & Massa, 2011:3). Value creation is defined as "an actor's attempt to increase value" (Chesbrough, Lettl & Ritter, 2018:4). Successful business model innovation leads to value creation. Value creation in the 4IR is personalised, interactive and customer focused (Azionya 2022:1) . It therefore affirms the relationship between business model, innovation and 4IR (Tohanean &Toma (2018:122).

1.5.2 The fourth industrial revolution (4IR)

The 4th industrial revolution (4IR), also referred to as the era of digital economy, is

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expected to make a huge impact on global economies, causing greater economic inequalities (Yoon, *et al.* 2018:109). Start-ups therefore must pay attention to the rapidity of changes brought about by the 4IR. These changes are expected to influence a shift in power, wealth and knowledge (Xu, David & Kim, 2018:90). With the emerging 4IR business model innovation, one could clearly distinguish between the way business is conducted and the way it was conducted during the 3rd industrial revolution (Yoon *et al*., 2018:109). 4IR brings about several technologies and functionalities that facilitate the business model innovation, such as biometric identification, 5G networks, block chain technologies and crypto-currencies, autonomous vehicles and mixed reality (Loureiro 2018:740). Start-ups are expected to adopt these technologies to remain relevant and be competitive in the 4IR market. One of the activities start-ups have to engage in for them to maintain their relevance and competitiveness is the use of social-media platforms to collaborate with, learn from and exchange information with customers and suppliers. The social media platforms also enable start-ups to access digital marketing which in turn increases their sales. Furthermore, they motivate start-ups to improve research and development, to enhance the quality of products and services (Prisecaru 2016:61).

Opportunities that come with 4IR cannot be over emphasized. 4IR comes with the following opportunities for business: less barriers to entering or staying in the market; increased use of artificial intelligence (AI; infusion of different techniques and domains for better business results, and better quality of life due to the use of robotics and internet connectivity that connects the globe into one village (Xu, David & Kim 2018:91). Other opportunities brought about by 4IR are that it reduces the cost of production, improves earnings and productivity, develops and establishes novel products, and provides abundant and accessible business opportunities (Fox and Signé 2021:3). Furthermore, 4IR motivated the creation and collection of digital data that escalated the use of data processing techniques (Hilbig, Etsiwah & Hecht, 2018:1). This has led to the adoption of AI by businesses in driving their business models and creating value. Data is used to improve the current processes systems and to create new business models, products and services (Hartmann, Zaki, Feldmann & Neely,

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2016:1383).

1.5.3 Artificial Intelligence

A recent surge in research funding indicates an increasing interest in artificial intelligence (AI). Contributing to this interest are machine learning, the collection of data and computational capacity (Lovejoy, 2018:1). AI has the potential to influence global economies, particularly in the production and vast range of products and services, and the innovation process (Cockburn, Henderson & Stern 2018:115). Ghosh, Chakraborty and Law, (2018:208) define artificial Intelligence as the "science of instilling intelligence in machines so that they are capable of doing tasks that traditionally required the human mind". Although AI based systems are commended for efficiency and the reduction of repetition of human efforts, they lack creativity in decision-making offered by humans (Gosh *et al.,* 2015:1). Numerous studies have proved that AI has been adopted by various sectors of the economy. For example, the military sector integrates AI in their defence systems (Mori, 2018:16), the digital technology sector uses AI for information processing (Sikdar, 2018:1), and the health sector can use AI as diagnostic tools and for monitoring patient progress (Lovejoy, 2018:1).

The benefits of AI to start-ups are numerous. AI offers them speed, consistency, and productivity (Kulkov, 2021:3). Other researchers assert that AI technologies provide quality services for start-ups and recipients (Garbuio & Lin, 2019:60) and allow for remote training of personnel (Kulkov, 2021:3). AI is covered comprehensively in Chapter 3.

1.6 Definitions of terms

Start-up: A new and active business entity that did not formerly exist and has been operating for a period of between nought and five years (Luger & Koo, 2005:18).

Network: A set of nodes and the set of ties representing some relationship, or lack of relationship, between the nodes (Brass *et al* 2004:795).

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Business network: The key organisational strategy firms should employ to develop innovations and access local and international new markets (Wegner *et al.,* 2018:27).

Branding: The promotion of a particular product or company by means of advertising and distinctive design (Oxford dictionary)

Brand equity: A set of brand assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol that adds to or detracts from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or to the firm's customers (Aaker, 1991:4)

Innovation: The implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), or process, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations (Gault, 2018:617).

1.7 Problem statement

As already stated in the introduction, start-ups have contributed significantly to the economic growth of countries across the globe. The greatest challenge that economies face is that start-ups fail rather than succeed after they are launched. This contributes to an increase in unemployment and poverty, particularly among young people and women. Botswana and South Africa are not an exception.

In 2022 the population of South Africa was estimated at R62 million (Statistics South Africa 2022). Of the total population, 18.2 million people are said to be living in extreme poverty. South Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) growth declined from 4.7 % in 2020 to 1.9% in 2022 and 0.9% in 2023 (World Bank 2023). Due to the declining GDP, job creation is said to remain a challenge in South Africa. The unemployment rate remains high, estimated at 32.6% (World bank 2023). However, research has shown that start-ups have contributed significantly to the reduction of wealth and income gaps and poverty in South Africa (Atiase *et al*. 2018:644; Kanayo 2021:123). Therefore, start-ups remain critical in the economic growth of South Africa.

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The population of Botswana was estimated at 2.3 million during the 2021 population census (Statistics Botswana 2023). Botswana experienced some growth in the GDP for the period of 2022-2023. In 2023 GDP rose by 3.4 % against the growth of 5.1 % in 2022. The unemployment rate in Botswana was estimated at 25.4% in 2022 (Statistics Botswana 2022). However, extreme poverty has declined from 23.4% in 2002/2003 to 6.4% in 2009/2010 and 5.8% in 2015/2016 (Statistics Botswana 2021). As the Botswana government continues to diversify the economy from diamonds and beef, start-ups play a vital role in bringing in new businesses from other sectors of the economy.

1.7.1 Research gap

Most start-up research has concentrated on the causes of failure or collapse rather than the success of start-ups. Despite a significant increase in research on start-ups, little research has been conducted to identify the factors that promote start-up success (Innocenti & Zampi 2019:376; Hechavarría, Matthews & Reynolds 2016:142; Gupta, Guha & Krishnaswami 2013:14). This suggests that more research on the factors that promote the success of start-ups is needed. In their concept paper titled "Interactive Network Branding: Creating Corporate Identity and Reputation through Interpersonal Interaction", Koporcic and Halinen (2018:404) recommend more research is needed to study the networks and branding process empirically and in-depth.

Furthermore, there is limited literature that empirically tested the use of the business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation collectively. Start-up researchers have focused on the three constructs individually or in pairs, but not as a collective. The researcher therefore used the evolution of the three strategies to establish the gaps that exist in the literature and inform and provide guidance to the development of the conceptual framework. The aim of the study at hand, therefore, was to investigate business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation as strategies for start-up success.

Based on the preceding arguments, the researcher finds it critical to conduct an

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empirical study to investigate business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation as strategies for start-ups success.

1.8 Purpose statement

The purpose of this mixed methods research was to investigate the use of business networks, innovation, and entrepreneurial branding as strategies for start-up success in Botswana and South Africa. The two countries differ drastically in size and GDP, however, they have some things in common such as bilateral relationships and membership to the regional bodies that motivates economic growth and political stability. Botswana and South Africa are members of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). Established in 1910, SACU's main purpose is to "promote the integration of Member States into the global economy through enhanced trade and investment; To facilitate the equitable sharing of revenue arising from customs, excise and additional duties levied by Member States; and. To facilitate the development of common policies and strategies" (SACU 2023). Furthermore, the two countries are members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The main objectives of SADC are to "achieve economic development, peace and security, and growth, alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of Southern Africa, and support the socially disadvantaged through Regional Integration" (SADC 2023). Based on the above arguments, the researcher found it important to conduct a mixed method research on the two countries under study.

Quantitative research method was used in Botswana to generalise the research findings to a larger group and to measure the relationship between business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation. The qualitative research method, on the other hand, was used in South Africa to investigate respondents' perspectives on the phenomenon being studied.

The study took a sequential mixed method of data collection and analysis. Quantitative and qualitative research were collected and analysed separately, thereafter they were triangulated. That is, findings from the qualitative research were used to provide a

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broader perspective of quantitative findings and interpretations (Othman, Steen & Fleet 2020:76). The researcher therefore does not intend to make a comparison between the two countries but instead find out if start-ups in Botswana have the same experiences as their South African counterparts. Therefore, the researcher intended to establish a broader perspective of the three aspects of study in Botswana and see if they can be applied in the context of South Africa.

1.9 Research goal and objectives

1.9.1 Research goal

The aim of this research was to investigate business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation as strategies for start-up success and propose an innovative networked brands framework as a strategy for the success of start-ups in Botswana and South Africa. The focus fell on the views of the respondents about the three research aspects. Phase one focused on a survey among respondents from Botswana, while Phase two was on structured interviews with participants in South Africa.

1.9.2 Research Objectives

The following research objectives were aligned to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study:

1.9.2.1 Primary research objective

To determine the impact of business networks, entrepreneurial branding, innovation on the success of start-ups.

1.9.2.2 Secondary research objectives

1. To examine the effect of business networks on the success of start-ups

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2. To examine the effect of innovation on the success of start-ups.

3. To examine the effect of entrepreneurial branding on the success of start-ups

4. To propose an innovative networked brands framework as a strategy for the success of start-ups in Botswana and South Africa.

1.10 Research questions and hypothesis

This study began with quantitative research questions and then the qualitative research questions followed. A research question is precise in finding out what the researcher intends to investigate (Bell, Bryman & Harley 2019:9). Research questions can be either broad or specific.

1.10.1 Quantitative research questions and hypotheses

This section presents quantitative research questions and the hypotheses. In quantitative research, hypotheses are formulated prior to data collection, as shown in Table 1.10.1

Table 1.10.1: Research questions and hypotheses

Research questions	**Hypotheses**
1. What are the effects of business networks on the success of start-ups?	Ho 1: Business networks have no significant impact on the success of start-ups.

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	Ha 1: Business networks have a significant impact on the success of start-ups.
2. What are the effects of innovation on the success of start-ups?	Ho 2: Innovation has no significant impact on the success of start-ups. Ha 2: Innovation has a significant impact on the success of start-ups.
3. What are the effects of entrepreneurial branding on the success of start-ups?	Ho 3: Entrepreneurial branding has no significant impact on the success of start-ups. Ha 3: Entrepreneurial branding has a significant impact on the success of start-ups.

1.10.2 Qualitative research questions

Unlike in quantitative research, hypotheses in qualitative research are formulated after the data has been analysed. In this study, the qualitative research questions complement the quantitative research questions.

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1.10.2.1 Qualitative objective

To understand how business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation contribute to the success of start-ups?

1.10.2.2 Secondary research questions

1. Is your business successful or not?

2. Do you use business networks, in your business and what does this strategy contribute to the success of your business?

3. Do you use entrepreneurial branding in your business and what does this strategy contribute to the success of your business?

4. Do you use innovation in your business and what does this strategy contribute to the success of your business?

1.11 Significance of the study

The study investigated the use of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation as strategies for the success of start-ups. The findings from this study could aid start-ups to adopt/adapt empirically proven strategies for the success of their businesses and ultimately increase their chances of survival. Additionally, researchers and academics will benefit from the findings of the study. The study will contribute to the body of knowledge on start-ups in Botswana and South Africa, an area that is unexplored, and further contribute to the new knowledge of engaging a combination of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation as strategies for the success of start-ups. Gaps that have been created by the study also inform the direction of future studies. Furthermore, this study will inform policy makers about the strategies for success of start-ups for consideration as they develop or review start-up policies.

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1.12 Meta-theoretical assumptions

The study used theories that stem from business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation to formulate a theory that can be used to grow start-ups. Extensive research has been done to develop theories that focus on start-ups but not much has been done to develop or suggest a framework that integrates these theories. Therefore, this study has formulated an overarching framework that encompasses the three suggested strategies.

Finkel (2014:7) defines meta-theory as “a set of assumptions that can be used to generate research questions and guide the development and refinement of theories. These assumptions are background beliefs that, for most purposes, are stipulated as true and that provide the foundation upon which scholars can construct theories”.

Ritzer (1990:3) classifies meta-theory into three groups: (1) when the researcher’s aim is to have a profound knowledge about a theory, (2) when a researcher studies a theory to develop a new theory, and (3) when the researcher’s aim is to develop an overarching perspective for the theory. This study used theories of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation to build up and suggest a framework that can be used to grow start-ups.

1.13 Grand Theory

The pioneer of grand theory is Wright Mills, who came up with this concept in 1959 (Brown (2013:483). Two decades later, Quentin Skinner revived the grand theory in a batch of essays termed “The Return of Grand Theory in Human Sciences. “Grand” theory explains a greater social view or connects reality at macro and micro levels (Turner & Boyns 2001:353-354). Generating a grand theory is necessary for understanding the core of the phenomena (Gummesson, 2017:18). Hence, the greater the reality to be investigated, the more "grand" the theory is. Grand theories, however, tend to be more skewed to uniform integration rather than differentiation (Schimmelfennig & Winzen 2019:1172).

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Grand theory can be used to help researchers to (1) choose the variables to be used in the investigation, (2) put forward the elementary assumptions, (3) provide hints on the causal links to establish (4) point to appropriate phenomena to investigate, (5) establish dependable variables and hypotheses, and (6) differentiate the hypotheses from contesting ones – including those with components of independent variables obtained from elementary assumptions (Brooks, 2017:86).

Based on the above arguments made by Brooks, the researcher took a stance on grand theory. This study focused on four areas of study: start-ups, business networks, entrepreneurial branding, and innovation; hence, it covers a larger (macro) view. The researcher found out the causal link between business networks and innovation, business networks and branding as well as branding and innovation.

1.14 Theoretical and conceptual frameworks

1.14.1 Theoretical Framework

Theoretical framework is made up of two words: theory and framework. “Theories are formulated to explain, predict, and understand phenomena and, in many cases, to challenge and extend existing knowledge within the limits of critical bounding assumptions” (Usc libraries). A theoretical framework provides guidance on how the researcher structures the philosophy, epistemology, methodology and analysis of the study. It is considered as a structure that supports a theory of research by explaining the existence of the research problem (Usc Libraries). It also sets expectations that determine whether the new findings of the research confirm or negates the already existing literature (Muthukrishna & Henrich, 2019:221).

This study takes an epistemological stance and assumes a pragmatic paradigm. Epistemology analyses the foundation and nature of the limitations of knowledge (Bengston, Burgess & Parrott, 1997:72). It is also described as the “theory of knowledge that informs the research” (Al-Ababneh, 2020:90). Epistemology is concerned with methods and theories. Methods are concerned with how we conduct

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empirical investigations to determine the phenomena in a reliable and valid manner (Bengston *et al*., 1997:72). The study used mixed methods approach to data collect and analysis. Theories, on the other hand, provide previous empirical knowledge of what is being researched (Bengston *et al.,* 1997:72). The theories of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation provide a background of what was being researched.

The researcher further outlines how the three concepts under study, namely, business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation, have evolved over time.

1.14.2 Business networks

Business networks have evolved over decades, beginning with dyad theory and progressing to business networks and, more recently, interactive business networks. The evolution of networks, according to Halinen and Törnroos (2005:1285), is justified by their increase in number, structure and complexity. Globalisation, technology, innovation and competition, among other factors, are driving these changes. Business networks research has been labelled as complex because it: (1) involves multiple actors, complicating the research design; (2) business networks are not formalised legal entities, making identification difficult; (3) they are more prone to change; and (4) each network is unique and specific (Halinen & Törnroos, 2005:1286; Rittera, Wilkinson, & Johnston, 2004:177; Henneberg, Naudé, & Mouzas, 2010:355).

Willett and Pennington cited by (Wren & Simpson,1996:64) were the first pioneers of the dyad theory. In 1966, they recognised that the interaction between the customer and the salesperson was dependent on their individual characteristics, but their theory had limitations. To improve the theory, Weitz created a framework in 1981 that focused on the influences of sales effectiveness. Although it is regarded as a more comprehensive framework of the time, it failed to include communication, which is a critical component of the buyer-seller interaction process. Dwyer, Schurr and Oh (1987:16) expanded on this framework in 1987, recognising the sub-processes of the relationship stages such as communication, shared values, and commitment. It did,

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however, ignore the external factors involved in the buyer-seller interaction process. Furthermore, Williams, Spiro, and Fine (1990:29) advanced a comprehensive model in 1990 that recognised the interactive and bi-directional relationship between customers and salespeople. According to Wren and Simpson (1996:64), the model lacked integration of the relationship between communication and other components of the interaction process such as selling behaviours, buyer behaviours, and structural characteristics. As a result, Ganesan (1994:1) developed a framework in 1994 that suggests a long-term orientation between the buyer and seller based on mutual dependence and trust. The framework was criticized, however, for ignoring other predictors of long-term relationships. Anderson, Håkansson, and Johanson (1994:13) embraced dyadic relationships between firms in a business-to-business setting in 1994. They advocated "the conceptualization of business networks as sets of connected relationships." They also suggested that, to understand business relationships, more emphasis should be placed on the business network context in which dyadic business relationships occur.

In 1996, Wren and Simpson created an integrated model with four main parts: 1. The skills and aptitudes of salespeople that have an impact on the sales environment. 2. Customer characteristics—this element considers the responsibilities involved in purchasing, the organisation of the purchasing centre, and the purchasing strategy 3. The interaction environment, which includes relationship structure, communication climate, and 4. Interaction outcomes, which contain metrics for both performance- and attitude-based outcomes (Wren & Simpson, 1996).

Ritter (2000:322) created a framework for analysing business network interconnections. He did not dismiss the dyad theory; he recognised that it provided insights into the management of single relationships, but there was a need to understand the interconnectedness of relationships. Håkansson and Ford developed the interaction framework in 2002. They suggested that relationships provided a platform for businesses to influence one another (Håkansson & Ford, 2002). If three businesses triangulate, the interaction of any two of them is influenced by what

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happens in the third. They expanded their argument in 2007 by identifying issues related to business interactivity, namely time, interdependence, jointness, relativity, and subjective interpretation.

Morgan and Hunt (1994:21), Halinen and Törnroos(2005:1286) and Rittera, Wilkinson and Johnston (2004:176) argue that over the years, research has focused on business relationship and networks. However, Rittera *et al.* (2004:176) and Henneberg *et al*. (2010:355) claim that the focus has shifted to managing business relationships and networks.

The IMP Journal revived the discussion of interaction in business relationships in 2011. The interaction of resources not only contributes significantly to the development of businesses but also promotes their specific interests (Cantù & Corsaro, 2011:10). It creates mutual reliance among the parties involved. The interaction in business relationships is what makes business development a joint and collective process. The interaction, however, is not without difficulties. Among these challenges are the actors' limited autonomy as well as the cost of interaction as a result of resource adaptation, activities involved, and actor structure (Snehota, 2011:5).

According to Håkansson and Ingemansson (2011:67), interaction and business relationships are critical for any business' knowledge development in marketing, purchasing, technical development, and strategy. Businesses interact to learn about each other's potential and strategies, to build trust, to adapt each other's strategies, and to commit their resources to use.

Many management scholars believe that the generation of new knowledge is critical to the formation and evolution of businesses (La Rocca & Snehota, 2011:79). The IMP framework for business relationships has been successful in exploring knowledge within and between organisations. Knowledge creation leads to increased productivity and growth (Di Vaio, Palladino, Pezzi & Kalisz, 2021:220).

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Several researchers focused on competition in business networks in 2012. Extending interactions with other business networks enables businesses to obtain more resources and thus increase their competitiveness. Start-ups, small and medium-sized businesses, and medium-sized businesses face more intense competition than established businesses, making it critical for them to manage their business networks (Huang, Lai & Lo, 2012:316).

The evolution of business networks provides an oversight of the importance of the interaction of start-ups with their stakeholders and the management of maintaining and enhancing such relationships to keep their business competitive in the market.

1.14.3 Entrepreneurial branding

Due to lack of literature in the field of branding during ancient times, researchers use historical evidence to trace the evolution of branding (Rajaram & Shelly, 2012:100). Branding can be traced back to the Stone Age, when different brands of hunting tools were used (Hampf & Lindberg-Repo 2011:1). When humans first began domesticating animals during the Iron Age, branding was used to mark the animals for easy identification. Farmers branded symbols on the bodies of the animals with hot metal tools. This type of branding is still evident among small business farmers to date. Different forms of branding continued to be developed, beginning the 14th century, with producers using symbols to differentiate and promote their goods (Bricui & Bricui, 2016:137); for example, the branding of pottery or ceramic was common among the Chinese, Indians, Romans, and Greeks (Rajaram & Shelly, 2012:101). Later, the "symbol of shame" labels were applied to humans such as slaves, fugitives, and brawlers. Furthermore, criminals were branded as a form of punishment and identification.

The industrial revolution marked the beginning of the development of modern brands and brand management (Roper & Parker, 2006:56). Technological innovation was evident in packaging and most household products were moved from communities to factories. The use of trademarks began when factories branded their logos on their

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packaging (Rajaram & Shelly, 2012:102). Following the industrial revolution, the emphasis was on mass production and there was a need to differentiate one product from another due to increased market competition (Roper & Parker, 2006:56). More researchers were drawn to branding, and they assigned various meanings to the concept (Rajaram & Shelly, 2012:100; Schutte,1969:9). Schutte (1969:9), on the other hand, suggested that two terms be used in branding to help differentiate the brands: manufacturers' and distributors' brands. For the distribution of goods to reach the masses, it called for building of networks which in the present day are referred to as network marketing.

Neil Borden coined the term "marketing mix" in the 1950s (Hampf & Lindberg-Repo, 2011:3). He was inspired by a 1948 article by James Culliton, who described a marketing executive as a "mixer of ingredients" whose job it was to make the business profitable (Borden, 1964:7). Marketing mix was not considered as a scientific theory but as a "conceptual framework that identifies the principal decision-making managers make in configuring their offerings to suit consumers' needs" (Londhea 2014:336). Neil included the concept of branding as an important ingredient in his marketing mix. The more recent marketing mix, on the other hand, has no ties to branding. Another theory that emerged in the 1950s is brand loyalty, coined by Ross Cunningham, and it continues to play an important role in branding today. Brand loyalty is associated with behavioural and attitudinal dimensions (Ishak & Ghani 2013:186). Hampf and Lindberg-Repo (2011:15), associate it with profitability.

Market segmentation theory is another concept mentioned in the evolution of branding. Wendell Smith pioneered this concept in the 1950s. According to Smith (1956:6), market segmentation has a significant impact. He notes that when market segmentation is used effectively and consumer or user satisfaction is maximised, the market position tends to be stable and secure. The literature on market segmentation did not emphasise the relationship between segmentation and branding. However, the concept of lifestyle segmentation was born with the introduction of lifestyle branding, a concept introduced by William Lazer in 1963 (Plummer, 1974:37). Plummer argues

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that lifestyle segmentation looks at consumers' lifestyles, factors that motivate them, and all marketing factors that affect their lives, to gain a new perspective on the market segment.

Several theories were proposed by researchers between 1970 and 1990. During this time, researchers began to develop an interest in and contribute to the marketing literature on service branding. One of these theories is the corporate branding theory. According to Fetscherin and Usunier (2010:739), corporate branding has evolved since the 1970s. The emphasis was then more managerial than scholastic. The emphasis, however, was not on corporate branding per se, but on other marketing activities such as consumer behavior towards brand performance (Yandle, 1978:129), brand loyalty (Tankersly,1977:249) and brand choice (Narayana, 1977:221). Winters (1986:54) defined marketing as the most important corporate communication tool. In his study, he argues that brand advertising can influence attitudes toward corporations and that social conduct image is critical when attitudes toward corporations are low, and that there is a need to place more emphasis on corporate advertising during this time.

In 1971, Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman (Kotler & Zaltman, Ind (1998:140), organisations must understand, protect and communicate their corporate brands. He proposed models for analysing the effectiveness of branding and communications, as 1971:5), coined the term "social marketing," shifting society's focus from sales return to market orientation. They were inspired by Wiebe (1952:679), who asked, "Why can't you sell brotherhood and rational thinking like soap?" Hampf and Lindberg-Repo (2011:16) argue that social marketing lacks direct causal connections. Though social marketing is not considered a theory, it draws and applies models and theories from behavioural sciences (Bhat, Darzi & Hakim 2019:79) Relationship marketing was another concept that emerged during this time. According to Hampf and Lindberg-Repo (2011:6), researchers failed to connect the new phenomenon to branding. This has since changed as researchers began to incorporate branding into relationship marketing theories, giving rise to the concept of relational branding. Jack Trout and

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Al Ries first proposed the concept of positioning in 1972 (Trout & Ries,1972:408). The positioning strategy was designed to get the customer to think about the product or service. Positioning became more popular among marketers, particularly advertising agencies, as they transitioned to more innovative methods of reaching out to their customers (Hampf & Lindberg-Repo, 2011:6). Causation is said to exist between segmentation and positioning. Positioning also has an impact on brand identity; for example, when a company implements a new positioning strategy, the brand's identity changes.

The concept of brand equity was developed in the early 1980s and piqued the interest of researchers, becoming one of the most researched areas in the field of marketing. The Marketing Science Institute (MSI) designated it as a priority area, and it drew many marketing-related publications (Hampf & Lindberg-Repo, 2011:6). As a result, different researchers provided different definitions of brand equity. According to Kim, Kim, and An (2003), brand equity can be viewed from three perspectives: financial, consumer-based, and combined. The financial perspective is concerned with the market performance of the company. It focuses on the total value of the brand, allowing businesses to assess the long-term impact of their branding efforts (Hampf & Lindberg-Repo, 2011:17). The consumer-based perspective assesses consumers' reactions to the brand. Finally, the combined viewpoint considers the overall picture of brand equity. Motameni and Shahrokhi (1998:281) created the Global Brand Equity Valuation (GBEV) model to emphasize the value of combining perspectives. According to Hampf and Lindberg-Repo (2011:17), brand equity has a causal relationship with brand personality and brand loyalty.

Other new concepts related to branding have been introduced since the 1990s, and research on Country of Origin (COO) has been ongoing for the past decade. COO branding is most seen on products perceived to be of high quality or luxury, such as wines and perfumes. Because COO is linked to brand identity, businesses may use their country of origin in their branding to establish their identity. Brand communities and subcultures are also important concepts in branding. These organizations have

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strong ties to specific brands that they have chosen. Brand communities and subcultures have a causal relationship with brand identity. This concept is also causally related to relational branding (Hampf & Lindberg-Repo, 2011:18).

Another theory related to branding is corporate social responsibility (CSR). Businesses that practice social responsibility in their communities tend to earn a good reputation and brand loyalty, as a result, CSR is linked to loyalty and brand identity. Businesses that engage in CSR and work to change the identity of their brands in the minds of their customers can increase their brand equity (Hampf & Lindberg-Repo, 2011:17). The most recent brand concept is interactive network branding. Nikolina Koporcic coined the phrase in 2015. She contends that the purpose of businesses in the market is not to compete, but to interact and cooperate with one another (Koporčić, Tolušić, & Tolušić, 2015:525). This concept is yet to be empirically tested during this era of disruptive innovation.

The branding theories are centred on the phenomena of building, maintaining and management of relationships between the brand and customer. The interaction between the brand and the customer promotes brand personality and creates brand equity. The section that follows outlines the evolution of the innovation strategy.

1.14.4 Innovation

Joseph Schumpeter was a forerunner in the field of innovation. His Schumpetian theories influenced many researchers. According to Hospers (2005:20), Schumpeter first introduced innovation in 1919. In their research innovation is defined as new combinations that disrupt the existing economic system's equilibrium. The preceding conditions influence the change in the economic system. Innovations, according to Schumpeter (1935:4), are "changes in production functions that cannot be decomposed into infinitesimal steps." According to Schumpeter, innovation does not require invention. He went on to say that "the social process that produces innovations is distinctly different "economically and sociologically" than the social process that produces inventions."

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Other researchers have praised and criticized Schumpeter's theory. Some scholars examined the Schumpetean theory on its own, while others examined it in comparison to other theories. Paul M. Sweezy reviewed the Schumpetean theory in 1943. Sweezy agreed with the theory, but he had a different idea on profits and accumulation. Profits and accumulation, according to Schumpeter, are the results of the innovative process. However, Sweezy proposed that the profit-making process forces businesses to accumulate, and that accumulation leads to innovation as a means of maintaining the profit-making system and the capitalist structure that supports it (Sweezy. 1943:96).

H.G Barnett, an anthropologist, proposed a broader definition of innovation than Schumpeter's in 1953. He defines innovation as "any new thought, behavior, or thing that is qualitatively different from existing forms" (Barnett, 1953:7). As innovation progressed, economists referred to the transcendentalist approach, which asserts that creativity is unpredictable. Sociologists, on the other hand, referred to the mechanistic theory, which states that "innovation does not occur by chance; it is the result of antecedents..." Abbott Payson Usher (Usher, 1954:61) , an economist, coined the term "cumulative-synthesis" in 1954 after combining economist and sociologist perspectives This approach emphasises that major inventions are the result of "many individual items of novelty as well as many familiar elements."

According to Brown, innovation is a deliberate attempt to increase demand for machine tools. Unlike Schumpeter, who believes that innovation is inherently discontinuous, Brown believes that it can be programmed to occur (Brown, 1957:406). Ruttan compared the Schumpeter theory to the Usher theory in 1959. He contends that social scientists have been unable to distinguish clearly between innovation and invention, or between innovation and technological change (Ruttan, 1959:596).

Rogers broadened Barnett's definition in his book "Diffusion of Innovation", referring to innovation as "an idea perceived as new by the individual" (Rogers, 1962:13). He perceived the diffusion process as an orderly sequence of events and proposes a diffusion curve similar to a normal distribution curve. In his paper "The Process of Innovation and the Diffusion of Innovation," Robertson proposed three classifications of innovation in

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1967 as follows: continuous, dynamically continuous, and discontinuous (Robertson, 1967:15).

During the 1970s research was directed at refining the theory of innovation, with researchers recommending what they thought was the best fit theory. Nelson and Winter (1977:36) condensed the innovation theories, arguing that they were fragmented, and that the knowledge and research presented were disjointed. Furthermore, the theories ignored the fact that innovation is characterised by uncertainty, and that its support structures are diverse. They proposed theoretically "modeling innovation generation as the conditional probabilistic outcome of various R&D strategies and modeling the fate of an innovation in terms of the workings of a selection environment" (Nelson & Winter, 1977:71).

From the 1970's to date, the diffusion of innovation theory has been gaining popularity. Researchers approached this theory through a multidisciplinary stance. Literature covered areas such as its characteristics (Völlink, Meertens, Midden, 2002:353), its application (Cheng, Kao, & Lin, 2004:439; Dearing, 2009:503; Al-Jabri & Sohail, 2012:379) its usefulness (Lyytinen & Damsgaard, 2001:173), integration (Lien & Jiang, 2017:259) and the insights from the theory (Min, So & Jeong, 2021:2). Other theories, however, were also suggested, such as the disruptive innovation theory arising from the disruptive technology experienced prior and during the millennium. Yu and Hang (2010: 450) laments that literature on disruptive technology is scattered and needs to be packaged in a more systematic and manageable way to stimulate future research. The disruptive innovation theory coined by Clayton Christensen in 1995, alludes to the expansion and creation of new markets, emerging with new functionalities that disrupts the existing ones (Christensen 1997). Disruptive innovation is capable of making unaffordable products and services affordable (Jaya 25:2019). The impact of disruptive technology and disruptive innovation is perceived as follows: (1) dominance of educational practices by "innovative applications of Information and Communication Technologies" (2). Retail business dominated by online business (3) requirement of new skills leaving a large sum of population without jobs (Majumdar, Banerji &

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Chakrabarti 2018:1247.

The evolution of the three strategies provided a broad view of the research problem, through the lens of theories that emerged over time. The theoretical framework served as a foundation for the conceptual framework for this study outlined in 1.15.

1.15. Conceptual framework

Tamene (2016:50) defines concept as a "system or network of concepts, related to other concepts that make up its meaning". The connection of these concepts, therefore, creates the framework. A conceptual framework is an analytical tool used to show relationships among the concepts. It is defined by Tamene (2016:51) as a theory developed tentatively to guide the study and Regoniel (2015:1) points out that it is seen as a map that guides the researcher towards achieving the research objectives. The conceptual framework is part of the theoretical framework of the phenomena that anchors on empirical findings of various researchers over time.

This study takes a multidisciplinary approach to problem- solving. The phenomena in question are linked to different bodies of knowledge belonging to multiple disciplines and, they therefore require a multi-disciplinary approach. To better understand this approach, a qualitative research method was chosen for the investigations. The study used a case study grounded theory methodology to confirm various viewpoints suggested in the three strategies under study. Grounded theory is sufficient for conceptual framework building because it is a methodology that is inductive in nature and researchers use it to discover new theories (Jabareen, 2009:52; Martin & Turner, 1986:141).

The study used theories from the three strategies that were under investigation. It first looked at how the three strategies evolved over time; then, established whether there were gaps in the literature and then a conceptual framework was proposed. However, there is limited literature on the blended (or amalgamated or integrated) contribution of the three strategies to the survival of start-ups. Current literature addresses the

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problem of start-up success and failure using these strategies independently. Nevertheless, from the historic stance, literature showcases a clear indication of the interconnection between the three strategies. The researcher has, therefore, proposed a conceptual framework as a structure for the proposed theory.

Halinen and Törnroos (2005:1285) argue that the evolution of networks is justified by their increase in numbers, structure and complexity and the changes are brought about by globalisation, technology, innovation and competition in particular. Innovation is one of the key drivers behind the success of business networks. Interaction of businesses is vital to developing knowledge on marketing (which is an umbrella of entrepreneurial branding), purchasing, technical development and strategy (Håkansson & Ingemansson, 2011:67).

Additionally, branding literature makes mention of business networks and innovation. A theory coined by Koporčić in 2015 titled interactive networking branding, supports the relationship between the business networks and branding. This theory calls for integration and cooperation between businesses instead of competing with each other (Koporčić, Tolušić & Tolušić, 2015:525).

1.16 Proposed conceptual framework

The link between start-up growth and success and business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation cannot be overemphasised. Research alludes that each construct individually contributes to the growth and success of start-ups. Business networks provides access to scarce resources that start-ups may not attain on their own, such as information and knowledge, access to finance (Albourinia, Ahmada Abuhashesha & Nusairat 2020:2523); entrepreneurial culture (Passaro, Quinto, Rippa & Thoma 2020:2). Entrepreneurial branding creates start-up reputation among stakeholders. More interaction and awareness of stakeholders with the brand leads to success in capitalising the market, increased revenue and profit (Pakura & Rudeloff 2023:157). Branding of start-ups is associated with revenue generation and providing access to venture capital (Alsaaty 2019:78). Start-ups play a critical role in creating

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employment and driving innovation (Choi, Sung & Park 2020:1). Innovative ideas are developed during the start-ups phase of the business (Tsolakidis, Mylonas & Petridou 2020:3). During this time, start-ups cause potent changes in the market that contribute towards economic growth (Spender, Corvello, Grimaldi & Rippa 2017:4).

When combined or paired, research has shown that business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation, play a significant role in the growth and success of start-ups. The success of start-ups is motivated by their access to resources such as finance, knowledge and information. Business networks facilitate the start-ups' access to the scarce resources (Wang & Schøtt 2020:3). Start-ups can churn the knowledge accessed through business networks, into innovative applications (Caseiroa & Coelho 2018:143). Lack of or shortage of these resources affect innovation (Spender et al. 2017:4) and subsequently affects the growth and success of start-ups.

"Entrepreneurial branding is a corporate branding for entrepreneurial, i.e., innovation- or growth-oriented, small enterprises" (Peters et al. 2010:1). This definition clearly shows that innovation and entrepreneurial branding are inseparable. Entrepreneurial branding is considered a critical aspect in the performance and growth of start-ups (Vallaster & Kraus 2011: 386; Soleimani, Dana, Salamzadeh, Bouzari & Ebrahimi 2020:144). The 4IR is driven by innovation, so start-ups have to keep up with the dynamic changes of the market. Branding should therefore be explored as a technique that drives successful innovation (Halliday & Trott 2020:156).

Since there is an interconnection between the three strategies, the researcher has proposed a conceptual framework as structure for the proposed theory. Figure 1.16 shows the diagrammatic presentation of this conceptual framework. Innovation encompasses business networks and entrepreneurial branding. The framework will be tested to find out if the three concepts lead to innovative networked brands, which in turn lead to the growth of start-ups and promote start-up success.

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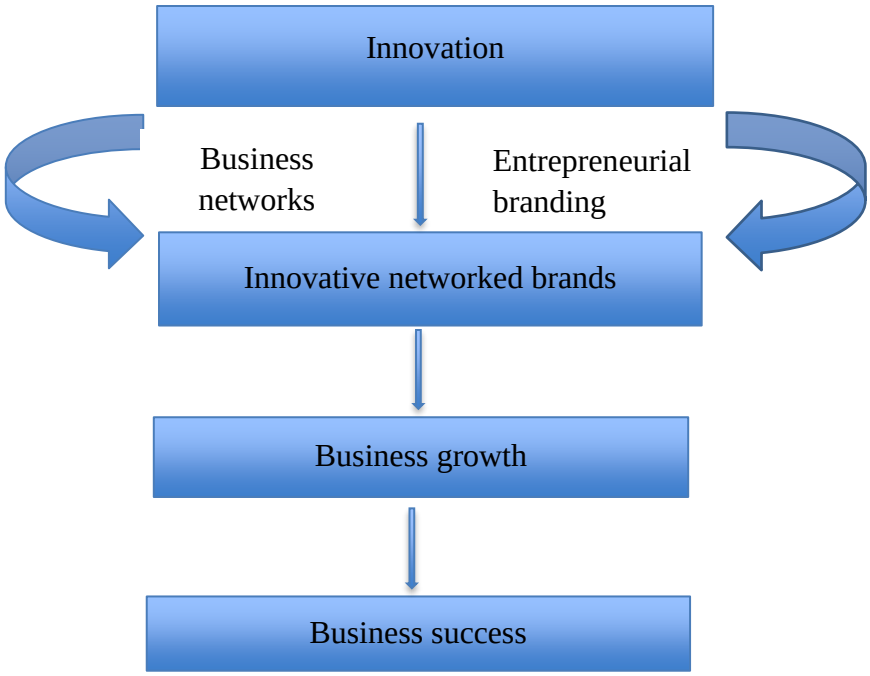

Figure 1.16: Proposed innovative networked brands

1.17 Limitations of the study

One of the limitations was the low response rate. The study was conducted during the time when Covid-19 was rampant. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions, the process of data collection was difficult and not consistent in terms of responses or participation. However, the researcher kept on following up the respondents through email and phone until they have completed filling in the questionnaires. The other challenge was the long-time frame and the lengthy process of obtaining permission for data collection from the authorities in Botswana. It took over a month to obtain a research permit form the Ministry of Trade in Botswana, however, the researcher persistently made follow ups until the response was given.

1.18 Delimitations of the study

In Botswana this study included start-ups that have been operating for a period of 0-5 years and registered with CIPA in three areas: Gaborone, the capital city of Botswana, situated in the eastern part of the country; Maun, a town in the northeastern part of

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Botswana, popularly known as a tourist destination; and Serowe, a semi-urban area, situated in the central part of the country. In South Africa, the study was conducted in Johannesburg, a metropolitan city and the economic capital of South Africa, the headquarters of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) with a population of 6.6 million and a vast number of start-ups. The population of the study was limited to the start-ups that had registered with Companies and Intellectual Properties Commission (CIPC); any other start-up fell outside the sample population.

1.19 Demarcation of chapters

Chapter 1: Background and orientation

This chapter outlined the background of start-ups and focused on start-ups in Botswana and South Africa, particularly, those that have been operating between 0-5 years. It also covered the following areas: introduction, the background of study, definition of terms, purpose statement, research goals and objectives, research questions and hypothesis, significance of study, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, limitations of the study, delimitation of the study, and the summary of the chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature review: Start-ups

This chapter covered the literature on start-ups, including research done in Botswana and South Africa.

Chapter 3: Business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation

In this chapter, the researcher discussed literature on business networks, entrepreneurship branding and innovation.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

The chapter outlined the methodology used in the study. It covered the sampling

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techniques used, the research design, the methods and instruments used in data collection and how the data were analysed.

Chapter 5: Quantitative data analysis

The researcher analysed data using SPSS and presented the results using charts, graphs, tables and histograms.

Chapter 6: Qualitative data analysis

In this chapter, the researcher analysed qualitative data using thematic analysis.

Chapter 7: Integration of data

The findings were integrated to find out if the aim of the study had been achieved.

Chapter 8: Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions and recommendations of the study were outlined in this chapter. It included the limitations of the study as well as suggested areas for further research.

1.20 Summary

Chapter one provided the background and orientation of the study. It started by highlighting the contribution of start-ups to economic growth. A problem statement was used to justify the need for the study. The researcher adopted the evolution of the constructs under study to provide a background of what was being researched and explain the theories and models that formed part of the theoretical framework. A conceptual framework: “innovative branded networks” was then proposed. The framework will be tested to find out if business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation lead to the success of start-ups.

The study employed a pragmatic approach, and mixed methods research (quantitative

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and qualitative) was used to collect and analyse data. The conceptual framework was appropriate for the study because it provided a structure for exploratory research. This study used qualitative data to investigate the use of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation for the success of start-ups. Since there is lack of literature on the survival of start-ups in Botswana and South Africa, and the use of the three strategies combined, the qualitative data collection and analysis became ideal for the study in order to establish the theory of the new concept. The concepts were empirically tested to find out whether they contributed to the success of networks.

The next chapter presents the literature review on start-ups.

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Chapter 2: Start-ups

2.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the literature on start-ups including research done in Botswana and South Africa. The contribution of start-ups to the economies cannot be over-emphasised. However, substantive research has shown that start-ups collapse more often than they succeed. This chapter adopts a funnel approach. Firstly, it presents the global literature on start-ups with an emphasis on the United States of America, Europe and Asia. The researcher then gives the highlights of start-ups in Africa and narrows it down to Botswana and South Africa.

Literature does not provide a coherent definition for start-ups (Tim & Günther, 2016:505). Luger and Koo (2005:19) define a start-up as a business entity that did not exist before or during a given time period (i.e., it is new), that starts hiring at least one paid employee during the given period (i.e. becomes active), and that is neither a subsidiary nor a branch of an existing firm (i.e. functions independently). A start-up is a new, independent business, up to six years old, which is strongly growth-oriented, has not yet settled upon a scalable business model, and spends at least 15% of its operating expenses on research and development (R&D). Furthermore, start-ups are new businesses that have been in operation for a period of 0 to 3.5 years (Errko, 2016:8; Mazanai & Fatoki, 2012:31), On the basis of the above definitions, this study has defined a start-up as a new business entity that did not exist before, either independently or as a subsidiary of an existing business and has been operating for a period between 0 and 5 years.

Start-ups have been a topic of great interest to researchers and policy makers for decades. This indicates the importance of research on what makes them fail and what makes them succeed. Extensive research has shown that start-ups play a significant and transformative role in the economic growth of countries across the world (Ngek & Smit, 2013:3043; Mazanai & Fatoki, 2012:31; Munemo, 2017:97; Li, Ahmed, Qalati,

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Khan & Nazi 2020:2; Horne & Fichter 2022:1). They also play a key role in the innovation process through the exploration and exploitation of new ideas, market opportunities and disruptive technologies (Pisoni & Onetti, 2018:26). However, there are gaps in literature regarding the nature, dynamics, growth and success of start-ups in emerging economies as compared to developed countries (Elston, Chen & Weidinger, 2016:79; Horne & Fichter 2022:1).

Research reveals two common factors that contribute to start-up growth and success across the globe: (1) incubators and (2) venture capital. Incubators support start-ups in their developmental stage to acquire and enhance entrepreneurial skills (Voisey, Gornall, Jones & Thomas, 2006:454); create value (Li et al. 2020:1); give them credibility and build their business networks (Tötterman & Sten, 2005:4). On a macro scale, incubators catalyse economic development (Torun, Peconick, Sobreiro, Kimura & Pique, 2018:98). Venture capital also plays major role in the establishment of startups (Jeong, Juhee Kim, Son & Nam 2020:1). They provide capital to start-ups that might have challenges raising finances (Gompers & Lerner, 2001:145).

2.2 Start-ups in the United States of America, Europe and Asia

The literature reviewed about start-ups in the United States of America (USA), Europe and Asia (with the emphasis on India and China), covers business incubation, venture capital and innovation as the three phenomena that stand out and are used to close the equity gap and motivate the growth of start-ups (Hegeman & Sørheim 2021:9; Ayatse, Kwahar & Iyortsuun, 2017:10; Grilli, Mrkajic & Latif, 2018; Tsaplin & Pozdeeva, 2016;Trzmielak, Gwarda-Gruszczyńska & Zehner, 2014:146; Jeong,*et al.* 2020:9). The study at hand, however, does not focus on business incubation and venture capital but rather on the contributions made by business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation towards the success of start-ups. Therefore, the American, European and Asian perspective on start-up success, as mentioned above, has been only briefly outlined.

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The USA is ranked as the world's leader in the provision of a conducive environment for the development of start-ups (Geibel & Manickam, 2016:66;). Literature confirms that the formation and success of start-ups in the USA outnumbers that of any other country across the globe. Alessia and Alberto (2018:26) affirm that Europe lags behind the USA in start-up acquisition. According to Kuschel, Lepeley, Espinosa and Gutiérrez (2017:312), in the World Start-up Ranking undertaken in 2015, it was found that the USA was leading the world in start-up ecosystems with a total of 11,000 start-ups. The USA is also well known for originating business incubators in the 1950's (Al-Mubaraki & Schrödl, 2013:435).

Zehner II *et al.* (2014:146) argue that business incubation in the USA is growing and prospering; it has risen sharply (up to 28%) in the past five years and has also raised the success rate of the incubated start-ups above the non-incubated ones. These researchers are supported by Ayatse *et al*. (2017:10), who posit that incubation enhances the performance of the start-ups and advocate support for and encouragement of the use of incubators.

Business incubation is defined differently by different researchers. Tsaplin and Pozdeeva (2016:34) and Theodorakopoulos, Kakabadse and McGowan (2014:603) define business incubation as a planned and organised exercise meant to nurture start-ups in their early phase of growth. According to Tsaplin and Pozdeeva (2016:33), "Business incubation is interpreted as a dynamic business development process which helps to reduce the failure rate of early-stage companies and speeds up their growth." The main goal of a business incubator, as pointed out by Zehner II *et al*. (2014:146; Deyanova, Brehmer, Lapidus,Tiberius and Walsh (2022:2083) is to make start-ups more successful, independent, financially viable and develop firm foundation for growth. Based on these definitions, this study defines business incubation as the process of nurturing start-ups during their early phase of growth to achieve financial viability. Literature also highlights venture capital as a business incubation support used by start-ups in the USA to motivate their growth.

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The USA is also considered the pioneer and leader in venture capital (Grilli *et al.,* 2018:394). Other countries that follow are the United Kingdom and Sweden whereas developing countries are reported to be lagging behind. Venture capital has been growing at a faster rate in the last two decades and is considered a significant source of financing for start-ups in the USA. However, much of the evidence on venture capital concerns the start-ups that survive or are successful, but less is known about those that fail (Puri & Zarutskie, 2008:2). An investigation by Puri and Zarutskie (2008:1) has proved that venture capital start-ups tend to grow more rapidly and have less failure rates than their counterparts although there was an insignificant difference in profitability measures at the time of exit. Lerner (2010:264); OECD (2018:10); Jeong *et al.* (2020:9) claim that venture capital is closely linked to innovation and the fast growth of start-ups.

In Europe, the process of start-up formation and growth has been a popular subject among researchers and policymakers for decades (Pisoni & Onetti, 2018:26). Western Europe policy makers are said to motivate the creation and growth of start-ups to accomplish growth in the economy, despite their small size (Ahmad & Ingle, 2013:120). They perceive them as significant role players in the creation of employment and innovation (Brown & Mason, 2014:1); and competitiveness among the global economies (Skawi´nska & Zalewski 2020:1). Notwithstanding the support by policy makers in Western Europe, start-ups continue to struggle (Weele,Rijnsoever, Eveleens, Steinz, Stijn & Groen, 2016:1162). They face challenges such as a high failure rate, lack of access to capital precipitated by a lack of collateral as well as information asymmetry and uncertainty (Grilli *et al.,* 2018:393), no access to entrepreneurial capacity building (Jáki, Molnár & Kádár 2019:10). As a result, Europe experienced a lesser number of successful start-ups than the USA (Klaus-Heiner, 2016:4), who suggests that this has contributed to low economic growth, coupled with a high unemployment rate in Europe.

To counteract these challenges and others that affect start-ups, the European governments introduced incubators to support start-ups with resources such as

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physical infrastructure, mentoring and financial capital (Ahmad & Ingle, 2013:120; Bruneel, Ratinho, Clarysse & Groen, 2012:115; Alpenidze, Pauceanu & Sanyal 2019:9). According to Weele *et al*. (2016:1162), the provision of incubators is in line with a global trend. As the number of start-ups increases around the globe, it creates an opportunity for improvement as incubators learn from each other, thereby enhancing the ecosystem's networks. Rijnsoever, Weele, and Eveleens (2017:605), assert that the incubator support of start-ups in Europe is noticeable. Although the literature has been uncertain on the extent to which incubators boost start-up performance, their study confirms that incubators contribute positively to investments. These authors acknowledge the differences presented by researchers on the impact of incubators on start-ups. Some believe there is a positive impact (Stokan, Thompson & Mahu, 2015:32; Abi-Fadel & Peeters 2019:206), while others claim a negative impact or no impact at all (Schwartz, 2013:3; Tamásy, 2007:469), though (Lukosiute, Jensen & Tanev 2019:5), purport that little research focusing on the drawbacks of incubators.

Another way of overcoming the financial challenges faced by start-ups is the establishment of venture capital firms. According to Hall and Lerner (2010:609), venture capital provides funding solutions to the more-risky investments such as start-ups. However, despite the significant contribution of venture capital to the survival of start-ups, their exploitation is argued to be limited, i.e. they are selective about which start-ups to invest in or even nonexistent in some European countries (Eldar & Grennan 2023:38; Grilli *et al*., 2018:393).

Outside of the USA and Europe, Asia has recently experienced a significant growth in start-ups and innovation. This evolution of the start-up ecosystem was motivated by factors such as the growth of incubators, the evolution of technology, growth in the smartphone and media platform usage and growth of angels (Vandenberg, Hampel-Milagrosa & Helble 2020:15). China is considered as the world's biggest emerging economy to have made massive accomplishments in rapid economic development for the past few decades (Cheng, Yuan & Jiang, 2022:16). Start-ups in China are perceived as tools for modernisation and they are used to stimulate the spirit of

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entrepreneurship among graduates particularly those who received higher education, training thereby reducing unemployment pressure on the economy (Yuan, Wang, Mao & Wu 2020:12). Furthermore, they contribute significantly to the development of SMEs and to scientific research and innovation of enterprises.

Despite government support, start-ups in Asia encounter challenges on the growth of start-ups such as limited or lack of funding (Kamaldeep, 2017:2321; Banudevia & Shivab 2019:286). Preference of the pecking order financing by Chineses start-ups, limits the participation of financial institutions such as venture capitalists and banks (Elston *et al.* 2016:90). This implies that the finance of start-ups and their growth remains a challenge among Chinese enterprises. In Thailand, start-ups have a tendency of flying solo and this limits their capability to progress (Kijkasiwat 2021:55).

Zhang and Zhang (2014:137); Rohendi, Asriani and Kharisma (2023:11) assert that the governments must put the right measures in place to support start-ups as this will in turn promote entrepreneurship and create employment.

Like their global counterparts, Africa looks to start-ups as a solution to curbing economic problems such as poverty and unemployment. Consequently, most African governments perceive start-ups as major contributors to economic growth.

2.3 Start-ups in Africa

Mead (1994:1892), Ngek (2014: 253); Muriithi (2017:36) and Ajide (2020:2), claim that there has been a significant growth in employment opportunities in Africa as a result of the contribution by start-ups and small businesses. Even during periods of recession, where growth is limited, the start-up contribution to economic growth in Africa is noticeable and Owoseni and Twinomurinzi (2016:1), therefore calls for start-ups to be aware of their capabilities and strive to remain relevant in the dynamic business environment.

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Literature has cited endless challenges faced by start-ups in the African continent (Kongolo, 2010:2293; Tengeh & Ngem, 2017:1; Mallinguh & Zéman, 2019:273). According to Sriram and Mersha (2010:268), the factors that affect entrepreneurship in Africa are (1) limited access to start-up capital, (2) a lack of training and skills, (3) stiff competition and (4) a lack of adequate facilities in an appropriate location. Furthermore, literature shows that the most challenging factor facing start-ups in Africa is limited funding (Mallinguh & Zéman, 2019:274; Sriram & Mersha, 2010:269). This therefore calls on policymakers to come up with solutions that support the growth of start-ups and to find ways to assist with start-up funding. Ndemo (2017:8) argues that many countries in the Global North offer a variety of incentives for start-ups. However, so far African countries have not been able to encourage or support start-ups in the same way. This implies that in order to keep up with competition across the globe, African governments need to invest more in start-ups. One of the ways to promote start-up success, as suggested by Sriram and Mersha (2010:269), is the provision of necessary education, skills training and incubation and funding (Muathe & Otieno 2022:27). African governments may provide start-ups with incubators to ease the burden of securing space and equipment at their initial stage. In countries such as Kenya, however, start-ups continue to face challenges despite support from policymakers and seed capital investors (Ndemo, 2017:8; Kansheba 2020: 112).

Some researchers advocate support for the most disadvantaged groups of entrepreneurs in the African market such as women and the youth. For example, Brixiová, Ncube and Bicaba (2015:2) suggest that the government of Swaziland should put in place policies that favour youth entrepreneurship. This includes policies on training and skills development (Nade 2021:45) and the provision of subsidies. Brixiová *et al.* (2015:2) further assert that since African governments are looking at entrepreneurship as an option to developing sustainable economic growth, they should support young entrepreneurs because they remain critical players in driving the technology of entrepreneurship. They can adapt to changes in technology as well as innovate. The significant role of women in the growth of the economy cannot be ignored. For example, in Ghana and Ethiopia, women-owned enterprises are said to

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be very low, (18% and 23%, respectively). Sriram and Mersha (2010:269; Swid, Rukobo & Maro 2023:29) therefore recommends that African governments should formulate policies that support and strengthen women entrepreneurs and in so doing narrow the gender gap.

2.4 Start-ups in Botswana and South Africa

Botswana is considered a developing country with a population of 2.3 million and a gross domestic product (GDP) standing at P50 476.6 million. The public sector participation in the economy of Botswana is more domineering. In 2018 the public sector employment contributed 53% whilst the private sector contributed 47% of employment in Botswana. South Africa has a population of 62 million with a GDP of P1.16 billion. The South Africa industry landscape is dominated by the private sector, contributing 76% of the employed workforce while the public sector only contributes 25% (SA News 2022). These two countries differ drastically in terms of size of population and GDP; however, they have some things in common such as trade relationships and regional integration. Botswana and South Africa have bilateral relationships. They are also members of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU). Established in 1910, SACU's main purpose is to "promote the integration of Member States into the global economy through enhanced trade and investment; To facilitate the equitable sharing of revenue arising from customs, excise and additional duties levied by Member States; and. To facilitate the development of common policies and strategies" (SACU 2023). Furthermore, the two countries are members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The main objectives of SADC are to "achieve economic development, peace and security, and growth, alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of Southern Africa, and support the socially disadvantaged through Regional Integration" (SADC 2023).

There is limited literature on start-ups in Botswana and South Africa, therefore the researcher refers to old literature. Furthermore, there is lack of data on the current statistics of the rate of start-up establishment and failures as well as employment

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creation in the two countries, hence, reference is made to the old literature in the following sections of the chapter: 2.4.2, 2.4.3 and 2.4.4.

2.4.1 Literature gaps on start-ups in Botswana and South Africa

As proof that there is limited research on start-ups in Botswana and South Africa, the researcher searched for journal articles on the research databases with these words: (1) start-ups in Botswana and (2) start-ups in South Africa. Several databases were used: Google Scholar and Booksc, the University of Pretoria Library, Ebscohost and Emerald. For each of the databases, a search was made for the first five pages. Much of the literature that contained these keywords was mainly about micro, small and medium enterprise studies; they mentioned start-ups only in passing. The researcher came across limited literature on start-up capital or start-up financing in South Africa and what there it was mostly published between 2011 and 2016. The researcher has noted that some of the studies used “new SMEs “instead of start-ups but referred to the same enterprise. Since other researchers referred to start-ups as new SMEs, the researcher used the word “new start-ups in Botswana" and “new start-ups in South Africa”. The results of the search from Booksc.com gave one article published on South Africa and none on Botswana. The researcher also included a couple of additional words such as: “new ventures” and “new business” to the search but obtained the same results; most of these publications mentioned start-ups only in passing.

Tödtling and Wanzenböck (2003:352) acknowledge that start-ups play a major role in explaining regional inequalities in developing countries. However, they claimed that there had been limited research done in the area. These scholars are supported by Naude, Gries, Woody and Meintjies (2008:112); Liu (2021:82) who assert that there was a vacuum to be filled in start-up empirical literature. Despite the claim by Sriram and Mersha (2010:258), that South Africa is an exception when it comes to inadequacy in.entrepreneurship literature, there remains a gap in terms of literature on start-ups in Botswana and South Africa.

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2.4.2 Establishment of start-ups

Start-up SMEs are said to play a significant role in the sustainable economic development of any country (Mazanai & Fatoki, 2012:31; Nkwe, 2012:29; Majama & Magang, 2017:75). According to Mead and Liedholm (1998:64), start-ups are being established at a substantial rate with an annual rate of over 30% in Botswana. In South Africa, however, the rate at which new SMEs are created is one of the lowest in the world (Fatoki, 2014:980). This is supported by Ngek and Smit (2013) who argue that entrepreneurial activities in South Africa are low while the failure rate of SMEs and unemployment rates are high. Mead (1994:1892) also affirms that new start-ups are faced with high attrition rates. The high mortality is experienced by start-ups across the globe and has motivated extensive research on the failure and success of start-ups over decades.

Growth is essential for the success of startups (Monyake & Kuruba 2021:25). They are supported by LeBrasseur and Zinger (2005:409); Naude, Gries, Woody and Meintjies (2008:120) who argue that due to density and scale of economic activity, market size (agglomerates) can have a positive impact on start-ups. Other factors that contribute positively to the start-up rates are the determinants of the profit rates are productivity, infrastructure and policy choices focusing on access to finance, incubation, training and skills development (Schutte & Direng 2019:14; LeBrasseur & Zinger 2005:409; Naude, Gries, Woody & Meintjies 2008:120).

2.4.3 Importance of start-ups

One of the greatest economic challenges in South Africa is the high unemployment rate (Fatoki, 2014:94), which continues to increase in Botswana and South Africa. It amounted to 25.2% in 2014 (Statistics South Africa, 2014), and 30.8% in 2020 (World Bank, 2020) and 32.6% in 2023 (Statistics South Africa, 2023). In Botswana, the unemployment rate was registered at 17.82% in 2014, 18.72% in 2020 (World Bank, 2020) and 25.4% in 2022 (Statistics Botswana, 2023). This signals the need for the

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two countries to come up with solutions to reduce unemployment, among which start-ups are claimed to be ideal.

Start-ups contribute to the creation of employment and reduction of poverty (Moffat & Kapunda 2023:205; Anwana & Anwana 2020:1). They are supported by (1994: 1884) claims that between 1981 and 1990 start-ups contributed 75% of employment creation in Botswana. This implies that start-ups play a critical role in the creation of jobs. Although Ngek and Smit (2013:3045) support Mead, they emphasise that not all start-ups can generate a significant number of jobs. It is, therefore, imperative for Botswana and South African governments to identify and support start-ups with high growth. This could be achieved through developing human capital and providing an enabling environment for innovation of start-ups (Schilirò 2020:7).

The development of start-ups is said to be crucial for intensifying competition and entrepreneurship growth. This leads to the creation of jobs, the promotion of innovation, productivity and efficiency, and ultimately makes a significant contribution to economic growth (Schutte & Direng 2019:14; Fatoki & Garwe, 2010:729; Mazanai & Fatoki, 2012:31; Andzelic, Dzakovic, Lalic, Zrnic, & Palcic, 2011:1253). Literature has identified numerous challenges that thwart the growth of start-ups in Botswana and South Africa, however.

2.5 Start-up ecosystem

It is important to build an ecosystem suitable for startups that will help form and provide the support they need (Surbhi 2016:152). Startup ecosystems are concerned with three key players: stakeholders (people) land and environment (Tripathi, Sepp¨anen, Boominathan, Oivo & Liukkunen 2019:18; Singh, Chauhan & Dhir 2020:14). To survive in the 4IR, strong networks and effective communication between the stakeholders is critical. Furthermore, readiness to adjust to new management approaches of the ecosystem and acquisition of high technology skills are essential (Ziakis, Vlachopoulou & Petridis 2022:21). The market needs startups that utilise information technology to solve economic, social, financial, and

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environmental challenges of the 4IR (Babenko, Zomchak, Nehrey, Salem & Nakisko 2020:311).

Start-up ecosystems research is shifting towards policies and business eco friendly environment (Tripathi, Seppänen, Boominathan, Oivo & Liukkunen 2019:153) The initiative is supported by (Surbhi 2016:152), who calls for consideration of researchers' and practitioners' perspectives and who (Berger & Kuckertz 2016:17), purport that developing policies that promote access of start-ups to markets is an effective way of tapping into the ecosystems. Tripathi *et al.* (2019:1 outline three key stakeholders that support the start-up ecosystems. These are: funding organisations, governments, and academic institutions.

2.5.1 Financial institutions

Solutions to the problems encountered by start-ups in South Africa include, among others, the development of a business plan. Business plans are important aspects of the start-up of a business (Bushe 2019:15). Fatoki (2014:111) argues that the business plan helps the start-up to understand its profitability. Additionally, it may attract the bank's interest in the start-up. The government of South Africa motivated the development of various organisations to support entrepreneurship development and provide financial and non-financial services to start-ups (Kaplan 2021: 259; Pretorius & Shaw, 2004:239; Phillips, Moos and Nieman, 2014:86). Other organisations such as the Women Entrepreneurship Programme (WEP), address the problem of lack of entrepreneurship skills among women entrepreneurs and motivate them to start up their own businesses (Swartz, Scheepers & Toefy 2022:2; Botha, Nieman, & Van Vuuren, 2007:181).

2.5.2 Government Support

Government support to the start-ups ecosystems is outlined in two ways: provision of incubators and developing and implementing effective policies and programmes that support the sustainability and support of the ecosystems.

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a) Incubators

The establishment of business incubation programmes in South Africa dates to the 1900s. However, it wasn't until the millennium that the government of Botswana established the incubators. The main purpose of these programmes is to support the success of SMEs; that is, they provide the platform for the sustenance of businesses (Allie-Edries & Mupela 2019:172; Lose & Tengeh, 2015:14345). Business incubators are defined as "organisations that provide protected environments for business start-ups" (Buys & Mbewana, 2007:356). They serve as mechanisms for start-ups, provide legitimacy and motivate networks and community support (Hewitt, L.M. & Van Rensburg 2020:4). Furthermore, business incubators are said to promote the success of a significant number of start-ups; hence, contributing to the economic growth of the country (Schutte & Barbeau 2022:2; Meyer, Meyer, & Kot, 2016:1110). The government should therefore allocate funding to rising incubators to enhance their growth and success.

In 2002, the government of South Africa through the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), in partnership with the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the European Union (EU), merged several incubation initiatives and established the Godisa Programme. Its mandate was to facilitate technology and business incubation in South Africa (Godisa Annual Report, 2005:1) and to create a sustainable business incubation model for South Africa (Masutha & Rogerson, 2014:145). According to Hewitt and Van Rensburg (2020:6), the Godisa Programme merged in 2006 to form the SEDA Technology Programme (STP). The main aim of the STP was to establish strategic government support, curtail poverty and raise the level of employment. In 2012, the DTI initiated a ten-year Incubation Support Programme (ISP). The SEDA Annual Report (2021/2022:12 states that there are100 business incubators across South Africa.

Rogerson (2017:8) asserts that in South Africa, more attention has been given to agricultural and manufacturing incubators and calls on policymakers to shift their attention to services incubators as well.

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Similarly, Schutte and Direng (2019:14) argue that business incubation in Botswana is still in its infancy. Despite the roles they play as catalysts for adopting the 4IR and motivating diversification (Lyken-Segosebe, Montshiwa, Kenewang & Mogotsi 2020:13); economic instrument used to quicken the growth and success of start-ups (Temtime, 2004:30), Temtime and Pansiri (2005:34), purport that business incubation was given little attention in Botswana. In 2004, in her review on business incubation in Botswana, Temtime identified the need for the government to establish Business Incubation Programmes (BIPs). During the same year, Local Enterprise Authority (LEA) was established through the Small Business Act of 2004, Chapter 43:10 of the Laws of Botswana, with the mandate of developing entrepreneurship and enterprises in Botswana (LEA, 2004). In July 2007, LEA engaged consultants to establish an operational model for their prospective business incubators. Currently, LEA has established the following five business incubators: Pilane Multi-Sector Incubator in 2009, Gaborone Leather Industries Incubator in 2010, Francistown Industrial Business Incubator in 2011, Glen Valley Horticulture Incubator in 2011 and Kutla Incubation Centre in 2017, (LEA, 2023). The LEA incubation programme is fully supported by the Botswana Government.

Business incubators in Botswana and South Africa, just as any other incubators across the globe, face challenges, the major challenge being the difficulty to diversify into different areas. Other challenges include limited production space, lack of funding, lack of entrepreneurial skills and advanced technological facilities (Lose & Mapuranga 2022:42; Lose & Tengeh 2015:14354).

b) Policies and programmes

The age of a business is positively related to business success, which means that those firms that have been in existence for longer periods are more likely to succeed than start-ups. Therefore, programmes and policies for promoting start-up ecosystems in Botswana and South Africa need to focus more on firms that are in the start-up phase and early stages of operation. The implication is that more government support should target start-ups and firms at their early stages of operation. According to Skawińska

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and Zalewski (2020:2); Mazanai and Fatoki (2012:40), start-ups contribute to the self-sustainability of the economy, hence it is crucial to promote their survival and growth. Anwana and Anwana (2020:11); Mazanai and Fatoki (2012:40) advocate a partnership between the government and the private sector institutions, arguing that it can bolster access to finance for start-ups through the provision of business development services (BDS).

Kaplan (2021:259); Sriram and Mersha (2010:268) affirm, that government policy in South Africa contributes significantly to the promotion of entrepreneurship. This is supported by Schutte and Barbeau (2022:2); Buys and Mbewana (2007:358) who argue that government policies should create and sustain business environments suitable for ecosystems. In addition, the government must formulate policies that widen access to finance, training and business networks (Moise, Khoase & Ndayizigamiye 2019:110; Tengeh & Nkem, 2017:14).

The South African government plays a critical role in moulding the present and future of the SME sector. A shift in the national policy after 1994 (the post-apartheid era) has brought about changes in the governance of the SME sector. For example, the government established Business Development Services (BDS) that catered for SME needs (Mazanai & Fatoki, 2012:31). However, they claim that the start-ups are still experiencing challenges in access to finance even after the establishment of the BDS. In their study, Pretorius and Shaw (2004:222) assert that the South African government not only formulated the policies but also implemented a strategy for developing and promoting SMMEs. According to Mazanai and Fatoki (2012:31), government support is justified to help SMEs access external finance; hence, BDS plays a key role in increasing access to finance by start-ups in South Africa. They emphasise that the government needs to support start-ups to ensure more sustained socio-economic development.

Pansiri and Yalala (2017:74) argue that most of the policies in Botswana were directed enhancing the survival and profitability of start-ups. Despite the favourable policies and access to necessary requirements such as access to finance, mentoring, start-ups in

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Botswana lack the skills to leverage these opportunities Nthubu (2021:754). To close this gap, Nthubu, Perez, Richards and Cruickshank (2022: 730) recommends the use of ecosystem visualisation. In addition, Nthubu (2021:754) recommends the exploration of new strategies for future ecosystems.

2.5.3 Academic institutions

Academic institutions are shifting towards resource, knowledge and expertise sharing in the ecosystem (Gastaldi & Corso 2016:1). They are known to provide skills and competences for the start-ups as well as collaborate with them to undertake research in the critical areas that affect the sustainability of the ecosystems. This collaboration extends to the industry to ensure that the academic institutions undertake the relevant "ecosystem gap analysis" (Hillemane 2020:1180) and provide industry relevant skills and competences. In the absence of the ecosystem framework (Wright, Siegel & Mustar 2017:909) suggested a framework that facilitated student start-ups, a continuum involving accelarators and pre- accelerator, variety of start-ups, investors, support actors, academic institution environment and how they evolve over time.

2.6 Challenges of start-ups

Despite the support given by the governments of Botswana and South Africa, start-ups continue to experience limited growth. In South Africa, a high percentage (75%) of start-ups fails before they become established businesses (Fatoki and Odeyemi, 2010:128); Ngek & Smit, 2013:3044). This is considered one of the highest failure rates in the world. Additionally, Fatoki and Garwe (2010:730) argue that start-ups fail to move from the first stage to the other stages of development. During their learning phase, start-ups tend to be more vulnerable (Mead and Liedholm, 1998:64) and are faced with high attrition rates (Mead, 1994: 1892). Most start-up closures occur in the initial stages of a firm's existence. In Botswana, over 50% of the closures had taken place within the first three years of a start-up (Mead and Liedholm, 1998:65).

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Although there is a gap in the literature about the start-up challenges in Botswana and South Africa, a substantive study has been done in the areas of micro, small and medium scale enterprises. This study has highlighted some of the challenges experienced by small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the two countries in question. Orford, Wood, Fisher, Herrington and Segal (2004:31) rated a lack of education and training as the most reported contributing factor to start-up failure in South Africa, followed by a lack of financial support (Anwana & Anwana 2020:1). They are supported by Pretorius and Shaw (2004:223), Fatoki (2014:980), Tengeh and Nkem (2017:2) and Meyer and Meyer (2017:131). The other challenges are inadequate marketing skills and a lack of access to markets (Scheers, 2018:29; Meyer & Meyer, 2017:131), poor infrastructure and lack of business skills (Bamata & Phiri 2022:112; Ramukumba, 2014:24; Meyer & Meyer, 2017:130, 131), crime and corruption (Fatoki & Garwe, 2010:732; Meyer & Meyer, 2017:131) and networking (Fatoki & Garwe, 2010:731).

In the case of Botswana, the following SME challenges have been identified: (1) limited knowledge of the planning process and the size of the business (Majama & Magang, 2017:79). (2) Limited marketing skills and limitation of business networks (Nkwe, 2012: 34; Hendrawan, Sucahyowati & Cahyandi, 2018:210). (3) Lack of finance or inadequate access to financial support (Molefhi 201911; Mutoko & Kapunda, 2017:2). (4) Competition from established businesses and lack of innovation and creativity (Monyake *et al.* 2020:1869; Nkwe, 2012:34; Sekonopo, Mapfaira, Moalosi, & Molwane, 2017:111). (5) Inadequate training in running the business or failure to integrate coaching (Schutte & Direng 2019:14; Hendrawan *et.al*. 2018:210). Botswana and South Africa have established measures to counteract the start-up challenges.

The section that follows outlines the relationship between the three constructs under study: business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation, and how they contribute to start-up growth and success.

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2.7 Relationships among constructs

Reviewed literature in sections 2.7.1, 2.7.2 and 2.7.3 confirms the relationships between the constructs: Business networks and innovation, business networks and entrepreneurial branding and innovation and entrepreneurial branding. However, there is limited literature the relationship between the three constructs combined.

2.71 Business networks and innovation

Networking and innovation have been studied across various social science fields (Pittaway, Robertson, Munir, Denyer & Neely 2004: 142) Business networks have been linked to innovations (Öberga 2018:124) Innovation is said to enhance business relationships among startups (La Rocca & Snehota 2014:441) on the hand business networks may lead to better innovation practices (Belso-Martínez, Mas-Verdu & Chinchilla-Mira 2020:73), hence start-ups that cannot keep up with the innovation process can make up for this by engaging in business networks for shared resources (Hilmersson & Hilmersson 2021:43).

2.7.2 Business networks and entrepreneurial branding

There is limited research done on branding and business networks particularly on start-ups (Koporcic & Tornroos 2019:1681; Koporcic 2017:i; Mäläskä, Saraniemi & Tähtinen 2011:1144). Business network relationships however, has been said to have a positive influence on the start-up brand image (Morrish & Earl 2021:7; Iglesias, Landgraf, Ind, Markovicm & Koporcic 2020:1; Mäläskä *et al.* 2011:1144).

2.7.3 Entrepreneurial branding and innovation

The relationship between branding and innovation dates back to the stone age. Innovation, entrepreneurship and marketing and or branding literature suggest a link between branding and innovation. Drucker (1954:39) purport that the two basic functions of a business enterprises is marketing and innovation. The two concepts are

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perceived as the two sides of a coin and are supported by researchers: brands need innovation (Abbing & van Gessel 2008:52); innovation drives marketing practices (Purchase & Volery 2020:783). There is a strong relationship between innovation, branding and start-up performance (Castaldi, Block & Flikkema, 2020:8; Šupín, Corejov, Repková-Štofková, Šupínová, Štofková & Olšiaková 2021:8). Star-ups use Innovation to improve market performance (Lin, Ho, Sambasivan,Yip & Mohamed 2021:10). A positive link between branding and innovation affords start-ups a better chance to identify and mitigate various managerial problems (Lin, Ho, Sambasivan,Yip & Mohamed 2021:12).

2.8 Summary

Although start-ups are faced with the risk of collapsing in the early stages of their formation, new start-ups are being established around the world. Literature indicates that measures are being developed to mitigate the challenges faced by start-ups, such as empowering them with entrepreneurial skills and supporting them with incubation through the start-up ecosystems. Due to their significant contribution to economic growth, start-ups continue to be recognised and supported by governments through policies that promote entrepreneurship. Research reveals little literature on start-ups in Botswana and South Africa, however, which is one reason why this study intends to contribute to new knowledge on start-ups. The chapter that follows reviews the literature on the three strategies in question—namely, business networks, entrepreneurial branding, and innovation—to measure their contribution to the success of start-ups.

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Chapter 3: Business Networks, Entrepreneurial Branding and Innovation

3.1 Introduction

This section reviews the literature on the three strategies to be explored in the study, namely business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation and their contribution to start-up success. The review of business networks assumes a funnel approach in that it begins with a review of the literature concerning global business networks, with a focus on Europe, the USA, Australia and China, before reviewing the literature on Africa, particularly the Sub-Saharan region, finally, narrowing down to focus on Botswana and South Africa. Research on entrepreneurial branding follows, covering components of branding such as brand creation, brand familiarity, brand equity, brand identity, brand success and corporate branding. The chapter concludes with a review of literature on innovation, with the emphasis on business models innovation, artificial intelligence and the 4IR.

3.2 The Role of Business Networks

Start-ups are faced with tough competition from existing enterprises. Research has shown that only a few of them are able to survive the competition, hence they tend to seek network collaboration with existing enterprises (Huang, Lai & Lo, 2012:316). Extensive research has proved that one of the factors that lead to start-up failure is limited resources. In support of this finding, Aaboen, Dubois and Lind (2011:42) and Usman and Vanhaverbeke, (2016:172,) assert that the newness of a start-up implies limited resources. Therefore, start-ups should preserve the limited resources they have or can have access to, since resources are critical for their survival (Aspelund, Berg-Utby & Skjevda, 2005:1337). Start-ups establish business networks to pool strategic resources and strengthen their competitiveness in order to build a greater market share, (Håkansson & Ford, 2002:134), develop innovations, break into new markets (Wegner, Costa e Silva & De Rossi, 2018:27), create, tap into and share knowledge

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and information with stakeholders (Van Heck & Vervest, 2007:30; Håkansson & Ford, 2002:134; Heidari, Yazdani, Saghafi & Jalilvand, 2018:677), and strengthen the connections of participating stakeholders in an effort to build more sustainable and successful start-ups (Albrecht, 2013:642).

Through collaboration start-ups can positively contribute to enhanced policies and better methods of governance, leading to sustainable development projects (Heidari *et al.*, 2018:677).

According to Wegner, Costa e Silva and De Rossi (2018:27), business networks are described as a key organisational strategy enterprise should employ to develop innovations and access local and international new markets. Brown, Mawson and Rowe (2019:6) describe business networks as dynamic and having a focus on why and how relationships change.

As indicated earlier in Chapter 1, Brass *et al*. (2004:795) define a network as a set of nodes and the set of ties representing some relationship, or lack of relationship, between the nodes. Nodes are actors such as individuals, people in businesses or markets, work units, organisations such as businesses and associations (Borgatti, Mehra, Brass and Labianca, 2009:893). They are supported by Kilkenny and Fuller-Love (2014:1) who define a business network as a group of people or businesses with whom a start-up or start-up owner has a relationship.

Kilkenny and Fuller-Love (2014:2) and Brown *et al.* (2019:5) classify networks into social networks (also referred to as informal networks) and business networks (also referred to as industrial networks). According to Ajumobi and Kyobe (2016:36), most network researchers adopted the social network theory. A social network is “a set of socially relevant nodes connected by one or more relations” (Marin & Wellman, 2009:2). Social networks are beneficial because they influence the entrepreneur, promote innovation and the success of the business, and enhance the efficiency of the start-up (Lewrick, Raeside & Peisl, 2007:39). According to Jensen and Koenig (2002:1045), social networks impact entrepreneurship by way of the resources they

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give access to. This can be achieved through weak or strong ties. Strong ties give access to motivational resources while weak ties give access to information resources.

Business networks are said to be progressive in that they are continuously being created, enhanced and maintained (Slotte-Kock & Coviello, 2010: 44). Halinen and Törnroos (2005) argue that business networks have evolved in form, number and complexity, changes brought about by globalisation, technological innovation, information technology and the surge in the value of knowledge. The sections that follow highlights the roles of business networks perceived at global level, at regional level and within the countries under study. The roles tend to be more similar across the globe.

3.2.1 Global Business Networks

Due to the globalisation of the world economy, multinational companies have been overtaken by global business networks (Brondoni, 2014: 11). This move is characterised by vertical specialisation and various forms of collaboration in both inter-firm and intra-firm arrangements. Global business networks lessen barriers to markets and motivate effective communication, the exchange of ideas and a standardised way of doing business (Canegrati, 2009:40). In the global arena, networking is vital for start-ups to reach out to potential customers, and access government support availed through government agencies (Minai, Ibrahim & Kheng, 2012:180).

In addition, business networks serve as a link between various businesses. In cases where the networks were established by governments, there tend to be fewer social linkages within them (Farr-Wharton & Brunetto, 2007:190). In Europe and Australia, business networks are essential for opportunity recognition, gaining access to scarce important information and advice, and start-up survival (Ardichvilia, Cardozob & Ray, 2000:115; Löfsten, 2016:335). Successful networking benefits include increased productivity and profitability, increased innovation diffusion, and the establishment of a suitable market environment that facilitates growth in exports (Farr-Wharton & Brunetto, 2006:188). In the USA, business networks facilitate information sharing and business-

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development services, including policy advice and advocacy with emphasis placed on the incubators (Hess & Sudibjo, 2018:24).

Chinese businesses are increasing their global networking and knowledge acquisition activities across the world. Their leading global mind-set and international entrepreneurial orientation are said to play a vital role in the growth of these global networks (Lin, Cao & Cottam, 2019:449). Global Chinese business networks are known to be an engine of growth for local economies in Southeast Asia and China region (Wu & Choi, 2004:325). According to Brautigam (2003:447), Chinese business networks, popularly known as the 'flying geese', are regarded as key players in the industrial dynamism in the Eastern and South-eastern part of Asia. These networks encouraged the spread of manufacturing among the regional member states such as India, South and North Korea, Japan and Taiwan. Brautigam (2003:451) emphasises that networks were the fundamental means through which Chinese and Indian business groups could have access to resources such as financial assistance, innovative ideas and global markets. Brautigam (2003:451) further argues that in Sub-Saharan Africa the entrepreneurial networks and clusters have not been able to match the strong Asian 'flying geese' industrial dispersion; they have been able to make their mark in the survival of businesses.

3.2.2 Business Networks in Africa

Entrepreneurial business networks are one of the crucial resources that allow small businesses in Africa to flourish and be competitive (Abbas, Raza, Nurunnabi, Minai & Bano, 2019:2). Like their counterparts in developed economies, African business networks provide vital information and other resources to businesses (Boafo, Owusu & Guiderdoni-Jourdain, 2022:622). They also build trust and stimulate business activities (Mehta, Maretzki & Semali, 2011:5379); they develop the market, reduce transaction costs, and identify and deal with market cheats. Networks in Africa thus play a positive role in market development (Fafchamps,1999:34). However, Brautigam (2003:451) laments that little attention has been paid to business networks in the Sub-Saharan Africa region with regard to the impact the Chinese business networks have on Sub-

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Saharan Africa industrial development or to how the Chinese business networks connect with Sub Saharan Africa business networks.

3.2.3 Business Networks in Botswana and South Africa

In a study in Botswana, Ntseane (2004:39) pointed out that women in Botswana use networks as a success mechanism. To overcome the challenges that hinder success, women formed pressure groups and non-competitive networks, which are described as reliance on one another for business and social support. Ntseane (2004;41) affirms that some of the women took part in the regional and global business networks. This implies that regional networks are vital for the security of women businesses. Additionally, they assist women to open bank accounts in foreign countries. Rudhumbu, Du Plessis and Maphosa (2020:10) lament that the paucity of business networks in Botswana has a significant negative effect on the success of women entrepreneurs. There is limited research regarding business networks in South Africa, however.

Significant evidence points out that in many other developing countries, on the other hand, managing business networks is critical for business growth and profitability (Fafchamps, 1999:6). It is therefore critical to ensure that the relationships developed through networks are managed and sustained.

3.2.4 Business networks and incubators

Empirical literature has outlined the various benefits of incubators. Mas-Verdu, Ribeiro-Soriano and Roig-Tierno (2015:793) point out that incubators may not warrant start-up success; however, they avail services that will provide assistance for the future advancement of the start-ups (Sousa, Meneses, Ribeiro & Alves, 2018:823). The critical aspects of incubators are their ability to provide a networking benefit (Löfsten, 2015:17) remove resources gaps (Yusubova, Andries, & Clarysse, 2019:803), provide advice and support to enable start-ups to stand out among others in relation to business and innovation performance (Löfsten, 2015:17) and stimulate the establishment of an

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innovative business climate (Lamine, Mian, Fayolle, Wright, Klofsten & Etzkowitz 2018:1122).

Barbero, Casillas, Wright and Garcia (2014: 153) distinguish between for profit incubators (they make a profit from getting involved with the start-ups) and not for profit or public incubators (their main aim is to lower the cost of starting up and relieve start-ups from the financial burden). They classify incubators into four broad categories: (1) basic research incubator (offered by research institutions with the main aim of promoting entrepreneurial research); (2) private incubator (provides resources for the start-ups, with the intention to have a financial gain); (3) university business incubator (supports technology-oriented start-ups (Cooper, Hamel & Connaughton, 2012:434); promotes entrepreneurship (McAdam & Marlow, 2008:236); research commercialisation (Ng, Chen, Wong & Chandran, 2019:465); and lastly, (4) economic development incubators (lowers the economic inequality among start-ups (Aernoudt, 2004:127). In all these different kinds of incubation, branding is regarded as a vital component that enhances the relationship between the start-up and the external environment (Liana, Aquinia, Andraini & Mariana, 2018:130). Sá and Lee (2012:243) support management of relationships. They assert that incubators provide business networking opportunities for businesses to collaborate with their external and internal stakeholders.

3.2.5 Managing Relationships

Håkansson (1987) cited in Rittera, Wilkinson and Johnston (2004:17), affirm that relationships are vital resources that start-ups hold because they allow access to knowledge, markets and other networks. In addition relationships developed through collaboration and social networking could provide start-ups access social capital (Karani & Mshenga 2021:223). Network relationships allow start-ups to use embedded connections within the networks to gain an economic advantage (Lin and Lin, 2016:1783). The strength of an enterprise lies in how it connects with other business entities, and this implies that it is important for enterprises to manage business and network relationships (Rittera *et al*., 2004:175). However, Spekman, Isabella and

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MacAvoy (1999) cited in Rittera *et al*. (2004:175) contend that relationships are not easy to manage. Since enterprises are occasionally in control of these relationships, they tend to be controlled and influenced by the relationships around them; it is therefore a challenge for enterprises to implement their strategies. However, older start-ups who have more channels of networks tend to be less affected (Gueguen, Delanoë-Gueguen & Lechner 2021:131). Etemad, Wright, and Dana (2001:497) warn that, over and above the managers' internal competencies, there is the need to create new strategies to keep up with network capabilities.

Rittera, Wilkinson and Johnston (2004:175) argue that the dyadic activities within the network form part of the continuous interactions and relationships. This implies that networks are dynamic instead of static. According to Rittera *et al.* (2004:175), the core competence of a business is its ability to establish and maintain successful relationships with other businesses. The business' ability or disability to manage these relationships can positively or negatively affect its performance and growth (Abrahamsen, Henneberg, Huemer, & Naudé, 2016:108). Rittera and Gemunden (2003:746; Marcon & Ribeiro 2021:1) emphasise the importance of developing competence in the management of business networks. Firstly, it facilitates the development and utilisation of the relationships among enterprises, and this brings about the intertwined use of technology amidst the network, which leads to innovation success. Secondly, enterprises that have developed a greater network competence tend to be more realistic and market-oriented and to present an advanced relationship marketing strategy for products and services. Thirdly, network-competent oriented enterprises are assumed to also develop a high competence in market knowledge.

Researchers have been observing relationships between businesses for decades. Some of the things they have established are that: to develop their networks, start-ups must learn to effectively manage their relationships (Ribeiro-Soriano & Pineiro-Chousa 2021:110); relationships can be complex (Martin-Rios & Erhardt, 2017:302), and long term, and they result from the way businesses interact with each other. To understand a relationship one has to make reference to a wider network in terms of how the

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relationship has been maintained in the past, lesson learned from past relationships, the current status of the relationship, their expectation for future interactions, and their interactions with a wider network they are not related to (Håkansson & Ford, 2002:134).

Business networks are categorised into formal and informal networks (Ajumobi & Kyobe, 2016:35). Informal networks are usually confined to business partners, family and personal relationships and may allow flexible arrangements while formal networks, include stakeholders such as financiers and suppliers have terms and agreements that are normally difficult to modify (Ajumobi & Kyobe, 2016:35; Terman, Feiock & Youm 2020:41). Martin-Rios and Erhardt (2017:286) argue that substantive research has been done on formal networks while limited research has been devoted to informal networks.

According to Rittera *et al.* (2004:175), an enterprise is part of the business and non-business network of relationships and these relationships can enhance or cripple its performance. They look at relationships from the internal and external strategic point of view. Wu, Wang & Yu (2020:23), calls for the strengthening of both internal and external networks. Rittera *et al.* (2004) argue that the management of networks implies connecting the internal and external network of relationships. Building strong internal or external business networks is vital for start-ups and it leads to better performance (Smyrnios 2021:359). The strong internal networks allow the start-up to adopt innovative strategies. On the other hand, strong external networks allow start-ups to develop and manage relationships with relevant stakeholders and intensify external stakeholder understanding of the business' innovative strategies (Bresciani & Ferraris, 2016:122; Jafari-Sadeghi, Dutta, Ferraris & Del Giudice 2020:1070). The internal strategic setup of an enterprise forms a network of relationships among employees, departments and units that enables the implementation of its strategies. It is therefore necessary to strengthen the internal communication structure as it is vital for the advancement of the enterprise's ability to network. They are supported by Jaworski and Kohli (1993: 65), who assert that effective coordination of the inter- functional

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communication plays an integral part in market orientation. Managing relationships is something intangible, however it can be tangible if linked to entrepreneurial branding.

3.3 Entrepreneurial branding

The branding of small businesses has been an area of interest for researchers for decades. Branding is no longer perceived as a strategy exclusive to large enterprises. In fact the branding strategy for both small and large enterprises have been proposed by some researchers (Keller, 1998;301; Wong & Merrilees, 2005:155; Ojasalo, Na¨tti, & Olkkonen, 2008:93; Flikkema, Castaldi, de Man & Seip, 2019:1341) Furthermore, several researchers have made calls for start-ups to be the focus of brand studies on reputation building, corporate branding, competitive strategy and brand orientation (Petkova, Rindova & Gupta, 2008:321; Rode & Vallaster, 2005:122; Abimbola, 2001:99; Wong & Merrilees, 2005:160; Anees-ur-Rehman, Wong & Sultan, 2018:303). Bresciani and Eppler (2010:1) argue that branding is a vital activity for the successful establishment of a start-up. It facilitates the acquisition and retention of customers and helps build start-up reputation. It is therefore critical for start-ups to invest in branding. Merrilees (2007:403) cautions that small businesses lack understanding of the real meaning of branding, however; in fact, they may even fail to that they are a brand. This study therefore investigated entrepreneurial branding as a strategy for determining the success of start-ups. Ruzzier and Ruzzier (2015:1) argue that branding is no longer perceived as a marketing strategy for large enterprises only; it is also recognized with successful startups. Furthermore, Erenkol and Öztaş (2015:1144) describe branding as a vital competition tool that can positively impact on the competence of the enterprise's marketing efforts. Although Erenkol and Öztaş support the use of a branding strategy by start-ups, Sakaya (2019:62) warns of the challenge that comes with start-ups embracing branding. Sakaya argues that entrepreneurs perceive branding as complicated since they possess limited knowledge on the subject, and those with the knowhow are unable to apply the knowledge appropriately.

Entrepreneurial branding research is still in its infancy (Boyle, 2003:79; Bresciani & Eppler 2010:356). Previous research has suggested three dimensions to

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entrepreneurial branding. These are: product dimension, founder/leader dimension and organisation dimension (Delaperche, 2018:48). According to Peters, Pfurtscheller, Wong, and Kraus (2010:1), entrepreneurial branding is popular among start-ups where a brand is associated with the enterprise's reputation. Peters *et al*. (2010:1) describe entrepreneurial branding as "corporate branding for entrepreneurial, i.e., innovation- or growth-oriented, small enterprises".

3.3.1 Creating/building a brand

Creating a brand far exceeds the mere development of a product or service; it is about being unique and creating value (Shariq, 2018:316). Erenkol and Öztaş (2015:1139) maintain that creating unique brands that stand out among the competitors and create awareness among the consumers leads to the success of an enterprise. If an enterprise is guided by values that facilitate entrepreneurial behaviour, it may be able to develop a unique corporate brand, and if both the internal and external stakeholders have the same perception about the developed brand, it is perceived as authentic (Vallaster & Kraus, 2011:372). Over the last decade, branding researchers have developed interest on authenticity. It is considered as a tool that is perceived to help enterprises regain trust and increase credibility (Vallaster & Kraus, 2011: 370). They further argue that ‘'authenticity is about making the diverse stakeholder groups experience what is promised". However, as the enterprise continues to grow, it is faced with greater challenges of sustaining the brand authenticity.

The building of brands entails managing the marketing elements implicit in the marketing strategy. A quality marketing plan leads to a positive brand equity and brand value (Shariq, 2018:313). Brand value is described as the capability of brands to generate profits (Kapferer, 2004:14). Brand equity may be displayed through customers' "perception about the brand, as well as the value the brand brings to start-up" (Shariq, 2018:317).

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3.3.2 Brand equity

Julio Rionaldo (2021:2) relates brand equity to the customer's memory. They are supported by Kegoro and Justus (2020:162), who purport that a strong brand cannot be separated from the customer's mind heart and spirit. Eggers, Eggers and Kraus (2016:428), on the other hand relate brand equity to marketing outcomes generated by the brand name, such as corporate image, a better product and lower price sensitivity by consumers. They are supported by Aaker (1992:28); Ghelichkhan, Nematizaden, Saeddnia and Nourbakhsh (2020:160), who underpins brand equity to, brand awareness, brand familiarity, brand quality, brand performance, brand association, brand uniqueness, brand image and brand loyalty.

Ederm and Swait (1998:135) claim that there is a need to investigate the role of brands as key players in a market that is characterised by asymmetric and imperfect information. Although it can be hypothesised that uncertainty is high among start-ups, Eggers *et al.* (2016:439) note that, on the bright side, their newness can improve their brand perception as they are contemporary and innovative. Both the internal and external stakeholders tend to build a strong bond with brand if it conforms or excedd their expectation (Kegoro & Justus 2020:162). Branding researchers advocate a balanced approach to brand equity between the internal and external stakeholders. Ruzzier and Ruzzier (2015:1) argue that the concept of a balanced approach assumes a balanced view of both the internal and external stakeholders. The internal stakeholders assume a brand identity approach while the external stakeholders assume a brand equity approach (Ruzzier & Ruzzier, 2015:70). For example, presenting the enterprise management team to the customer has proved to increase the choice probability of the product (Eggers *et al.,* 2016:439). In addition, Keller (1993:9) explains that brand equity is motivated by a combination of brand familiarity and effective brand association. Adoption of brand familiarity by both the internal and external stakeholders makes brand familiarity more effective.

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3.3.2.1 Brand Familiarity

Due to the newness of the businesses, start-up brands face challenges in the market. The most common ones are the unfamiliarity of the brand among customers and the lack of resources to address the challenges they face. Unfamiliarity with the brand causes tremendous customer uncertainty. Eggers *et al.* (2016:429) argue that if the perception of a customer about the brand is uncertain, they are less likely to make a purchasing decision. If start-ups want to increase the likelihood of a purchasing decision, they must increase familiarity and boost customer knowledge, and this will in turn reduce uncertainty. Similarly, Aldrich and Fiol (1994:650) emphasise the importance of developing brand familiarity among customers. According to Delaperche (2018:48), familiarity with the brand builds understanding and enhances healthy relationships between the start-up and the customers. Eggers *et al*. (2016:428) suggest that for start-ups to build their brands and to lower uncertainty, they need to provide vital information about the brand to the buyer since buyers use available information to make a purchasing decision. One of the deterrents to purchase may be the newness of the enterprise; hence, start-ups must learn to convey brand identity and meanings to the new customers. Sundaram (1999:665) therefore, asserts that brand familiarity leads to brand success.

3.3.4 Brand success

Brand researchers have developed a keen interest in the evaluation of brand success over the years, but they differ on suitable criteria for brand success. Additionally, there is uncertainty surrounding the difference between brand strategy and brand success (Chematony, Rile & Harris, 1998:778). According to Sakaya (2019:62), the following factors have a positive influence on start-up brand success: the flow of information, the branding strategy and the financial resources. To promote brand success, Sakaya proposes that entrepreneurs should create brand preference by investing in shifting the consumer perception towards their brands. It is critical for entrepreneurs to build strong brands that convey unique and authentic values and can meet the customers' daily expectations. Furthermore, entrepreneurs should use integrated marketing

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communication to communicate the start-up brand value as it is perceived to be a more powerful strategy than the traditional ones. In addition, enterprises should use corporate branding as a vital tool to improve their performance (Jones, 2010:45).

3.3.5 Corporate branding

Although corporate branding has been researched for decades, Mingione and Abratt (2020:1) argue that limited research has been done on start-up corporate brands. Corporate branding is a strategy that enterprises use to market all their products and services in one single brand, and it is pertinent to those who wish to penetrate diverse markets using the image of the main brand (Erenkol & Öztaş, 2015:1143). The advantage of using corporate branding as a strategy is that it reduces the marketing costs of advertising each individual product or service (Kotler & Keller, 2012: 283; Erenkol & Öztaş, 2015:1144). Furthermore, and as the enterprise becomes popular in the market, it attracts quality employees (Banerjee, Saini & Kalyanaram 2020:173) and experiences growth in the sale of new products (Kotler & Keller, 2012:283).

There are some disadvantages of corporate branding that need to be noted. Erenkol and Öztaş (2015:1144) highlight three of them, namely, 1. Any mistake associated with a product or service will tarnish the image of the enterprise as well as their other products and services. 2. Managing the brand is not an easy job and 3. Using the same brand overly may become monotonous for customers and may end up lowering the brand meaning.

Ajike, Kabuoh, and Ogbuanu (2015:19) define corporate branding as “the process to maintain, continue and create a positive corporate reputation and associations using the power of a brand, which in return is a promise to the stakeholder and consumer in particular at which the brand has formed a set of perceptions about a product, service or business”. Vallaster and Kraus (2011:370) describe a corporate brand as “a mechanism that serves both as an orientation towards strategically managing the opportunities of the marketplace as well as towards integrating fragmented business decisions”.

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A corporate brand leans on a focal set of values that drive enterprise activities and decisions (Fisher-Buttinger & Vallaster, 2008) cited in Vallaster & Kraus (2011:372). This implies that a corporate brand harmonises the enterprise's decisions and actions. The branding strategy creates value; therefore, it is a rational strategy for start-ups (Erenkol & Öztaş, 2015:1143). Values convey the personality, perception and the intent of the enterprise. They are perceived as the lifeblood of the enterprise that explains the ethical identity and the brand success (Ind, 1997, cited in Vallaster & Kraus (2011:370; Inglesias & Ind 2020:713). They further influence the way employees behave daily. Yang and Tan (2017:875) emphasise the use of innovation in corporate branding to maintain start-up competitiveness and sustainable development.

3.4 Innovation

Innovation has been a topic of interest for decades. Researchers from different fields such as economics, information technology, business management and education emphasise the importance of embracing innovation to have a competitive advantage. The reviewed literature is silent on the use of the business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation as strategies for start-up success. However, the conceptual framework proposes a model where innovation is at the centre of the other two strategies. Innovation is considered as the main determinant of start-up competitiveness and a vital contributor towards sustainable development (Yang and Tan, 2017:864).

Innovation is defined in various ways by different researchers. OECD/Eurostat (2005:34) defines it as a technologically new or technologically improved product, service, or process. Kuczmarski (1996:7) defines it as a mindset—a fresh way to ruminate about business strategies and processes that motivates businesses to focus on achieving their visions. It protects start-ups from competitors and helps them to secure a more stable position in the market (Bereznoi, 2014:15; Shqipe, Gadaf & Veland, 2013). Tohanean and Toma (2018:122) posit that innovation leads to value creation. Value creation is described as the start-up's endeavor to increase value (Chesbrough, Lettl & Ritter, 2018:4). In their attempt to increase value, the system

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they use is faced with radical changes that emerge from the market economy due to innovation (Halinena & Törnroos, 2005:1285).

Different scholars have created their own conceptions of innovation. According to AF Bureau (2020) innovation is categorised based on its impact on the market, cost and value proposition—described as a strategic tool used by start-ups to relay how they intend to provide value to their customers (Payne, Frow & Eggert, 2017:467). Hjalager (2010:1), on the other hand, classifies innovation into five categories, namely, product/service, process, managerial, marketing and institutional innovation. Meanwhile, Rothwell (1992:223) posits that industrial or technological innovation is a combination of organisational, management, production, process, and commercial/marketing innovation. Technological innovation is supported by governments across the globe through the provision of funding to reduce the cost of research and development (Nemet *et al.*, 2018:3) and to aid the implementation of policies that promote innovation (Schmidt & Sewerin, 2018:1).

Other researchers classify innovation as: entrepreneurial, administrative and technical. According to Guerrero and Urbano (2019:1348), the pioneer of entrepreneurial innovation is Joseph Schumpeter, who coined this theory in 1911. Entrepreneurial innovation focuses on radical innovation, and it is the source of competitive advantage (Autioa, Kenney, Mustar, Siegel & Wright, 2014:1099). Malerba and McKelvey (2020:517) define entrepreneurial innovation as start-ups that are innovative, whose activities have notable knowledge intensity, with innovative procedures and processes, and utilise innovative opportunities in different developing sectors and contexts.

For Damanpour, Szabat and Evan (1989:588C), innovation can either be administrative or technical. Administrative innovation occurs in the administrative section of the business and it affects the social procedures and processes concerned with the employees and their relationships. Technical innovation, on the other hand, occurs in the operative section of the business and is concerned with itsr technical procedures and processes. To heighten their performance level, Damanpour and Evan (1984:16)

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suggest that start-ups should adopt both the administrative and technical innovations instead of choosing one over the other.

3.4.1 Business Model Innovation

Blaug (1963:3) argues that, for the impact of innovation to be significant on the business output decision, it must operate at an increasing return to scale. In their quest to increase revenue and sales, businesses are moving away from product innovation to business model innovation. Foss and Saebi (2017:201) define this as "designed, novel, nontrivial changes to the key elements of a firm's business model and/or the architecture linking these elements." According to Chesbrough (2007:12), every business has a business model, whether they express it or not. The business model innovation, however, is not the responsibility of one person in the business (Chesbrough, 2007:16). This may pose a challenge for start-ups since often the business is the sole responsibility of the owner or manager. Chesbrough (2007:12) further claims that all businesses have a business innovation model gap. The gap, however, can be identified and analysed using a business model canvas approach (Mustaniroh, Prabaningtias & Citraresmi, 2020:2).

Business Model Canvas was coined by Österwalder in 2005 (Faganel, Biloslavo & Janeš, 2016:30). Österwalder's business model canvas provides insight into the building blocks of a basic business model. It is a blueprint that aids entrepreneurs to systematically create, design, and develop business models (Alberdi, 2023:2). The business model canvas also provides entrepreneurs with a clear understanding of business value creation and delivery coupled with the customer relationships, the creation procedure and the financial aspects (Berbegal-Mirabent & Trimi, 2012:456) as well as the value propositions (Sort & Nielsen, 2018:13).

A value proposition is described as "the marketing offers or value promise" created and communicated by a seller, with the intention to be accepted by a buyer (Ballantyne, Frow, Varey, Payne, 2010:203). Harvard Review (2006:2) classifies value proposition into three; namely,

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- all benefits (this is simply listing the benefits of their product to customers). The limitation of this approach is that managers can list benefits that do not add any value to their customers.

- favourable points of difference (suppliers make customers believe that their offer is better than the competitor's, the customers have an alternative, they are able to differentiate the competitor's products and make the best choice). The limitation of this approach is that suppliers can escalate points of difference even when they do not add value to the customer; and

- resonating focus (the buyer assumes that the supplier understands their needs and makes their value proposition superior as well as communicate the value proposition in a way that meets the buyer's priorities).

The business model canvas has been found to offer entrepreneurs an enhanced understanding of the company's value creation and delivery with the notion of value propositions at the very centre of the business model analysis. The objective of using the business model canvas and its structure of nine building blocks is to provide the user with a clear understanding of the company's uniqueness and motivate effective communication. This objective is what makes it a potentially helpful tool to entrepreneurs in their communication (Sort & Nielsen, 2018:13). It is also used to shape the business model processes and the business design processes (Lund and Nielsen, 2014). However, the business model canvas is not without limitations. Sort and Nielsen (2018:13) argue that some entrepreneurs find difficult to understand the concept of value and therefore fail to use the framework effectively. They further assert that the business model canvas is not a one size fits all. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that what works for one business can work the same for another.

Sosna, Nelly, Rodrı´guez and Velamuri (2010:384) argue that business innovation leaders go on to become global leaders. Organisations that adopt business model innovation are more likely to out-compete those who use the old business models.

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Business innovation is usually driven by a smart entrepreneurial idea, identifying the needs of a new market and satisfying them (Bereznoi, 2014:15). However, Sosna *et al.* (2010:384) assert that the sustainability of the business model is uncertain. Therefore businesses must innovate business models to motivate social and environmental sustainability (Bocken, Short, Rana & Evans, 2014:3) According to Toniolo, Masiero, Massaro and Bagnoli (2020:112), artificial intelligence (AI) is listed among critical enablers for creating sustainable business models.

3.4.2 Artificial Intelligence

A recent surge in research funding indicates an increasing interest in artificial intelligence (AI). The contributory factors to this interest are machine learning, data collection and computational capacity (Lovejoy, 2018:1). According to Cockburn, Henderson and Stern (2018:2), artificial intelligence has the potential to influence global economies, particularly in terms of the production and vast range of products and services, and the innovation process.

Ghosh, Chakraborty and Law, (2015:1) define AI as the "science of instilling intelligence in machines so that they are capable of doing tasks that traditionally require the human mind". Although the AI based systems are commended for efficiency and the reduction of repetition of human efforts, they are seen as lacking creativity in decision-making offered by humans (Gosh *et al.*, 2015:1). Numerous researches have proved that AI has been adopted by start-ups and other various sectors of the economy. For example, the military sector integrates AI in their defence systems (Mori, 2018:16); the digital technology sector uses AI for information processing (Sikdar, 2018:1); the health sector can use AI as diagnostic tools and monitoring patient progress (Lovejoy, 2018:1); business/commerce industry integrated AI in product customisation, target marketing, managing customer relationships, analysis of market trends, and web personalisation (Zhuo1, Larbi, & Addo, 2021:178).

The benefits of AI to startups and people are outlined by various researchers. Nadimpalli (2017a:1) asserts that AI has the capability to change people's lives. It

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promotes equal access to public services such as education, health, public transportation, and social assistance (Gibbons, 2021:25). In the healthcare industry, start-ups use AI to elevate physician and hospital staff performance by improving the quality of care provided, shortening the delivery time, and improving the value rendered (Makhni, Makhni & Ramkumar, 2020:2). It is also capable of identifying patients who are at risk, which adds value to the services patients get in hospitals. AI further aids physicians in making a correct diagnosis of the problem and aids their decision- making (Nadimpalli, 2017b:2). Similarly, start-ups in the transport and logistics industry also benefit from the use of AI. Shipping companies can weigh the cargo, load and offload a heavy weight of cargo, and monitor its movement across the world to ensure that they keep their promise to their customers. It also gives an opportunity to the customers to track their cargo online (Nadimpalli, 2017b:2). AI can also be used to address transportation challenges for start-ups such as increasing travel demand, safety concerns, wasted fuels as well as carbon dioxide emissions (Abduljabbar, Dia, Liyanage & Bagloee, 2019:17). In the finance and banking industry, start-ups use AI to monitor various activities such as fraud and they tend to save the banking industry a lot of money that would otherwise be lost through malpractice (Nadimpalli, 2017b:2).

Academics and practitioners perceive AI as the future of society (Sanjeev, Sharma, Deb & Maitra, 2020:1). Wirth (2018:435) describes it as the current massive game changer. Ma and Sun (2020:502) advise that academic researchers should take advantage of the rich data to heighten the industry's understanding in addressing emerging critical research issues through machine learning. Machine learning is described as a sub discipline of AI that uses statistical models and algorithms to predict data (Khanzode & Sarode, 2020:31).

AI in marketing is gaining momentum. This is motivated by the increase in the power of computing, the availability of big data, and the sky-rocketed use of machine learning algorithms and statistical models by start-ups (Huang & Rust, 2021:30). AI provides convenient and quicker shopping duration, after-sales service and builds the consumer-brand relationship (Jarek & Mazurek, 2019:52). Start-ups also uses drones and robots

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for shipping and delivery; reaches out to new customers and provides in-store personified assistance (Huang & Rust, 2021:30). AI in marketing also uses real time data to analyse and make quick responses to customer needs (Jarek & Mazurek, 2019:47).

Other benefits of AI to start-ups include standardisation of produce; that is, AI increases the chances of start-ups having identical products (Nadimpalli, 2017b:2). By controlling and optimizing the production processes, AI can minimise the amount of defects, thus reducing the cost of production (Zhuo *et al.*, 2021:178). This also increases customer loyalty and retention since customers understand that they will get the same quality, if not improved, every time they make a purchase. Start-ups in the mining industry also utilise AI in areas that are dangerous for humans, such as underground activities. They use vehicles and machines that are computer operated (Nadimpalli, 2017b:2). As Sahibuddin (2019:1) asserts, the development of AI is inseparable from the fourth industrial revolution.

3.4.3 The Fourth Industrial Revolution

The fourth industrial revolution (4IR) has significantly impacted start-ups across the globe to achieve exponential growth (Bowmaker-Falconer. & Herrington 2020:4). According to Yoon, Thin, Thao, Im and Gim (2018:109), 4IR, also referred to as the era of digital economy, is expected to make a huge impact on the global economies, causing greater economic inequalities. Hence, businesses, including start-ups must pay attention to the speed of changes brought about by 4IR. These changes are expected to influence a shift in power, wealth, and knowledge (Xu, David & Kim, 2018:90). Therefore, start-ups have to be 4IR-driven in order to keep up with the changes and prepare for the 5IR (Tshabalala & Beharry-Ramraj 2021:17214).

With the emerging 4IR business model innovation, one could clearly distinguish the difference between the way business is conducted and the way it was conducted during the 3rd industrial revolution (Yoon, *et al.*, 2018:109). Loureiro (2018:4) argues that 4IR brings about a number of technologies and functionalities that facilitate the business

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model innovation, such as biometric identification, 5G networks, block chain technologies, crypto currencies, autonomous vehicles and mixed reality. Start-ups therefore, have to identify their skills gaps and equip themselves with appropriate 21st-century skills and competences (Muriungi & Chumo 2024:1) in order to make quick and more frequent strategic decisions required by the 4IR (Lanteri 2021:273) .

The reviewed literature on AI, 4IR, business model supports the importance and the contribution of innovation on the success of start-ups. However, further investigations through survey and structured interviews in chapter 5 and 6 will be done to establish the use of the three strategies on start-up success.

3.5 Link among the constructs

The study used the theories of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation to formulate a conceptual framework that can be used to grow start-ups. Extensive research has been done to develop theories that support the success of start-ups; however, not much has been done to develop or suggest a theory that integrates these theories.

The Business network theory focuses on the how and the why of relationship change (Brown *et al.,* 2019:5). Its limitation is that it focuses on established firms and overlooks the initial aspect of networks that aid in reducing the resource limitation for start-ups (Brown *et al.,* 2019:6; Ford & Mouzas, 2013:436). But the concept of business networking is not yet well developed. Attempts have been made to list the different elements that may comprise business networking and to illustrate these with case studies. But as yet there is no coherent theoretical structure that could form a basis for the empirical investigation of business networking.

The study, therefore, suggested an overarching theory, or meta-theory, that encompasses the three suggested theories. Finkel (2014:7) defines meta-theory as “a set of assumptions that can be used to generate research questions and guide the development and refinement of theories. These assumptions are background beliefs

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that, for most purposes, are stipulated as true and that provide the foundation upon which scholars can construct theories".

Ritzer (1990:3) classifies meta-theory into three groups: (1) when the researcher's aim is to have profound knowledge about a theory; (2) when a researcher studies a theory in order to develop a new theory; and (3) when the researcher's aim is to develop an overarching perspective for the theory. This study used the theories of business networks, corporate branding and innovation to build up and suggest a framework that can be used to grow start-ups.

3.6 Summary

Start-ups engage in business networks to survive competition. Business networking is a strategy used by start-ups to develop innovation and access to both local and international markets. It has been embraced by different countries across the globe, including Botswana and South Africa. However, there is limited literature on start-up business networks in these two countries. Research has shown that entrepreneurial branding is vital to the success of startups. In addition, in this era of 4IR, innovation plays an important role in the growth and success of start-ups in particular. The chapter that follows presents the methodology of the study.

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Chapter 4: Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Chapter One provided the background of the study and its constructs. Chapters 2 and 3 set out a comprehensive literature review of the constructs, in the global context and in Africa, Botswana and South Africa. This chapter presents the research methodology of the study, which was influenced by the aim and objectives of the study. Firstly, the research aims and objectives are outlined and an explanation of how they were achieved is provided. The chapter then follows a research onion approach to outline the steps taken to solve the problem.

The onion framework reveals the paradigm used, strategies employed, the choices made by the researcher during the investigations and any significant factor to be considered during the research (Alturki, 2021:10). The research onion has six layers, namely the researcher philosophy, the approach to theory, research strategies, methodological choices, timelines and the data collection techniques and procedures, as illustrated in Figure 4.1.4 (Saunders *et al*. 2019:130).

4.1.1 Research Aim

The aim of this research was to examine the use of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation as strategies to engage for the success of start-ups. The focus fell on the views of the respondents about the three research aspects. Phase One dealt with the survey among respondents from Botswana and. Phase Two focused on structured interviews with participants in South Africa. The link between these two phases is discussed in 4.3.

4.1.2 Research Objectives

The following research objectives are aligned to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study:

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4.1.2.1 Primary research objective:

To determine the impact of business networks, entrepreneurial branding, innovation on the success of start-ups.

4.1.2.2 Secondary research objectives

1. To examine the effect of business networks on the success of start-ups

2. To examine the effect of entrepreneurial branding on the success of start-ups

3. To examine the effect of innovation on the success of start-ups.

4. To propose an innovative networked brands framework as a strategy for the success of start-ups in Botswana and South Africa.

The primary and secondary objectives measure the effect of success on start-ups as a result of employing the following constructs: business networks, entrepreneurial branding, and innovation. That is, it establishes the extent to which these three constructs contribute to the success of start-ups.

4.1.3 Operationalisation of constructs

The study used four constructs: business success (dependent variable), business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation (independent variables).

4.1.3.1 Business success

Preisendörfer, Bitz and Bezuidenhout (2012:7) argue that there are generally no acceptable and objective indicators of success; however, they settle for a definition that considers an established economic criterion, namely: survival and employment growth. Other researchers such as, Kee, Yusoff, and Khin (2019:46); Pattanayak and Kakati, (2021:4), assert that measuring start-up success is not easy; however, they

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recommend three ways of measuring start-up success: financial, non-financial or a mixture of both. This study has, therefore, defined start-up success as the ability of a firm to survive or to sustain in business based on financial or non-financial performance or a mixture of both for the past five years (Lussier & Pfeifer 2001:232; Kee, Yusoff & Khin 2019:46).

Start-up success is determined by growth, profitability and achievement of goals (Leković & Marić, 2015:9,11; Pattanayak & Kakati, 2021:4); number of employees (Guettabi, 2015:49); duration in business (Praag & Mirjam, 2003:3); birth of the start-up and time invested in the business (Van Gelderen, Thurik & Bosma, 2005:365). The indicators of start-up success recommended in this study were identified in the qualitative research findings and were presented in section .

4.1.3.2 Business networks

The business network literature review highlights three dimensions of business networks: the role of business networks, support and financing of networks through incubation and venture capital and the management of relationships. The focused of the study was on the role of business networks and management the network relationships.

4.1.3.3 Entrepreneurial branding

Branding is considered a costly endeavour for the start-ups since most of them are faced with a challenge of lack of resources. However, marketing researchers have recommended that start-ups must invest in branding and even develop and implement branding strategies to survive competition in the disruptive innovation market. Literature review highlighted several elements of entrepreneurial branding that promotes the success of start-ups such as creating a brand, brand equity, brand success and corporate branding. However, three elements that suited the study were selected, namely: creating a brand, brand equity and brand success.

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4.13.4 Innovation

The evolution of innovation was outlined in chapter 1. It started with Joseph Schumpeter in 1919 describing, innovation as a disruption existing economic system's equilibrium. To date the focus is on disruptive innovation theory discussed in section 1.14.4. The review of literature highlighted namely: the role of innovation, business model innovation, artificial intelligence and the fourth industrial revolution. The two elements that best suited the study were selected, namely: the role of innovation and innovation in the fourth industrial revolution (4IR).

4.1.4 The Research Onion

The study used the research onion by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019:130), as a framework to explain the methodologies employed. It moves from the outer layer to the inner layer, as outlined in Figure 4.1.4 (Saunders *et al*. 2019:130).

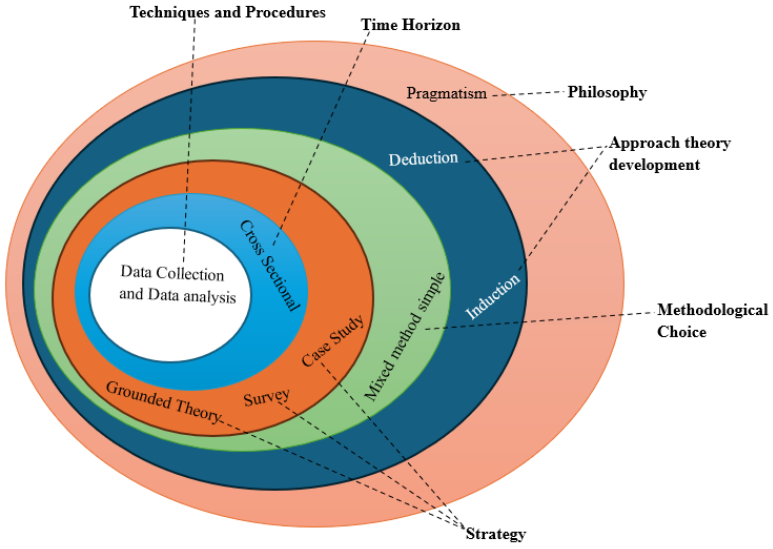

Figure 4.1.4: Research Onion

Source: adopted from Saunders *et al*. (2019:130)

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4.2 Research Philosophy

This part explains the philosophy that underpinned the study. Philosophy as explained by Watkins (1931:153) comprises three pillars: logic (studies the conceptual being), theoretical philosophy (studies the real being of things) and ethics (studies human acts). Chia (2003:2), on the other hand, posits a fourth pillar: epistemology (studies methods and standards by which reliable and verifiable knowledge is generated). Collis and Husssey (2014:43) argue that philosophy is a structure that directs how to conduct research based on ideas about reality and the nature of knowledge. It is "primarily concerned with rigorously establishing, regulating and improving the methods of knowledge-creation in all fields of intellectual endeavour…" (Chia, 2002:3). This view is supported by Žukauskas, Vveinhardt and Andriukaitienė (2018:1), who describe research philosophy as an organisation of the researcher's thoughts that produce new and reliable knowledge. It entails the choice of research strategy, formulating the problem and collecting, processing and analysing data. Philosophical assumptions shape the research practices and theoretical conclusions drawn on the basis of data collected and analysed (Bell *et al.,* 2019:25). Literature suggests five main research philosophies: the positivist, realistic, interpretivist, pragmatist and post-modernist. research philosophies (Saunders *et al.,* 2019:130; Bell *et al*., 2019:27-31; Žukauskas *et al.,* 2018:2).

In positivist philosophy the analysis of data is done objectively. That is, the researcher dissociates themselves, and works independently from their personal values (Žukauskas *et al.,* 2018:2). It adopts a deductive approach to data analysis by framing a hypothesis, collecting data and analysing them to test if the hypothesis is true or false (Bell *et al*., 2019:27-30). Realist philosophy analyses data objectively and subjectively. It combines the positivist and interpretivist principles. Contrary to the positivist philosophy, interpretivists analyse data subjectively. The researcher bases the analysis on their own interests. The post-modernist does not believe the concept of absolute truth; they argue that the findings must be based on conditions of the modern world. They are comfortable with getting different results from the same data analysed by

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different people (Farhan, 2019:3; Creswell & Poth, 2018:326). The pragmatists, on the other hand, believe that truth cannot be accessed from one scientific method; therefore, they advocate a combination of methods to help explain the participants' actual behaviour, the beliefs behind the behaviour, and the repercussions that may arise from different behaviours (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017:35). Since this study adopted a pragmatic philosophy, it assumed a mixed-methods approach.

Žukauskas *et al.* (2018:2) assert that the research paradigm assists in defining a research philosophy. For decades, researchers have attached different meanings to the use of paradigm in research. Some researchers embrace the paradigmatic approach to research and its inclusiveness of the research process; others perceive them as non-inclusive, while others perceive them as elusive (Freshwater & Cahill, 2013:3). According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:26), young researchers find it difficult to articulate and apply paradigms to their research proposals. However, they emphasise that researchers should clearly state the paradigm of their research in the proposal to give meaning to the data collected. The research paradigm defines the philosophical orientation of the researcher and influences the choices they make during the research process. Moreover, Shannon-Baker (2016:321) affirms that paradigms could be used to ground the research.

According to Morgan (2007:49), a paradigm is "a set of systems of beliefs and practices that influence how researchers select both the questions they study and methods that they use to study". Rehman and Alharthi (2016:51) define a paradigm as a "basic belief system and theoretical framework with assumptions about ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods. In other words, it is our way of understanding the reality of the world and studying it".

Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:26) and Rehman and Alharthi (2016:51), explains the four components of the research paradigm. First, ontology is concerned with the assumptions made by the researcher in order to believe that something is real. This helps to make sense of the data collected. Second, epistemology focuses on the nature of knowledge the researcher can acquire to widen and deepen their understanding of

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their research area. There are two ways of looking at knowledge: whether it can be acquired or experienced. Many tools of research are used to get both the inductive (subjective) and deductive (objective) evidence (Creswell & Poth, 2019:34). The methodology looks at the philosophies that guide the researcher on how to gather knowledge. This study used both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis to gather new knowledge. Lastly, methods are concerned with ways of collecting and analysing data. This study used survey and case study (structured interviews) data-gathering techniques. The analysis was both statistical and thematic.

4.3 Approach to theory development

The research approach refers to the strategy taken by the researcher in a study. According to Bell *et al*. (2019:19), the research strategy entails theory that informs the research design, the research questions and the research methods used to answer the research questions. There are three approaches used in research, namely deductive, inductive and abductive approaches.

The deductive approach is commonly used in quantitative research. Woiceshyn and Daellenbach (2018:186) and Bell *et al*. (2019:20) assert that deductive research takes place when the new theories and hypothesis are deduced from the empirical data. In other words, it verifies the existing theories (Dubois & Gadde, 2002:560). The weakness of deductive research is its dependency on a rigid logic of testing the theory and falsifying the hypothesis, as well as the challenge of deciding which theory to test (Bell *et al.,* 2018:24).

Inductive research, on the other hand, is commonly used in qualitative research and it takes the grounded theory approach. Here, the researcher uses the bottom-up approach of collecting and analysing data and coming up with a theory from the views of the participants. That is, the theory is developed from the qualitative data (Dubois & Gadde, 2002:560). Cresswell and Cresswell (2018: 248) define grounded theory as a qualitative strategy in which the researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants in a study. The

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weakness of inductive research is the argument that no amount of empirical data can enable theory building (Bell *et al.*, 2018:24).

The abductive approach is proposed as a solution to address the deductive and inductive limitations (Bell *et al*., 2018:24). It is grounded on the pragmatic viewpoint. It starts with a puzzle emanating from an empirical experience that is unaccounted for by the existing theories. The challenge with this approach is that it takes a much longer time to collect and analyse data (Saunders *et al.* 2019:157). This research assumed an abductive approach to theory development because it synchronises with pragmatist philosophy (Bel *et al*. 2019:24; Saunders *et al.* 2019:157). In addition, there is limited literature in the phenomenon under study, hence it is ideal and a more rewarding approach if used to explore new things (Dubois & Garde 2002:560). The study focused on different phases. Firstly, it reviewed the literature from around the globe, then it covered literature from the African perspective, and finally zoomed into Botswana and South Africa. Data were collected through a mixed methods approach. Quantitative data were collected in Botswana through a survey. The researcher used the survey to allow for larger collection of data and generalisation of the findings. In addition, the survey is less time consuming and less costly as compared to other methods of data collection. Qualitative data were collected in South Africa through case study and structured interviews. Case study allowed for an in-depth insight about the phenomenon being researched. The use of structured interviews brought uniformity to the interview processes and enhanced reliability of the research instruments.

4.4 Methodological Choice

According to Holden and Lynch (2004:16), the philosophy must match the methodology and the research problem. Methodology is the identification, study and justification of research methods (Johnson & Christensen 2017:654). Saunders *et al*. (2019:808) define methodology as the theory of how research should be undertaken, including the theoretical and philosophical assumptions upon which research is based and their implications for the method or methods adopted. Deciding on which methodology to follow is termed the “first methodological choice” (Saunders *et al*. 2019:174). A

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researcher can choose to follow a quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods research methodology. These choices are influenced by the research philosophies (Saunders *et al*. 2019:175), the research problem and questions, the personal experiences of the researcher, and the audience(s) for whom the report will be written (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:1). The research philosophy adopted by this study is pragmatism. Pragmatists believe that the truth cannot be accessed from one scientific method; they recommend a combination of methods to help explain the participants' actual behaviour. This study therefore used a mixed methods approach, which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.

According to Sandelowski (2000:246), the mixed methods approach needs to be employed when the researcher needs to enlarge and deepen the understanding of the research enquiries, and it is used in studying less explored or unexplored research problems. Hussein (2009:2) posits that the mixed methods approach neutralises the limitations of one method and reinforces the benefits of the other to provide better research results. She is supported by Smajic, Avdic, Pasic, Prcic, Stancic (2022:56) who assert that the intention of mixing the methods is to get valid answers to the research questions. Since there is limited literature that empirically tested the use of the three strategies—business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation—this influenced the research questions and the methodological choice. Hence the researcher adopted the mixed method approach to enhance the validity of the research methods, deepen the understanding on the three strategies understudy and get new insight about the phenomenon.

4.5 Mixed methods

The research follows a mixed method approach to data collection and analysis. As indicated in 4.3 the study adopted quantitative research as priority and qualitative research was used to enhance the findings of the quantitative research. Mixed methods research has been in use since the 1950s. However, it was formally practised in the late 1980s (McKim, 2017:202). went through some development and growth during the past two decades through the contribution of researchers such as Creswell

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and Creswell, Creswell and Piano Clarke, Teddlie and Tashakkori (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:215). Mixed methods research has gained popularity in recent years; Bell *et al*., 2019:571). However, Creswell and Cresswell (2018:215) argue that mixed methods research is not regarded as a distinct approach in the social and human sciences and advise researchers to define or describe it in their proposals.

The various definitions of mixed methods research have one thing in common: that it combines qualitative and the quantitative approaches to research. Here are some of those definitions. Cresswell and Creswell (2018:249) define mixed methods research as an approach to inquiry that combines or integrates both qualitative and quantitative forms of research. It involves the philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing or integrating of both approaches in the study. Bell *et al*. (2019:593) describe it as a term that is increasingly employed to describe research that combines the use of both qualitative and quantitative research. According to Johnson and Christensen (2017:33), it is research that involves the mixing of quantitative and qualitative methods or other paradigm characteristics. Saunders *et al.* (2019:808) also define it as the use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analysis procedures, either at the same time (concurrent) or one after the other (sequential). This study adopted this definition that describes the procedure of the methodology. It therefore assumed the concurrent collection and analysis of data.

Various scholars advocate a mixed methods approach to data collection (Byrne, 2007:1381; Abowitz & Toole, 2010:108; Timans, Wouters & Heilbron, 2019:194; Hong, Pluye, Fàbregues, Bartlett, Boardman, Cargo, Dagenais, Gagnon, Griffiths, Nicolau, & O'Cathain, 2019:49). The mixed methods research design may use inductive, deductive or abductive approaches (Saunders *et al.,* 2019:181).

Although mixed methods designs have been embraced by researchers in recent years, there are some weaknesses associated with this approach: It may be cumbersome for one researcher to carry out the research, particularly when approaches are used concurrently (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:21). Mixed methods tend to be costlier and more time consuming (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:21; Johnson & Christensen,

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2017: 488; Anguera, Portell, Chacón-Moscos & Sanduvete-Chaves, 2018:4). There is the need for a researcher to have experience in data collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative research (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004:21; Johnson & Christensen, 2017: 488). The qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis has been elaborated in sections 4.7 and 4.8

4.6 Research Design

According to Saunders *et al*. (2019:184), the main mixed methods research designs are: exploratory sequential, explanatory sequential, concurrent triangulation and concurrent embedded. The sequential mixed methods design uses more than one phase of data collection and analysis. The researcher uses one method and follows with another to expand or elaborate on the initial findings. Exploratory sequential, on the other hand, is when a qualitative method is followed by a quantitative method, while the explanatory sequential design is where a quantitative method is followed by a qualitative method.

The concurrent or convergent research design involves a single phased data collection and analysis. Both quantitative and qualitative data are collected and analysed in a single phase. Concurrent triangulation is when the findings are interpreted together for valid feedback to the research question. Concurrent embedded is when one methodology is used to support another, while the embedded design can use either quantitative or qualitative as priority research. The researcher's aim is to use one approach to enhance the findings of another approach when there is a research gap that needs to be filled and one approach alone is insufficient to fill the gap. This study adopted an embedded research design, with quantitative research as priority and qualitative research used to enhance the findings. Quantitative research measured the relationships between business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation. Qualitative research on the other hand brought clarity on the phenomena, emphasising on views and experiences of participants understudy (Verhoef & Casebeer 1997:65) and bringing out a deeper understanding of the relationships.

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Since the study was conducted in two different countries as elaborated in 1.7, the findings enabled the researcher to establish whether the start-ups in Botswana have similar experiences to those of start-ups in South Africa.

The assumption of the concurrent or convergent mixed methods approach is that the qualitative and quantitative approaches provide different information but yield the same results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:217). Figure 4.6 shows the diagrammatic presentation of the convergent mixed methods design.

Convergent Designs (one phase designs)

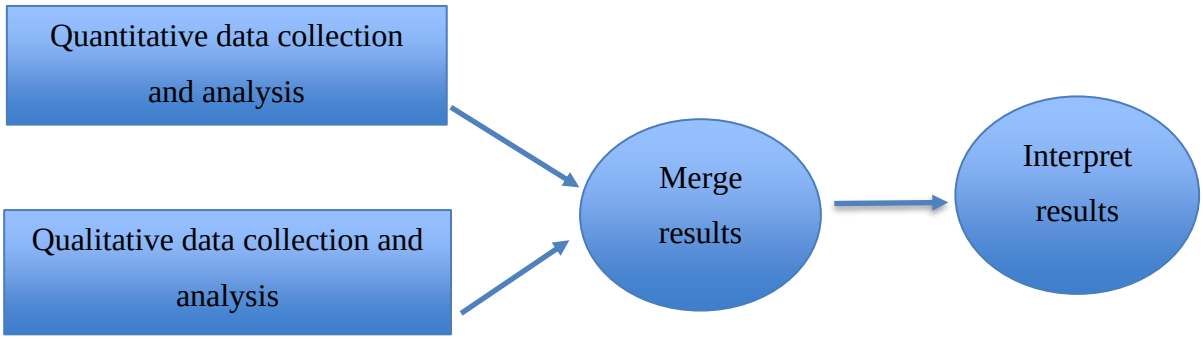

Figure 4.6: Convergent mixed methods design

Source: Adopted from Creswell and Creswell (2018: 218.)

4.6.1 Research Question

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018:141), robust mixed methods research should comprise at least three research questions: a quantitative question or hypothesis, a qualitative question and a mixed methods question.

1. Quantitative research question: Can business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation lead to the success of start-ups? This question aligns with the following research objectives: To examine the effect of business networks on the success of start-ups; to examine the effect of entrepreneurial

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branding on the success of start-ups; and to examine the effect of innovation on the success of start-ups.

2. Qualitative research question: Why do start-ups use business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation to motivate success? This question aligns with the following research objective: To explore why start-ups use business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation, to contribute to their success?

4.6.2 Data integration

As earlier indicated, this study employed the mixed methods data analysis approach. According to Johnson and Christensen (2017:590), mixed data analysis is defined as the use of both quantitative and qualitative analytical procedures in a study. It is also referred to as multi- analysis. In this study, multi-data were analysed concurrently, with quantitative and qualitative analysis combined and followed by meta inferences. As indicated in 4.2.1 quantitative research is used a as priority and qualitative research used to enhance the findings. The study adopted a side-by-side analysis approach where the researcher reported the quantitative findings and then used the qualitative findings to affirm or negate the statistical results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 220).

4.6.3 Time Horizon

A research design can be longitudinal or cross sectional. Longitudinal design includes repeated measures over an extended period, tracking changes in the variables over time; it includes panel or cohort groups (Shindler, 2019:583). There are two variations of longitudinal design suggested by Johnson and Christensen (2017:402), as well as Bell *et al.* (2019:62); however, these researchers attach a different meaning to these variations. According to Johnson and Christensen (2017:402), the two variations are trend study and panel/cohort study. In trend study, independent samples consisting of different participants are chosen over time and asked the same questions. In the panel/cohort study, the same participants are studied on a series of occasions (Bel *et*

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al., 2019:62), on the other hand, argue that the two longitudinal variations are panel study and cohort study. In panel study, data are collected from different participants within a panel study framework. In cohort study, data are collected from a cohort of participants with the same characteristics. The strengths of the longitudinal design are that it can trace the changes that occurred over a period (Schindler, 2019:79). The weakness of this strategy is that it is bound to inject bias when data is collected from the same participants the second or more times. It is also time-consuming and expensive to administer. Data are analysed using complex and unfamiliar statistical procedures (Rajulton, 2001:172; Schindler, 2019:80).

Cross sectional design is often used in the survey strategy to establish relationship between factors or to describe phenomena. However, the design can also be used in case studies (Saunders *et al.,* 2019: 212). The strength of this design is that it can be completed in a short period of time with less cost and minimal errors (Johnson & Christensen, 2017:401; Schindler, 2019:80). The weaknesses of this research design are that the researcher is unable to measure the variations that occur over time (Johnson & Christensen, 2017:401; Wang & Cheng, 2020:65). This study assumed a cross sectional approach with the data collected in a snapshot or at one point in time. This means that the data were collected at a specified period and not over many years.

4.7 First Phase: Quantitative Approach

Creswell and Creswell (2018:17) contend that the quantitative approach is associated with the post-positivist worldview. It is useful in testing theory for broad generalisations to larger groups Creswell & Creswell, 2018:62). It is associated with the deductive approach (Saunders *et al.,* 2019:176).

4.7.1 Research method

There are various methods of data collection and analysis used in quantitative research such as: experimental research, survey, and archival research. Experimental research is rare in the field of business (Bell *et al.,* 2019:49). This kind of research assesses the

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relationship between variables (Rogers & Révész, 2020:1) and it tests existing theories instead of creating new ones. A survey, on the other hand, is popularly used by business and management researchers (Braun, Clarke, Boulton, Davey & McEvoy 2021:2). It allows the collection of more standardised data from a sizeable population (Bethlehem, 2009:1). Archival research reviews the existing data, and it accesses materials such as records and manuscripts (Wan Ng, Chiu & Li (2022:2). In this study, the researcher used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative research adopted a survey method of data collection and analysis. A survey was conducted in Botswana among start-up owners and managers operating businesses that were 0-5 years old. These were respondents who were involved in the day-to-day running of the businesses.

Johnson and Christensen (2017:663) define survey research as a non-experimental research method based on questionnaires or interviews. According to Saunders *et al*. (2019:193), a survey is associated with a deductive approach to research, and it is used to answer the where, who, how questions. Questionnaires are popularly used with the survey method. The advantage of using questionnaires is that they are easy to administer. Similarly, the benefits of the survey method include that it is quick and inexpensive (Cork , Yost, Wollek, & MacKenzie, 2020:124), and standardized data can be collected from a large sample (Bethlehem, 2009:1). In addition, it is easy to explain and understand the data collected, and it allows for comparison. However, the weaknesses of the survey method are that it is more time consuming than other research methods and the researcher is limited to the several questions contained in the questionnaire. Oppong (2013:202) acknowledges that there are problems associated with sampling, and these problems need to be solved in order to have credible research findings.

4.7.2 Sampling method

Bel *et al*. (2019:595) classify sampling into probability and nonprobability sampling. Probability sampling is defined as a sample that has been selected using random sampling and in which each unit in the population has a known probability of being

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selected. It involves a deliberate selection of many units from a population (Etikan & Bala, 2017:210). Nonprobability sampling, on the other hand, is defined as a selection of sampling techniques in which the chance or probability of each case being selected is not known and selection is made with a specific intention (Etikan & Bala, 2017:210; Saunders *et al.*, 2019:810).

The quantitative approach used in this study adopted two probability sampling techniques, namely stratified and simple random sampling. Random sampling is used in quantitative research to select the participants (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018:250). The addition of a unit of population to a sample happens by chance (*Bel et al,*. 2019:595). According to Schindler (2019:99), stratified sampling is useful when the researchers want to draw conclusions in different strata, whereas a simple random sample gives each unit of population an equal chance to be sampled (Bel *et al*. 2019:191).

A survey was conducted among start-ups in Botswana, who have been in business between 0-5 years to establish whether their success was impacted by the engagement of networks and corporate branding strategies. The stratified sampling technique was used to represent the type of start-ups (businesses or companies), length of operation, their locations. Businesses are required to register a name and they have unlimited liability according to the law of Botswana, while companies also register but they have limited liability. The information about the companies in Botswana was obtained from the Companies and Intellectual Property Authority (CIPA). The other data was obtained from the Ministry of Youth sports and Culture and, Local Enterprise Authority (LEA). From these data the researcher then divided the population into localities: Gaborone (an urban area in the Southern part of Botswana), Maun (a tourist destination in the northern part of Botswana) and Serowe (a rural area in the central part of Botswana). Then in each locality the length of operation considered was between 0 and 5 years. A simple random sample of 384 start-ups out of approximately 100 000 registered start-ups was selected, apportioned according to the localities as follows: Gaborone 200; Maun 100 and Serowe 384.

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4.7.3 Sample size

Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007:281) assert that researchers must decide on the sample size (number of participants/respondents) and the sample scheme (process of selecting the members of the sample). Johnson and Christensen (2017:270) argue that larger sample sizes create lesser sampling errors. Three measures that were used to calculate the quantitative sample size in this study are: the confidence interval, standard deviation and the margin of error. Confidence interval is defined as a spectrum of numbers from a sample that has a chance of including the population parameter (Johnson & Christensen, 2017:646). Standard deviation is a statistic that describes the extent of spread of data values around the mean for a variable containing numerical data (Schindler, 2019:817). A margin of error of plus or minus 3% at a 95% confidence interval implies that if the survey is conducted 100 times, it will yield certain number of percentage points above or below the data found in 95 of the 100 surveys (Hunter 2016:1).

The researcher used the formula below to arrive at the sample size. The formula confirms what Krejcie and Morgan (1970:608) cited in Johnson and Christensen (2017:271), suggested as the sample sizes for the various populations ranging from 10 to 500 000 000. The quantitative sample size for this study was 384.

$$n = \left(\frac{z}{e}\right)^2 \times \sigma^2$$

Source: Fotis and Bix (2006:7)

z represents the z score = 95% confidence level (1.96)

p represents standard deviation = 0.5

e represents the margin of error = 0.05

N represents the population = 100 000

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$$n = \left(\frac{1.96}{0.05}\right)^2 \times 0.5^2$$

$$n = 384$$

It is important for the researcher, to highlight the challenges that led to a 65% response rate instead of a 100% response rate. 1. Data was collected during the Covid-19 period. During this time, there were a lot of travelling restrictions in Botswana. Travelling permits were given on merits and at times even when a permit was issued, travel was restricted in areas that were considered as red zone, where movements in and outside the zones were restricted. 2. Still during this time institutions were financially challenged and there was a shortage of resources to finance the length of stay required by the researcher.

The researcher managed to get 248 responses, providing response rate of 65% which is considered acceptable. Due to lack of acceptable minimum and maximum response rates across the research fields (Sataloff & Vontela 2021:683), some researchers claim that an acceptable response rate could go as low as 27% and as high as 75% (Story & Tait 2019:193; Reinisch, Daniel & Li 2016:3; Malloy, Ellender, Goldenberg & Dolan 2013:1037).

Response rate is an important component of survey research (Shih & Fan 2009:35). However, when the response rate is high, the data may have potential of response bias whereas low response rate imply a non-response bias, leading to misleading information about the data collected.

4.7.4 Sampling error

A sample is considered adequate if the sampling error is small (Oppong, 2013:202). The sampling error is the “difference between a sample and a population from which it is selected, even though a probability sample has been selected” (Bel *et al*., 2019:188). Sampling error can occur with both probability and non-probability sampling; however, probability sampling can reduce the error to a minimum, unlike its counterpart.

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4.7.5 Data collection design

Schindler (2019:579) defines data collection design as the blueprint for collecting data, involving how, when, how often, and where data will be collected. To collect quantitative data, the researcher made use of a newly developed questionnaire. The researcher checked the eligibility of the respondents. Then the respondents were asked to read and sign the consent form before filling in the questionnaire. They were made aware that they were free to stop at any time if they felt they did not want to continue filling in the questionnaire. Some of the questionnaires were left with the respondents to fill in at their convenience while others were administered by the researcher. However, for self-completed questionnaires, telephonic follow ups were made with the respondents whenever there were gaps that had not been filled. Data were collected for a period of seven months in Gaborone, Serowe and Maun.

4.7.6 Quantitative data collection instruments

Since the sample size was large (383), the researcher used the questionnaire to collect the quantitative data. A questionnaire is described as a data collection tool in which questions are structured in a predetermined order and which is filled in by respondents/participants (Saunders *et al*., 2019:815; Johnson & Christensen, 2017:190). The questionnaire consisted of a combination of closed and open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were quantified.

Saunders *et al*. (2019:506) distinguish between self-completion questionnaires, which are filled in without the assistance of the researcher, and researcher completed questionnaires. This study used both kinds of questionnaires to collect quantitative data. . Some of the self-completion questions were distributed electronically whereas others were delivered by hand. Researcher-completed questionnaires were completed face to face or telephonically. Prior to its administration, the questionnaire was tested with 10 start-up owners in Gaborone to review the interview schedule, refine it and to check its validity and reliability (Saunders et al., 2019:540). The findings of the pilot

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revealed that there were no significant problems, hence the pilot respondents formed part of the overall sample.

4.7.7 Pre-coding stage

The researcher pre-coded the data before the survey was conducted. According to Saunders *et al. (*2019:812), pre-coding is a process of adding codes to the questions before administering the questionnaire. The advantage is that it saves time, and it reduces the measurement of error since it removes the possibility of variability in coding the questions (Bell *et al.* 2019: 254). However, the disadvantage of pre-coding is that it limits the number of possible responses (Dawson, 2003:23).

4.7.8 Quantitative data analysis

Data were analysed using the IBM Statistical Package Social Science (SPSS). This electronic data analysis software is widely used by researchers in quantitative data analysis (Bell *et al.* 2019:334). SPSS was used to show the distribution values (measures of central tendency), generalisation of the probability sample (Chi-Squared), the relationships between the variables (Pearson, Spearman's correlation coefficient, and Cramer's V) and the variation in the distribution (measures of dispersion). Data were eventually transferred to SPPS Amos, a structural equation modelling software. The predictive power of the model was tested using path coefficients and variance.

4.7.8.1 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Structural equation modelling (SEM) is defined as a cluster of statistical techniques that enable a set of relations between one or more independent variables or dependent variables, either discrete or continuous, to be examined (Ullman & Bentler, 2012:41). This study used SEM to analyse the quantitative data by combining factor analysis with simultaneous regression (Bowen & Guo, 2012:5). Firstly, the model was conceptualised and hypothesised in chapter 1. Then validity and reliability tests were

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run on SPSS 28, followed by confirmatory factor analysis using Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS 28).

4.7.8.2 Data screening

Data screening included, missing data analysis, test for outliers. Data screening serves as the basis of any significant outcome from quantitative research. The quality of the initial data screening determines the quality and the output of an acceptable analysis (Abdulwahab, Dahalin & Galadima, 2011:11). Before the hypothesis can be tested, data screening is conducted to check any errors that may have occurred, the homogeneity of the variance and normality. Hernandez (2021:1) asserts that it is common practice in statistics and data analysis to determine the normality of the data sample. The assessment of normality and other factors affecting the distribution shape aids researchers in drawing accurate conclusions and identifying problems that can affect the results of the statistical analysis at a much earlier stage (Cruz, 2007:41). Neglecting this stage could lead to low quality of output and less accurate analyses (Abdulwahab *et al.,* 2011:11). It is therefore imperative for this study to conduct data screening to ensure the integrity of the data. Before data were analysed, a missing data analysis was done, and missing data were inputted.

4.7.8.3 Test for normality

Normality tests were used to assess whether sample data used in this study was drawn from a normally distributed population. When a normality test result is significant, the data differ significantly from the normal distribution and vice versa (Demir, 2022:400). Furthermore, goodness of fit can be used to test normality (Lianga, Tang & Zhao, 2020:1). Neglecting the test for normality could lead to error in selecting statistical tests, affecting the findings (Matore & Khairani, 2020:688).

The normal distribution is classified into skewness and kurtosis (Demir, 2022:398). These two components are categorised as descriptive statistics (Matore & Khairani, 2020:690). According to Lianga *et al.* (2020:1), they are popularly used for detecting a

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possible departure from normality. Skewness “is a measure of a distribution’s deviation from the symmetry” (Schindler, 2019:355). When the mean is in the middle of the symmetry, there is symmetric distribution but otherwise there is a skewed distribution (Demir, 2022:398). The kurtosis, on the other hand, measures the distribution’s peakness (Schindler, 2019:356). It relates to how far the data deviate from the mean (Demir, 2022:398).

The expected value of kurtosis is 3. This is observed in a symmetrical distribution. A kurtosis greater than three will indicate Positive Kurtosis. In this case, the value of kurtosis will range from 1 to infinity. A kurtosis less than three will mean a negative kurtosis. The range of values for negative kurtosis is from -2 to infinity. The greater the value of kurtosis, the higher the peak.

4.7.8.4 Test for outliers

Kwak and Kim (2017:407: Muhr, Affenzeller and Küng (2023:782) describe outliers as extreme values that lie outside the normal pattern of a distribution of variables. Similarly, Osborne and Overbay (2004:1) assert that outliers are more often caused by human error, for example, errors during the collection, recording and entry of data. Researchers therefore need to deal with outliers prior to the analysis of the data set that contains outliers (Kwak & Kim, 2017:407), which involves either modifying the outliers or replacing their values. In this study, the researcher used the Cook’s Distance to identify the outliers (Aguinis, Gottfredson & Joo 2013:292).

4.7.8.5 Factor analysis

Factor analysis extracts a few factors from the large number of related variables to a smaller number (Shrestha 2021:4;Taherdoost, Sahibuddin & Jalaliyoon 2020:375) before they can be used in other analysis such as multiple regression. There are two types of factor analysis: exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis. This study employs both types of factor analysis.

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Exploratory factor analysis is used to draw out information regarding interrelationships among a set of variables forming part of integrated concepts (Shrestha 2021:6; Oluwabukunmi, Ogunsanya, Aigbavboa, Thwala & Edwards 2019:5). This study used the Keiser-Meyer_olkin (KMO) to measure the adequacy of the sampling (Shrestha 2021:4).

4.7.8.6 Confirmatory factor analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is part of the structural equation modelling (Hox 2021:832; Alavi, Visentin, Thapa, Hunt, Watson & Cleary 2020:2209). It is used after the exploration factor analysis has been conducted to estimate the factor loadings, variances, and covariances of the factor(s)(Hox 2021:832). It makes an assumption that the researcher has a good understanding of the theory of the structure of the investigated concept. (Hox 2021:832). The study used CFA to test hypotheses "relating to the structural relationships of variables" (Oluwabukunmi *et al.* 2019:5). In addition the CFA was used to establish the goodness of fit. Goodness of fit examines the relationship between the observed and theoretical data expected from the model (Alavi, Visentin,Thapa, Hunt, Watson & Cleary 2020:2209).

The following model fit indices were used to assess the fitness of the model used in this study: Chi square (CMIN), Comparative fit index (CFI) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) and Standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) as suggested by Kline (2015:198; Taasoobshirazi & Wang 2016:31). CFI examines the discrepancy between the data and the proposed model (Costa & Sarmento 2019:7). RMSEA is a "measure that attempts to correct the tendency of chi-square statistics to reject models with large samples" (Costa & Sarmento 2019:8). CMIN/DF is chi square to the degree of freedom ratio (Günal, Pekçetin, Demirtürk, Şenol, Håkansson & Wagman 2020:493). SMRM is "a measure of the mean absolute correlation residual, with smaller values suggesting good model fit" (Kline (2010) cited Taasoobshirazi and Wang (2016:31

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4.7.8.7 Validity

Validity is concerned with whether the test scores measure what the researcher intended to measure (Schindler, 2019:590). There are two types of validity: internal and external validity. Jiménez-Buedo and Russo (2021;9553), describe Internal validity as the "approximate validity with which we infer that a relationship between two variables is causal or that the absence of a relationship implies the absence of cause". The internal validity is classified into three: content validity (is the content measured as intended?), predictive or concurrent validity (has the criterion measure been predicted? Is there a correlation between results?), and construct validity (Is hypothesis measured?) (Schindler, 2019:238; Creswell *et al.* 2019:153).

Establishing the validity of a research instrument aids researchers to determine the best instrument to use in a survey (Creswell *et al.*, 2019:153). Content validity was verified through conducting a pilot study with 10 respondents. The pilot study was meant to provide feedback on the research instrument used in the survey. There were no issues with the instruments and the researcher went ahead and administered the questionnaire to the rest of the population sample.

External validity on the other hand, "captures the extent to which inferences drawn from a given study's sample apply to a broader population or other target populations" (Findley, Kikuta and Denly (2021:366). This indicates that the findings of the study can be applicable in another setting, i.e they can be generalised. Since the study used a survey method of data collection, the findings of the study was generalised to a broader population.

4.7.8.8 Reliability

If a measure provides consistent results, it is considered reliable (Creswell *et al.*, (2019:250; Schindler, 2019:239). This study adopted composite reliability to measure the internal consistency approach, which uses one administration of the instrument to test whether the items are homogeneous (Schindler, 2019:242). This approach also

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supports the measurement of multiple items used on the survey instrument (Bell *et al.*, 2019:173). Two benefits of the internal consistency approach as outlined by Johnson and Christensen are as follows: it is convenient because it requires the test to be taken only once and there is no need to create equivalent forms of a test. Internal consistency can be tested through a split half method or Coefficient/Cronbach's Alpha. The split half measures consistency using two equivalent halves from the same test while Coefficient/Cronbach's Alpha measures the consistency of multidimensional items (Johnson & Christensen, 2017:167). In this study, Cronbach's Alpha was used to check the consistency of the research instrument.

4.8 Second Phase: Qualitative approach

The qualitative approach, on the other hand, is associated with the constructivist worldview (Creswell & Creswell, 2018:17). It is useful in generating hypotheses and for making inferences about a larger group than those being studied (Sofaer, 1999:1104; Swanson & Holton III, 2009:30; Creswell and Creswell, 2018:62). It is often used with the inductive approach (Saunders *et al.,* 2019:179).

4.8.1 Research method

This section discussed the qualitative research methods used in the study to collect and analyse data; namely, case study and grounded theory. The study employed Yin's case study approach. It started by giving the paradigm stand, then provided the definition of the case study, case study design, case study data collection and analysis, and lastly, data validation.

In this research, the case study adopted the epistemological stance and used the interpretivism approach. Epistemological stance refers to "what should pass as acceptable knowledge" (Bell *et al.,* 2019:591). The interpretivism approach is commonly used in qualitative research and it calls for the researcher to take a subjective interpretation of social action (Bell *et al.,* 2019:592). The analysis of data, including the generation of themes and the interpretation of the findings, are based on

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the researcher's subjective knowledge. Furthermore, the researcher gains an in-depth understanding of the perceptions and experiences of a social context (Alharahsheh & Abraham Pius, 2020:43).

Gustafsson (2017:2) defines a case study as an in-depth study about an individual, group or unit aimed at generalising over several units. In this study, the term case is understood to mean a start-up that has been operating for a period between 0 and 5 years. According to Yin (1994:6), the case study answers the "how" and "why" of the questions. Yin (2009:5); and Saunders *et al.* (2019:179) suggest four types of case study designs: single holistic, single embedded, multiple holistic and multiple embedded. This study adopted the multiple holistic approach to the case study.

Single holistic design involves the case of a single participant. The single embedded design, on the other hand, allows the researcher to understand a single case from different units of a larger case (Baxter & Jack, 2008:550). In multiple holistic case studies, several cases are examined to understand the similarities and differences between the cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008:550; Gustafsson, 2017:3). This type of case study design is becoming more popular. Baxter and Jack (2008:550) argue that multiple-case designs should follow a replication, and the case must be chosen carefully. As in multiple experiments, the cases must provide findings that are similar (a literal replication) or contrasting (a theoretical replication). Furthermore, the multiple embedded design concerns multiple cases, each containing many parts. They are used in exploratory research and can be used to develop new hypotheses (Bass, Beecham & Noll, 2018:7). This study adopted a multiple holistic case study approach. Eight (8) start-ups in South Africa were selected as cases. The limitation of this design is that it is costly and more time-consuming to conduct. However, the advantage of the multiple case design is that where a case is incomplete, there will be other cases to fall back on (Yin, 2004: xv).

The case study was analysed using the grounded theory method. According to Yin (2009:126) and Baskarada (2013:11), the case study analysis involves assessing, categorising and tabulating the evidence to examine whether it supports or negates the

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study proposition. The analysis has been discussed comprehensively in the qualitative data analysis section.

To validate the use of the case study approach, Yin (1994:361), supported by Baxter and Jack (2008:551), suggested the use of five components of the design: the study questions, proposition (if any), unit or units of analysis, link between the data and proposition and the criteria for interpretation of the findings.

The component, *Study questions*, has already been discussed in Chapter 1. It is important to note, however, that the case study is more suitable for the "How" and "Why" questions (Yin, 1994:361; Cresswell & Cresswell, 2019: Saunderst *et al*., 2019:). The study's qualitative questions have been aligned to this component.

Primary research question

1. How do business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation contribute to the success of start-ups?

Secondary research questions

1. Is your business successful or not?

2. Do you use business networks, in your business and how does this strategy contribute to the success of your business?

3. Do you use entrepreneurial branding in your business and how does this strategy contribute to the success of your business?

4. Do you use innovation in your business and how does this strategy contribute to the success of your business?

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4.8.1.1 Study proposition

Study proposition According to Pearse (2019:147), propositions can be developed in support of the research problem, and they are useful in case studies Baxter and Jack (2008:551). Goodrick (2014:4), posits that propositions may be derived from previous research or from theory development. However, they must allow for new lines of inquiry that may arise from the iterative analysis process. Propositions enable the researcher to place limits on the scope of the study and enhance the chances of completing it. The study proposition was covered in Chapter 1, proposing that business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation (innovative networked brands) contribute to start-up success. The proposition guided the data collection, analysis and discussion (Baxter & Jack, 2008:552).

4.8.1.2 Units of analysis

Unit(s) of analysis define(s) the "who or what for which information is analysed and conclusions are made" (Sedgwick, 2014:1). Over and above selecting the units of analysis, they had to be conceptualised according to the theoretical framework of the study (Ritella, Rajala & Renshaw, 2021:2). In addition, the proposition and the research question helped to refine the unit of analysis (Yin, 1994:363). In this study, the researcher established whether the use of business network, entrepreneurial branding, and innovation contributed to start-up success. Start-up therefore became the unit of analysis. Since the study adopted a multiple case study approach, eight start-up owners or managers were interviewed using the structured questionnaire.

4.8.1.3 Link between the data and proposition

This component has been discussed in detail under qualitative data analysis. The study used the case study and grounded theory approach to link data to the proposition through pattern matching, explanation building, and cross-case synthesis (Yin, 1994: 368). Pattern matching was used to link the empirical data and the proposed conceptual framework. Here the researcher was not intending to confirm or dispute the

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proposition but to build explanation as to whether the patterns match and why they match or not (Yin 2003).

4.8.1.4 Criteria for the interpretation of the findings

In multiple case studies, it is important to analyse each case individually before identifying the similarities and differences across the cases (Barratt, Choi & Li, 2011:9). The study used a grounded theory analysis in which the data were analysed using open coding, axiel coding and selective coding. Crowe, Cresswell, Robertson, Huby, Avery & Sheikh, 2011:6), argue that the case study findings can determine, strengthen or weaken the past explanations of a case. However, there should not be a one-size-fits-all theoretical framework. When reporting the findings, researchers must provide contextual information to the reader about the processes followed and the conclusions reached. In this study, the individuals and case sites were kept anonymous, and pseudonyms were used to replace the real names.

The advantages of using the case study approach are that it provides an in-depth detail about the phenomena being researched (Mfinanga, Mrosso & Bishibura, 2019:52), by offering insights into the gaps that exist, suitable for developing a new hypothesis and they are less costly to conduct (Crowe *et al*. 2011:4). The disadvantages of using the case approach are that they offer limited information, hence, the researcher may not be able to make a scientific generalisation (Crowe *et al*., 2011: 7; Mfinanga *et al*., 2019:53).

4.8.2 Selection of cases

In collective or multiple case studies, several cases are carefully selected so that comparisons can be made across replications (Gustafsson, 2017:9). In a straightforward theory, there must be two or three literal replications and five or more if the theory is more indistinct (Yin, 1994:388; Crowe *et al.,* 2011:6). Anderson, Wennberg and McMullen (2019:10) affirm the importance of replication in theory-testing research.

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The inclusion and exclusion criteria was used in this study. The inclusion criteria used the geographical location, years of operation and the registration of start-ups with Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC). Only companies operating in Johannesburg, Soweto and Pretoria and having been operating for a period of 0-5 years were eligible. The exclusion criteria ignored start-ups that were outside the selected geographic location, had been in operation for more than 5 years and were not registered with CIPC.

In this study, 10 start-ups were selected through snowballing, two of which were not eligible. Out of the eight eligible start-ups, one of them was in Pretoria and seven were in Johannesburg. Multiple case studies were used in this study to allow the researcher to compare the findings (Bell *et al*., 2019:67), and to identify what is common or unique among the cases. Additionally, they provide strong and reliable evidence (Baxter & Jack, 2008:550).

4.8.3 Grounded Theory

Grounded theory has evolved over decades. It was coined by Glaser (positivistic approach) and Strauss in 1967, developed and extended by Strauss and Corbin in 1990 and 1998, taking a post positivist approach. The two authors were criticised by Glaser in 1994, which led to the conception of Glaserian and Straussian approaches to grounded theory (Singh & Estefan, 2018:1). Later, Charmaz (2014) suggested a constructivist perspective to grounded theory methodology (Singh & Estefan, 2018:3).

Grounded theory is defined as a research strategy in which theory is developed from data collection by a series of observations or interviews, principally involving an inductive approach (Saunders *et al.,* 2019:804). According to Charmaz (2014), cited in Singh and Estefan, (2018:3), grounded theory involves a process of creating an understanding of participants' experiences and interpreting how they create meaning of their perceptions and actions. This strategy allows the researcher to use a simultaneous collection of data by conducting the observation or interview and analysing the data before moving on to the next one. The purpose of this approach is

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to develop theories to be used in data analysis (Schindler, 2019:135; Saunders *et al.,* 2019:205). It develops new theory from data and argues against the testing of the existing theory (Mohajan & Mohajan, 2022:6).

4.8.3.1 Grounded Theory and Case Study

This study combines two approaches to data collection and analysis: grounded theory and case study. The common grounded theory goal is to create theories derived from data meant to appreciate the social context (Halaweh, Fidler & Mc Robb 2008:2). When integrating two or more methods, researchers must ensure that the philosophical assumptions are the same (Halaweh, Fidler & Mc Robb 2008:3). Case study and grounded theory approaches are associated with interpretive paradigms (Halaweh, Fidler & Mc Robb 2008:3). This study adopted the Glaser and Strauss approaches to grounded theory. It uses the Glaser and Strauss constant comparative analysis. The comparative analysis has been discussed under qualitative analysis.

4.8.4. Sampling Method

The qualitative approach combines probability and non-probability sampling. According to Etikan and Bala (2017:209), the two types of sampling can both be used to select a sample. Since the researcher was not familiar with the business community in Johannesburg and Pretoria, snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was used to identify the start-ups in the selected area to cut costs and save time. According to Johnson and Christensen (2017:273), snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling that is sometimes used in qualitative research but Schindler (2019:588) claims that it is commonly used in qualitative research. It is a non-probability sampling technique whereby participants refer to subsequent participants that fit the sample description (Schindler, 2019:588; Bel *et al.,* 2019:596).

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4.8.5 Sampling size

Two things that define non-probability sampling are ambiguity and no rules. Non-probability samples are selected to make generalisations about the theory rather than about the population' The sample size therefore depends on the research questions and the objectives of the study (Saunders, 2019:315). The size of the sample is determined by theoretical saturation, which is the level at which additional data collected provides no new information (Saunders, 2019:801). It therefore does not provide an actual number of participants to be selected. Saunders (2012), cited in Sauders *et al*. (2019:317) suggests a size of between four and 12 for homogeneous groups and 12 to 30 for heterogeneous groups.

The three sampling methods adopted by qualitative researchers are judgmental/purposeful, convenience and theoretical sampling (Oppong, 2013:203). Convenience sampling is frequently used in both quantitative and qualitative research. The researcher selects the sample at their convenience (Farrokhi & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, 2012:784; Emerson, 2021:76). Theoretical sampling is a vital procedure for building theory in the grounded theory method (Conlon, Timonen, Elliott-O'Dare, O'Keeffe & Foley, 2020:2). Sampling of additional populations is guided by the constructs that evolve from the theory (Draucker, Martsolf, Ross & Rusk, 2007:1137) This study adopted the judgmental/purposive sampling, which is a non-probability sampling procedure in which sample cases are selected based on the researcher's judgment (Saunders *et al.,* 2019:813). For this sampling technique, the size of the sample is determined by the availability of resources, time and the research objectives (Oppong, 2013:203). The strength of purposive sampling is that it engages multiple phases and therefore allows the use of different sampling techniques (Sharma, 2017:751). The weaknesses of the purposive sampling are as follows: it does not allow generalisation (Taherdoost, 2016:23); it is prone to biases because judgment is based on the researcher and it is subjective and it is therefore not easy to defend the appropriateness of the judgment used (Sharma, 2017:752). The qualitative sample size

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of this study was 20 participants, only nine of whom took part in the structured interviews.

As already outlined under the types of sampling, this study used snowball sampling in qualitative research. According to Johnson and Christensen (2017:273), snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique, whereas. Oppong (2013:202) classifies it as a type of purposive sampling. The strength of snowball sampling is that it can be used to reach difficult populations (Sharma, 2017:752) particularly in this study which engaged start-up owners or managers who lacked the time for an interview or did not have any interest in the study. It therefore depended on referrals.

The weaknesses of snowball sampling are that: it is time consuming (Taherdoost, 2016:23); it is also prone to distortions; for example, the referrals may be of the same ethnic group, or they may be of the same gender. It may therefore be difficult to determine sampling error and generalise the findings (Waters, 2015:372; Sharma, 2017:752).

Since the study adopted convergent mixed methods data collection, it faced criticism of the inequality of sample size. Mixed methods researchers adopt approaches that suit their study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018:219). This study adopted unequal sample sizes; the quantitative method is intended to gather extensive information from the sample while the qualitative method is intended to generalise sizeable statistical findings from a sample to a population.

4.8.6 Data collection design

According to Rowley (2002:22), the data collection protocol of a case study should have an overview of the study and field procedures that include the information sources, how the information will be accessed and the questions the researcher will ask the participants. Rowley (2002:22) asserts that a qualitative data gathering protocol has to be developed, followed by screening the case study nominations and conducting a pilot study. Tools that are suitable in a case study are interviews, documentation, direct

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observations, physical artefacts, participants' observations and archival records. In this study, qualitative data were collected through structured interviews.

The researcher first checked the eligibility of the participants before making appointments with them and providing the estimated duration of the interview. Before the interviews began the participants were asked to read and sign the consent form. They were also made aware that they were free to stop at any time, if they did not want to continue with the interview. Face to face and online interviews were conducted in Johannesburg and Pretoria and recorded using a tape recorder. Since the researcher used snowball sampling, in May 2022, she identified one participant in Johannesburg, who later recommended another one still in Johannesburg. The two participants were interviewed but they did not have any further recommendations. Later in November 2022, the researcher approached the first participant again and she recommended two more participants in Johannesburg. The two participants recommended a participant each. My supervisor also recommended four participants, 2 of which were eligible and two of them did not meet the inclusion criteria because their start-ups had been in operation for more than 5 years.

4.8.7 Qualitative data collection instruments

Qualitative data can be collected through observations, interviews, documents and audiovisual digital materials (Creswell *et al*., 2019:188). Observation is described as monitoring behavioral and non-behavioral conditions or activities (Cooper & Schindler, 2001:768). An interview is defined as a method of data collection through oral verbal questioning and responses (Kothari & Gard, 2019:92). This study adopted the structured interview approach. Bell *et al.* (2019:596) describe structured interviews as an interview where all participants are asked the same questions in the same order using an orderly interview plan. They are labelled as standardised open-ended interviews by Patton (1987:116). The strength of this approach is that responses can be compared since participants are asked the same questions and the use of more than one interviewer reduces biases (Johnson & Christensen, 2017:236). Additionally, interviews provide richer and more in-depth data (Paradis, O'Brien, Nimmon &

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Bandiera, 2016:263). The weakness of structured interviews is that the standardised format of the questions restricts flexibility and limits the participants from being as natural as possible. Structured interviews also require more time and resources to conduct and analyse (Paradis *et al.* 2016:263).

Interviews were conducted face to face and virtually through Google meet. Creswell *et al*. (2019:190) suggest the use of an interview protocol to ask questions and record answers. Data were recorded by hand, audio tape and videotape. Data collection and analysis took a cyclical approach. The researcher collected and analysed the data and thereby derived a theory. Afterwards the researcher collected more data, analysed them, which contributed to the theory.

4.8.8 Qualitative data analysis

The qualitative data analysis of this study took a combination of grounded theory and case study approach, as earlier stated. Grounded theory aims at identifying a new theory that is grounded on the data (Sarantakos, 2013:371). The study established a new theory of the three strategies engaged to determine the success of the start-ups: business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation. A case study analysis involves assessing, categorising and tabulating the evidence to examine whether it supports or negates the study proposition (Yin, 1994:368). The study also adopted Rowland's proposition of performing a case study analysis as follows: Using all pertinent evidence; taking into consideration major rival interpretations and examining each of them successively; addressing pertinent aspects of the case study; tapping into the researcher's prior expertise in the area in this study in an unbiased and objective manner (Rowland, 2002:24).

The study used a case-by-case analysis of the findings, and a summary was presented on section 6.8. Following the case-by-case analysis, a cross-case analysis was then conducted to establish the similarities and differences between the cases. Then a holistic case study analysis of the start-ups was conducted, and the discussion of these findings, supported by the literature review were presented in section 6.10.

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4.8.8.1 Coding

Coding in qualitative research is defined as the process whereby data are broken down into component parts which are given names (Bell *et al.,* 2019:589). Qualitative data are full of text, unstructured and non-numeric; hence, the role of coding is to categorise and attach meaning to the data to make them meaningful and facilitate the development of the new theory (Basit, 2003:145). This study adopted the Strauss and Cobin grounded theory approach to coding. It includes open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

4.8.8.2 Open coding

According to Glaser (1978), open coding depends on a line-by-line coding of text. Strauss and Corbin (1990:62) describe open coding as a process of breaking down data into distinct parts, assessing them and identifying similarities and differences. Then, the researcher asks questions about the phenomena reflected in the data. Coding is recorded following a concept-indicator model process (Strauss, 1987: 25-26). This model involves a constant comparison of the indicators, identifying similarities and differences between them. First, the researcher identifies the indicators (LaRossa, 2005:841). The indicators are defined as word(s), phrase(s) or sentence(s) in the data being analysed. After identifying the indicators, the researcher groups these indicators into concepts. A concept is defined as a name or label that is related to the indicator(s). According to LaRossa (2005: 841), one indicator can prompt a researcher to develop a concept. However, multiple indicators are required to theoretically saturate a concept.

In addition to the indicators and concepts, the open coding develops categories. A category is described as a concept used for a superior level of abstraction (Glaser, 1992:38). In this study, categorisation means dimensionalisation, where similar and dissimilar (but allied) concepts are grouped into a category (Strauss & Corbin 1990:68). This open coding process led to axiel and selective coding (LaRossa, 2005: 843).

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a) Axiel coding

Axiel coding is defined as “the process of relating categories to their subcategories” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:123). They assert that subcategories answer to what, where, why and how questions. This stage is concerned with looking at the relationships between the variables (LaRossa, 2005: 849).

b) Selective coding

This stage involves choosing a core variable. A core variable is that variable “that in addition to other qualities, is theoretically saturated and centrally relevant (LaRossa, 2005: 851).

There are two ways of coding: manual and electronic coding. Manual coding is normally used for small data and electronic coding for large samples. The researcher used manual coding because the sample was small.

4.8.9 Trustworthiness, credibility, reliability and dependability

Bell *et al.* (2019:597) defines trustworthiness as “a set of criteria advocated by some writers for assessing the quality of qualitative research”. Credibility is one of the strategies used to demonstrate trustworthiness (Lemon & Hayes, 2020:605). To test the credibility of the study, the researcher shared the findings of the case studies with the participants to confirm whether the findings corroborated with their responses (Bell *et al*., 2019:363). Additionally, since the study used a convergent embedded mixed methods approach to collect and analyse the data, triangulation of findings was used to enhance the credibility of the research (Stahl & King, 2020:26).

Reliability checks the stability of the research approaches (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 201). If the research methods are justified and the analysis processes are clarified, the study is considered reliable (Rose & Johnson, 2020:4). The method used to collect qualitative data in this study was the case study. Case study enabled the researcher to collect data in a more natural setting and context, acquiring in-depth answers to the

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research question. The use of structured interviews also enhanced reliability by bringing uniformity within, the interview process (Coleman 2021:2043). In addition, the researcher used the rape recorder to capture the audio interview. These audio interviewed were later transcribed and analysed using the grounded theory coding process: open codes, axial codes and selective codes. The themes were then deduced from the selective codes. Furthermore, this study adopted Yin's case study protocol (presented in Chapter 6). According to Yin (2009:79), the case study protocol can be used to check the reliability of the study.

The study is also considered dependable. The research activities such as the recorded interviews, transcripts, analysis and conclusions of the study have been documented in the study. It is reported in such a manner that other researchers could arrive at similar interpretations should they review the data (Nassaji 2020:428).

4.9 Ethical considerations

For decades, ethical issues have received substantial attention across the various fields of human subjects' research, causing research to be screened based on the research regulations. Such regulations include, among others, informed consent, subject safety and privacy, and confidentiality (Zimmer, 2010:323).

4.9.1 Informed Consent

It is ethical for the researcher to provide all the information about the research to the participants concerned before collecting any data. The researcher provided information on what the study was about, who would benefit from the study and how they were expected to participate. The participants willingly agreed to provide the researcher with the information.

4.9.2 Subject Safety

The participants were notified beforehand of any risks and discomforts the study may

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cause them and were made aware that they may choose not to answer any question that made them uncomfortable or may discontinue to participate in the study at any time.

4.9.3 Privacy and Confidentiality

Participants were informed of the privacy and confidentiality of the data collected and that by no means would the data be traced back to them. Identifying information on the questionnaire was avoided. Pseudo names were used during the data collection, analysis and presentation of findings. An informed consent form and an opt-out form were signed by the participants before the survey or interview started. They were notified that there would be no monetary gain from the interview or survey. An audit trail was done for sharing the results with the participants and confirming that the results represented their views well. The information was shared between the researcher and the Supervisor, kept on the cloud and accessed with passwords known only to themselves.

4.9.4 Voluntary Participation

The participants were informed that their participation in the study was completely voluntary and that they were free to withdraw at any time for any reason without penalty or prejudice from the investigator. Their completion of the survey was an indication of their informed consent in the study.

4.9.5 Transparency

Participants were provided with information about where they could lodge their complaint if they felt their rights were violated. The informed consent contained the address of the University of Pretoria and the contacts of the supervisor.

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4.9.6 Scientific Soundness

This study followed scientifically proven research procedures. The research questions were formulated. In the case of a quantitative research approach, the hypothesis was formulated, the research design was selected and followed, data were collected, analysed and the findings presented. The researcher outlined the limitations of the study and the ethical procedures that were followed.

4.10 Summary

This chapter discusses the research methodology of the study. It uses Saunders research onion to illustrate the decisions taken by the researcher when developing the research methodology. The decisions include philosophy, approach to theory development, methodological choice, strategies, time horizon, techniques, and procedures. The study took a mixed methods approach to data collection and analysis. Quantitative data collection was conducted in Botswana through a survey, and 212 respondents filled in the questionnaire. Data were analysed using SPSS. The qualitative data were collected in South Africa through case studies. Structured interviews were used to collect data and eight participants took part in the interviews. Data were analysed thematically using grounded theory. The chapter that follows presents the findings of the quantitative data analysis.

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Chapter 5: Data analysis and interpretation of quantitative data

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the methodology of the study. This chapter presents the quantitative analysis of a survey conducted on start-ups in Botswana from July 2021 to March 2022. A total of 385 questionnaires were distributed and 248 respondents filled in the questionnaire which were later screened and reduced to 212 providing a response rate of 58%. The data were analysed using SPSS 28 and SPSS Amos 28.

The following are the research objectives of the study:

Primary research objective

To determine the impact of business networks, entrepreneurial branding, innovation on the success of start-ups.

Secondary research objectives

1. To examine the effect of business networks on success of start-ups
2. To examine the effect of entrepreneurial branding on success of start-ups
3. To examine the effect of innovation on success of start-ups.
4. To propose an innovative networked brands framework as a strategy for the success of start-ups in Botswana and South Africa

5.2 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics is used to summarise the quantitative data. Summarised data is presented in tables, graphs and charts and it includes: age, gender, marital status, and location, years of operation, number of employees and type of business.

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5.2.1 Demographic information of the respondents

The demographic information of the respondents, as presented in Table 5.2.1 consists of gender, marital status, age and location. Female respondents outnumbered males by 56% to 44%. This may be because females are more responsive to questionnaires than males. The respondents were either single (72%), married (25%), divorced (2%) or widowed (1%). The average age of marriage is below 40 so it's more likely that so many women were involved in start-ups because they were single.

Respondents were mostly in the youth category (18-40 years). This may have been because information about start-ups in this category was availed by the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Culture. Secondly, the response from this group either online or print, was significant. A lot of responses came from start-up owners residing in Gaborone (72%), followed by Maun (17%), Serowe (8%) and other (5%). Other is constituted by those who were operating businesses in the sampled locations but were residing elsewhere.

Table 5.2.1: Demographics.....

Demographic variables	Number of respondents	Percentage
Gender:		
Male	93	44
Female	119	56
Marital status:		

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Married	52	25
Single	152	72
Divorced	5	2
Widowed	3	1
Don’t want to say	0	0
Age		
18-29	92	44
30-40	90	43
41-50	23	11
51+	5	2
Location:		
Gaborone	149	70

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Maun	35	17
Serowe	17	8
Other	11	5

5.2.2 Background of the start-ups

The sample size was 383 and 248 respondents filled in the questionnaire, providing a response rate of 65%. After the process of screening was performed, the number of respondents was reduced to 212. Table 5.2.2 presents the background of the start-ups. All the respondents were either business owners or managers because that was the target group for the study. The majority of the businesses had been in operation between one and four years. Those who have been in operation, between 1-2 years amounted to 35% of the respondents, followed by those in operation for 3-4 years (33%) and those in operation for less than 1 year (26%) and lastly, those in operation for 5 years (6%). The top three types of businesses common to the respondents were other businesses that were not listed (23.1%), followed by farming (21.7%) and health and beauty (14.2%). The rest of the business scored less than 10%. Most of the start-ups (42.6%) had 1 employee, followed by those with 2-3 employees (36.1%) and lastly, those with 4-5 employees (21.8%).

Table 5.2.2: Background information of the start-ups

Background variable	Number of respondents	Percentage
Business owners/managers	212	100%

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Number of years in operation:		
Less than 1 year	56	26
1-2 years	73	35
3-4 years	70	33
5 years	13	6
Type of business:		
Education & Training	19	9
Farming	46	22
Finance	10	4.7
Food processing	18	8.5
Health and Beauty	30	14.2
Law firm	1	.5
Manufacturing	9	4

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Retail	9	4
Tourism and Hospitality	16	8
Transport & Logistics	5	2
Other	49	23
No. of employees		
1 employee	90	42
2-3 employees	76	36
4-5 employees	46	22

5.3 Data screening

Since the researcher used the self-completion questionnaires, there were some missing data. Missing data were imputed as supported by Ullman and Bentler (2012:41) who emphasise that missing data imputation is vital in SEM models. The data screening process reduced the number of respondents from 248 to 212.

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5.4 Missing data analysis

Since the questionnaires were left with the respondents to fill at their convenience and some were administered online, there were a lot of missing data. Table 5.4 shows the analysis of the missing data by SPSS.

Table 5.4: Missing data analysis

Univariate Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Missing		No. of Extremes[a,b]	
				Count	Percent	Low	High
Q1	212	1.00	.000	0	.0	.	.
Q2	211	2.19	.901	1	.5	0	0
Q3	212	5.83	3.702	0	.0	0	0
Q4	212	1.20	.400	0	.0	.	.
Q5	211	1.25	.446	1	.5	.	.
Q7	208	2.76	1.539	4	1.9	0	0
Q8	210	2.35	1.181	2	.9	0	0
Q9	211	1.52	.869	1	.5	0	1

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Q10	207	3.87	2.664	5	2.4	0	0
Q11_1	204	4.15	1.162	8	3.8	0	0
Q11_2	202	4.02	1.298	10	4.7	0	0
Q12	204	3.45	.953	8	3.8	1	0
Q13	210	4.03	.751	2	.9	5	0
Q14	212	1.08	.272	0	.0	.	.
Q15_1	209	4.09	.916	3	1.4	8	0
Q15_2	209	4.02	.968	3	1.4	0	0
Q15_3	209	4.16	.878	3	1.4	4	0
Q18_1	209	3.58	.874	3	1.4	5	0
Q18_2	208	3.42	.944	4	1.9	9	0
Q19_1	209	3.77	2.929	3	1.4	4	1
Q19_2	208	3.51	.862	4	1.9	2	0
Q19_3	208	3.29	1.009	4	1.9	13	0
Q20_1	207	3.56	.890	5	2.4	4	0

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Q20_2	208	3.40	.911	4	1.9	5	0
Q20_3	209	3.56	.859	3	1.4	4	0
Q21_1	207	3.63	1.057	5	2.4	11	0
Q21_2	207	3.67	.886	5	2.4	6	0
Q21_3	206	3.79	.912	6	2.8	5	0
Q22_1	208	3.31	.853	4	1.9	5	0
Q22_2	207	3.60	1.654	5	2.4	3	1
Q23_1	207	3.71	3.020	5	2.4	14	1
Q23_2	207	3.71	.910	5	2.4	7	0
Q23_3	206	3.82	.998	6	2.8	10	0
Q24	204	1.39	.489	8	3.8	0	0
Q27	207	1.16	.371	5	2.4	.	.
Q29	209	1.21	.405	3	1.4	.	.
Q30_1	205	4.14	1.194	7	3.3	0	0
Q30_2	205	4.14	1.238	7	3.3	0	0

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Q30_3	205	4.26	1.120	7	3.3	8	0
Q31	195	1.58	.553	17	8.0	0	1
Q32	196	1.82	.542	16	7.5	.	.
Q33	196	1.67	.755	16	7.5	0	5
Q34	196	1.57	.966	16	7.5	0	10
Q35	196	4.24	2.369	16	7.5	0	1
Q36	193	1.80	.857	19	9.0	0	2
Q6	201			11	5.2		
Q16	204			8	3.8		
Q17	125			87	41.0		
Q25	173			39	18.4		
Q26	184			28	13.2		
Q28	137			75	35.4		

a. Number of cases outside the range (Q1 – 1.5*IQR, Q3 + 1.5*IQR).

b. Indicates that the inter-quartile range (IQR) is zero.

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5.5 Test for normality

There are two components of the normal distribution, namely: skewness and kurtosis. Skewness is demonstrated by the position of the mean in the normal curve. If the mean is at the centre of the curve, the distribution is considered symmetrical or normal. If it lies to the left or to the right of the curve it is considered asymmetrical. to the status of the data's mode median and mean relative to each other. The kurtosis is related to how far the data is deviated from the mean (Demir 2022:398). For all sample sizes, the skewness and kurtosis coefficients, within the range of ±1.96 are not sufficient for normal distribution and anything outside the range of ±1.96 is considered anormal distribution.

Table 5.5 shows a test for normality. The skewness of the graph is 0.248, and the kurtosis is -1.501, hence it is outside the range of -1.96 and 1.96, therefore the sampled data was drawn from a normally distributed population (Demir 2022:400).

Table 5.5: Test for normality

N	Valid	212
	Missing	0
Skewness		.248
Std error of Skewness		.167
Kurtosis		-1.501
Std error of Kurtosis		.333

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5.6 Outliers

The Cook's distance plot was used to test Figure 5.6 shows the Cook's distance developed through a regression analysis using innovation as the independent variable and business networks as the dependent variable.

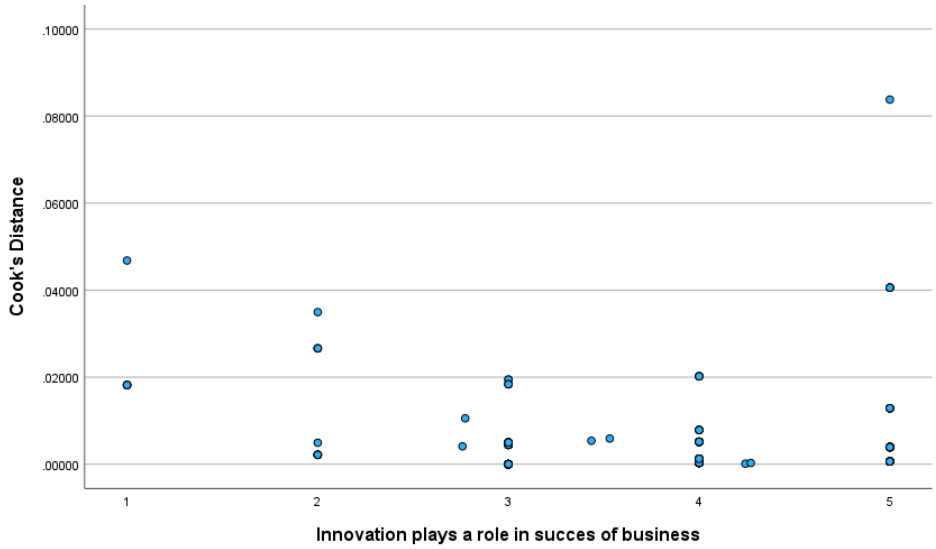

Figure 5.6: Cook's distance plot

Any value greater that 0.5 is considered high and influential in the Cook's distance plot and it is considered extreme if it is greater than 1. There was one outlier that was considered influential because it was greater that 0.5, however it was below 0.1, hence the researcher assumed it was no cause for concern and did not remove it.

5.7 Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)

Exploratory factor analysis was performed using principal component analysis and a varimax rotation with the minimum factor loading criteria set at 0.60. The results showed that all the communalities were above 0.60. The Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of the adequacy of the sampling (Shrestha 2021:6) was 0.824. Data with a measure of sampling adequacy above 0.7 were considered appropriate for factor analysis. The significant value was 0.00, which is less than 0.05.

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Four factors were derived from the analysis: Table 5.7 shows the rotated component matrix. After performing the EFA, variables that were loaded on a factor other than their underlying factor were deleted.

Table 5.7: Rotated component matrix

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Is business success linked to entrepreneurial branding?	.842			
Is business success linke to innovation?	.793			
Use of entrepreneurial branding as business success strategy	.783			
Is business success linked to business networks?	.728			
Innovation plays a role in succes of business	.721			
Perception of internal business networks relationship		.943		
Perception of external business network relationship		.931		
Confidence in managing business network relationship		.912		
Customers awareness of the products			.932	
Customers awareness of owner/manager of the business			.921	
Customers awareness of business name			.892	
Innovation strategiess to stand out against competitors				.870
Innovation strategies to promore entrepreneurial branding				.827
Innovation strategies to enhance and strengthen business networks				.824

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

The validity of the research instrument was tested using the Spearman's correlation coefficient since the data validated were ordinal.

5.8 Confirmatory factor analysis

Suhr (2005:1) describes confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) as "a statistical technique used to verify the factor structure of a set of observed variables". CFA is used to confirm the EFA findings (Harrington 2009:10); test the hypothesis (Carstensen, Ørnbøl, Fink,

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Pedersen, Jørgensen, Dantoft, Benros & Frostholm 2020) to determine whether a relationship exists between the observed variables and the constructs. A model will then be assessed to establish how well it fits the observed data (Alavi, Visentin, Thapa, Hunt, Watson & Cleary 2020:2209)). This is referred to as the goodness of fit outlined in section 5.9.

5.9 Model Fit

Model fit can be evaluated using a range of indices. This study used the following model fit indices to assess the suitability of the model: comparative fit index (CFI), goodness-of- fit index (GFI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), (Almaleki 2021:158). SPSS Amos was used to estimate the model fit. Figure 5.9 shows the measurement model of the proposed model, illustrating the correlation between the four constructs: success, business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation.

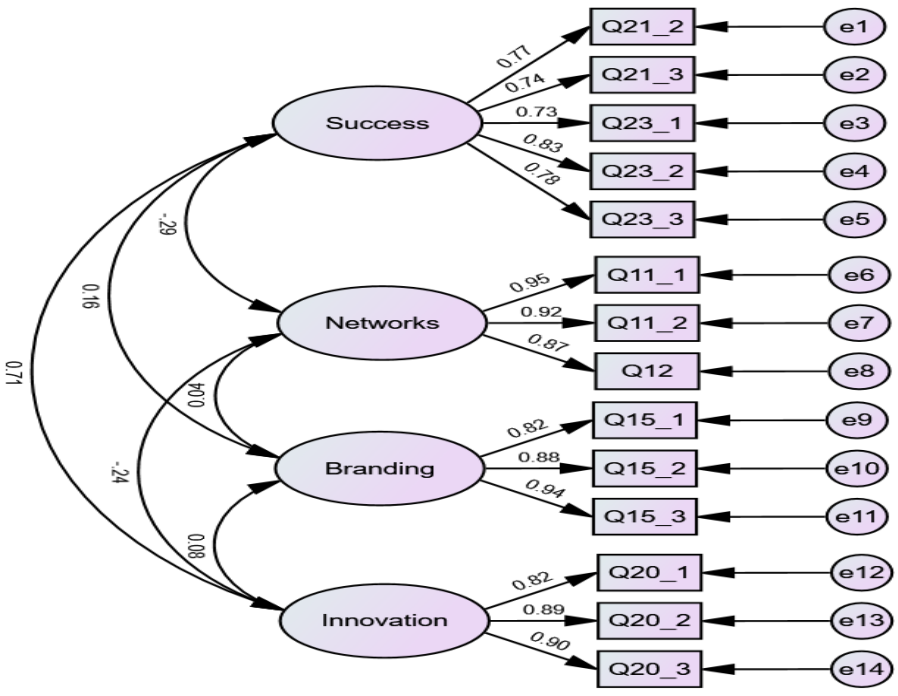

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Figure 5.9 Measurement model: Start-up success

Table 5.9 shows the analysis of the model fit indices of the proposed model. The following model fit indices were used: CMIN/DF, comparative fit index (CFI), Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and standardised root mean square residual (SRMR).

Table 5.9: Model fit (Start-ups success)

Measurement	Perfect Fit	Acceptable fit	Model values
CMIN	---	---	291.399
DF	---	---	71
CMIN/DF	≤3	≤5	4.104
CFI	≥ 0.95	(0.9; 0.95)	0.902
RMSEA	≤0.05	0.06 – 0.08	0.121
SRMR	≤0.08	(0.08;0.1)	0.068

For a sample size ranging between 150-300, a median of 2-5 (3.5), could be used as a cutoff to assess the fit whereas a sample size above 300, could use 5 as a cutoff point (Yaşlioğlu & Yaşlioğlu 2020:8). The sample size for this study was 384 hence 5 was used as a cut off point. Table 5.9 shows that the minimum chi square (CMIN) is 291.399 and the degree of freedom (DF) is 71, therefore the CMIN/DF is 4.104 which

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is less than 5. This implies that the model is an acceptable fit (Mahat, Hashim, Saleh, Nayan, Samsudin, Suhaili & Norkhaidi 2022:1166). The comparative fit index (CFI) is 0.902 and this implies that the model is an acceptable fit (Costa & Sarmento 2019:8). Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) is 0.121 which implies that the model is a bad fit (Mahat *et al*. 2022:1166). The standardised Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is 0.068 which implies that the model is a perfect fit (Kline 2015:190).

5.10 Structural Model

The structural model in figure 5.10 was used to show the relationship between the constructs (Kang & Wan-Ahn 2021:) understudy: business networks, entrepreneurial branding, innovation and start-up success. The hypothesis analysis indicated a positive and significant impact of innovation on start-up success, a negative and positive, insignificant impact of business networks and entrepreneurial branding respectively on start-up success.

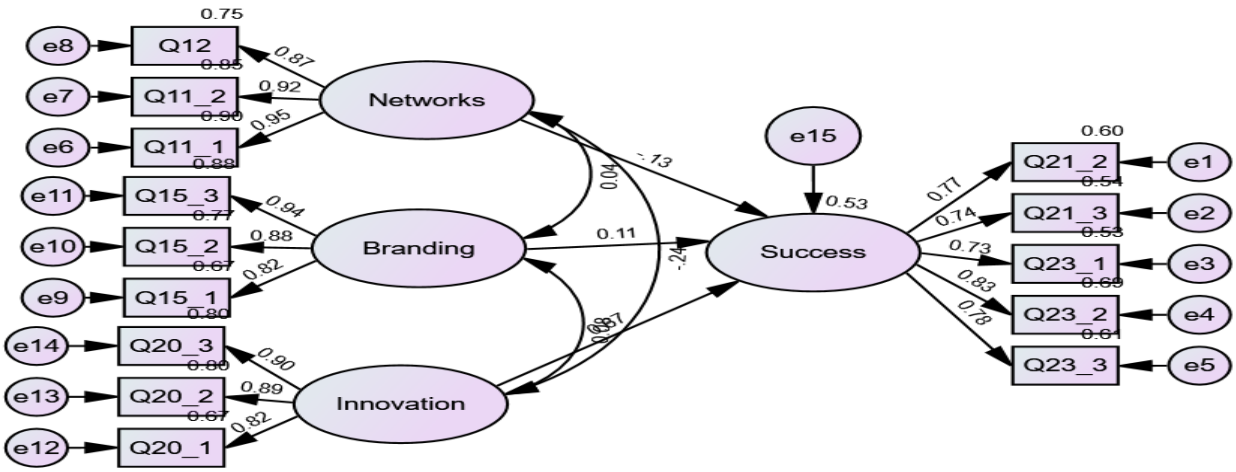

Figure 5.10: Structural model

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5.11 Hypothesis testing

This study assessed the impact of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation on the success of start-ups. Table 5.11 shows that the impact of business networks on start-ups' success was negative and insignificant (b= -.131, t= -2.199, p= .028) supporting Ho1. The impact of innovation on start-ups' success was positive and significant (b= .671, t= 8.871, p= ≤.001) rejecting Ho2. The impact of entrepreneurial branding on start-ups' success was positive and insignificant (b= .113, t= 1.934, p=.053) supporting Ho3.

Table 5.11: Hypothised results

Hypothised relationship	**Standardised estimate**	**t value**	**p value**	**Decision**
Success <---Networks	-.131	-2.199	.028	Accept Ho 1
Success <---Innovation	.671	8.671	.000	Reject Ho 2
Success <---Branding	.113	1.934	.053	Accept Ho 3
R square				
Success	.053			

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5.12 Reliability analysis

This study took an internal consistency approach to reliability that tested the homogeneity of the items (Schindler, 2019:242) and supported measurement of multiple items (Bell *et al.*, 2019:173).

5.12.1 Cronbach's Alpha

The Cronbach's alpha was used to check the internal consistency (Nawi, Tambi, Samat, & Mustapha 2020:21), because it measures the consistency of multi-dimensional items A good and acceptable Cronbach's Alpha should be greater than 0.70. (Barbera, Naibert, Komperda, & Pentecost 2020:21). The reliability was checked on SPSS using 14 indicators of the four factors for the following constructs: success, business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation. Table 5.12.1 shows the reliability of the four factors of the proposed model.

Table 5.12.1: Reliability of data

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.745	14

The results revealed that the questionnaire items were acceptable and found to be reliable since Cronbach's Alpha was 0.745 (Djakasaputra, Wijaya, Utama, Yohana, Romadhoni & Fahlevi 2021:306).

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5.13 Validity analysis

The convergent validity of the constructs was evaluated on SPSS Amos. Table 5.13 shows the convergent validity (AVE) of the data. All the standardised factor loadings in the model were higher that 0.5 hence they were considered statistically significant (Cheung, Cooper-Thomas, Lau & Wang 2023:6). The values of the AVE for the four constructs were: 0.594, 0.833, 0.771 and 0.757. They all exceeded the AVE threshold of >0.50. (Sujati & Akhyar 2020:233). This implied that the research instrument was valid.

Table 5.13 Validity of data

Construct	**Standardised factor loading**	**Sum of squared standardised loadings**	**Convergent validity (AVE)**
Success		2.968	0.594
Business networks		2.499	0.833
Entrepreneurial branding		2.313	0.771
Innovation		2.270	0.757

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5.14 Conclusion of the quantitative research findings

Following the testing of the research hypothesis in section 5.10, the study concluded that the proposed conceptual framework does not with the quantitative research findings. The framework stated that business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation contributes to the success of start-ups. However, the hypothesis stated that the impact of business networks on start-ups' success was negative and insignificant. In addition, it stated that the impact of entrepreneurial branding on start-ups' success was positive and insignificant. On the other hand, the impact of innovation on start-ups' success was positive and significant, further confirming what was stated in the proposed framework, that innovation lies at the centre of the business networks and entrepreneurial branding.

5.15 Chapter summary

This chapter provided an analysis of the quantitative data. SPSS was used to analyse the data. First the descriptive statistics was anaysed including demographic information and the background of start-ups. Data was screened and missing data was imputed. A test for normality was performed. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis were performed to verify the structure of the model. The model was found to be a good fit.

Hypothesis testing was performed to establish the relationships between the constructs. The quantitative research findings contradicted the proposed conceptual framework that: business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation contributes to the success of start-ups. However, the research findings on the other hand confirmed that innovation lied at the centre of business networks, entrepreneurial branding.

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Chapter 6: Qualitative Data Analysis

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the quantitative analysis of the study. This chapter presents the qualitative analysis. The qualitative data were collected through structured interviews (Appendix B) with the start-up owners in Johannesburg and Pretoria. Through snowballing, six participants were identified in Johannesburg and two in Pretoria. The participants, five males and three females, are all start-up owners; their businesses are outlined in Table 6.5. Pseudonyms were used in place of real company names to protect their identity. As discussed in Chapter 4, the analysis was based on a grounded theory and case study analysis approach. The analysis addressed the qualitative research questions presented in Chapters 1 and 4. It applied Yin's case study protocol starting with the how questions presented in sections 6.1.1.1 and 6.1.1.2, then the study proposition, unit of analysis establishing the link between the data and proposition presented in 6.3, and the criteria for interpretation of the findings to confirm or negate the conceptual framework proposed in Chapter 1, is presented in

Section 6.3.1.

The first case (Creative Crafts) was used as a pilot study; the researcher then analysed the data and wrote a report. The second case (InoMedia) was also analysed, and a report was written. The rest of the case studies studies (As You go, Weblink, Convy Store, Fascinations, Le'Consult and Autosave) were then analysed manually and reports were written for each individual case conducted. In addition, a cross sectional analysis was used to show similarities and differences across the cases.

Due to the ongoing debates about the use or non-use of quotes in qualitative research, the researcher opted for the use of quotations. Eldh, Årestedt & Berterö (2020:1) argue that qualitative research findings are habitually associated with quotations, and they seem to be normalised within qualitative research writing (Parkin & Kimergård 2022:109). However, there is limited research that justifies their inclusion (Eldh *et al*.

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2020:1). Polit and Beck (2016), purport that there are no guidelines on the use of quotations. The researchers use their discretion on the how, why and when they are used.

6.1.1 Qualitative research objectives

The qualitative research objectives consisted of the primary and the secondary research objectives that guided the analysis of the study. Firstly, the analysis was done on the primary research objectives. The secondary research objectives were instrumental in explaining the depth analysis of the primary objective.

6.1.1.1 Primary research question

How do business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation contribute to the success of start-ups?

6.1.1.2 Secondary research questions

1. Is your business successful or not?

2. Do you use business networks, in your business and how does this strategy contribute to the success of your business?

3. Do you use entrepreneurial branding in your business and how does this strategy contribute to the success of your business?

4. Do you use innovation in your business and how does this strategy contribute to the success of your business?

6.2 Summary of descriptive statistics

Table 6.2 shows the descriptive results of the qualitative research. From a sample size of 20 participants, nine(9) of them were interviewed providing a response rate of 40%.

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The response rate proved to be sufficient since it generated a replication of themes from the interviews, hence a saturation point was reached. The ratio of black owned start-ups to white owned start-ups was high. This may have been caused by snowball sampling. Participants tend to make referrals of the same race. The ratio of females to males was also high (3:6). The males tend to make male referrals than female referrals.

Table 6.2: Descriptive analysis

Category	Number/ratio/percentage
Sample size	20
Number of respondents	8
Response rate	40%
Gender ratio (females to males)	3:6
Race (whites to blacks)	1:7

6.3 Study proposition

Chapter 4 indicated that the unit of analysis for the study is start-ups. The proposition as indicated in chapters 1 and 4 is that business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation contributes to the success of start-ups. The researcher used pattern marching to establish whether the patterns matched or not or and why they matched or did not. An explanation was provided as follows: The findings of the study supported the study proposition that business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation

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contributes to the success of start-ups. By confirm the use of the three strategies combined, the findings supported the proposition of a new concept: Innovative Networked Brands. The concept suggested that the three strategies are inseparable. If start-ups could combine them, they would realise growth and eventually become successful.

6.3.1 Criteria for interpretation

Data was analysed case-by case. A cross-case analysis was then conducted to establish the similarities and differences between the cases. Following the cross-case analysis, a holistic case study analysis of the start-ups was conducted, and the discussions were supported by the literature with the aim to establish whether they agree or negate the conceptual framework.

6.4 Case selection

As indicated in chapter 4, Start-ups included in the study were registered with Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC), they had been operating for a maximum of 5 years or less. In addition, they were operating in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Soweto.

6.5 Background of the Cases

Table 6.5 provides a summary of the background of the case studies. It gives a demographic overview of the start-ups as well as the summarised details of the interviews. Eight start-up owners were identified through snowball sampling. The snowball was used because the researcher lives outside South Africa and Covid-19 restrictions made travel very difficult. The case selection is supported by Yin (2004: xv), who argues that in a straightforward theory, there must be two or three literal replications.

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Table 6.5: Outline of the cases studies

Case	**Company 1**	**Company 2**	**Company 3**	**Company 4**	**Company 5**	**Company 6**	**Company 7**	**Company 8**
Company pseudonym	**Creative Crafts**	**InoMedia**	**As you go**	**Weblink**	**Convenience store**	**Fascinations**	**Le' Consult**	**Autosave**
Sector	Bakery and Confectionery	Media production	Food	IT	Food	Gifting	Finance	Auto industry
Product/service	Cakes	Photography	Fast foods	Web designs	Fast foods	Gifts	Consultancy	Motor repairs
Length of operation	5 years	5 years	1 year 5 months	5 years	3 years	4 years	3 years	4 years
Location	Johannesburg	Johannesburg	Johannesburg	Pretoria	Pretoria	Johannesburg	Johannesburg	Johannesburg
No. of interviews	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Interview type	Virtual	Virtual	Virtual	Virtual	Face to face	Virtual	Virtual	Virtual
Audio length of Interview	24 minutes 43 seconds	39 minutes 53 seconds	31 minutes 19 seconds	41 minutes 36 seconds	26 minutes 54 seconds	34 minutes 24 seconds	39 minutes 58 seconds	40 minutes 51seconds

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6.6 Coding

The analysis of the transcription was done manually. As indicated in Chapter 4, the analysis was done on an individual case basis before a cross case analysis was conducted. The analysis used a grounded theory approach to coding, starting with the open code, then the axiel coding, and finally, the selective coding. Table 6.6 demonstrates how the researcher arrived at the selected themes explained in 6.5. Transcript from three cases were used: Creative Crafts, Fascinations and Convenience Stores The research question 2.2 was used: **Would you say your business is successful or not?** The researcher started with the open codes. Highlights were used throughout the coding process to group the related Axial codes that ultimately emerged into selective codes. The researcher then connected the selective codes and developed a theme: start-up commitment. That implied that for start-ups to be successful, there has to be commitment powered by hard work and devotion to the start-up, identification of challenges in the business, sourcing feedback from the customers and the ability to measure growth.

Table 6.6 Process of coding

Would you say your business is successful or not?

Transcript	**Open coding**	**Axial code**	**Selective code**
Creative Craft Its really hard to judge. Why I say this is because sometimes I stop because of pressure at work. When I got the time to do what I'm supposed to do, *yone* 'it" does flourish.	hard to judge Pressure at work	Hard judgement Pressure	Challenge to commitment

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	When devoted time it flourishes	Devotion	Devotion
Fascinations I would say it is, relative to when I started, obviously, I'm not where I want to be but from where I started. I know it is very difficult for a start-up business to grow past a year…	Yes, relative to when I started. I'm not where I want to be. Very difficult for a start-up business to grow past a year…	Measurement Challenges	Measurement of growth Challenges to Commitment
Convenient Store I would say the hard work has paid off. Success is a difficult thing to say, obviously with customers feedback, its always good to hear the feedback, there's honestly not many complaints but more positive things we try and improve on what a customer feels and their feelings towards the business.	Hard work pay off Success is hard to say Good to hear customer feedback Less complaints more positive things	Hard work pays Success not easy Customer feedback Customer feedback	Hard work Customer feedback

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	Improve customer satisfaction	Customer satisfaction	Customer satisfaction

6.7 Themes

Themes have been developed in two categories: (i) case by case (ii) across cases. Section 6.8 summarises the findings of the case-by-case category and section 6.9 presents the across case themes. It is worth noting that there were some themes that were used interchangeably by the participants while some terms were new and suggested for use by the researcher.

a) Innovation was used interchangeably with creativity, and collaboration was used interchangeably with partnerships.

b) The suggested terms for this study were: customer twinning, meaning customers were shared among the start-ups, and greentrepreneurship, which meant entrepreneurs who embraced eco-friendly products or the use of eco-friendly materials.

6.8 Case by case analysis

The analysis is categorised into the background of the cases, the main themes that emerged in each case and the summary of the findings for each case. The background provides information about the location of the start-up, the years of operation, gender of the owner/manager and the type of business they operated. The start-ups were identified by pseudonyms. The main themes that emerged from the primary and secondary research questions were tabulated per case. Lastly, the summary of findings was provided.

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6.8.1 Case analysis – Case 1: Creative crafts

6.8.1.1 Background

Creative Crafts is situated in Johannesburg, South Africa. It has been operating for five years and is owned and operated by one person, a female. The company produces cakes and confectionery products and sells them in Johannesburg and the surrounding cities.

6.8.1.2 Main themes in Case 1

The most domineering themes emerged in Q4.1 and Q4.2 as indicated in Table 6.8.1.2, followed by first theme that emerged from Q2.3 and Q3.1. The themes that appeared more than once are brand awareness, creativity, professional packaging, customers satisfaction advertising.

Table 6.8.1.2: Themes emerging from Case 1: Creative Crafts.

Innovative networked brands (Q4.1 and Q4.2)	
Brand awareness	Brand loyalty
Creativity	Customer satisfaction
Professional packaging	Advertising
Business success (Q2.2)	
measurement of growth	Devotion to achieve objectives

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Challenges to commitment	
Business networks (Q2.3 and Q 3.1)	
Start-up advertisement	Start-up growth
Start-up identity	Start-up innovation
Entrepreneurial branding (Q2.4 and Q3.2)	
Professional packaging	Brand awareness
Innovation (Q2.5 and Q3.3)	
Creativity	Customer satisfaction

6.8.1.3 Summary of the findings

The use of the three strategies combined is evident in this case as shown by the themes that emerged from Q4.1 and Q4.2. The three strategies were primarily used to motivate the growth of start-ups.

> *"I think the main expectation is growth… having those strategies in place helps the business grow, that is the expectation." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

In addition, Creative Crafts used the strategies to motivate their creativity in branding and advertising which in turn led to customer satisfaction and eventually customer loyalty. The other strategy that stood out was business networks. Creative Crafts

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used networks to expand their start-up, advertise the brand and share innovative ideas that make them competitive.

> *"Yes, definitely, that is the ultimate expectation that when you network more people get to know about you, they get to see your product." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Creative crafts felt that business networks promoted start-up identity and that inspired them to be unique and be known in the market. The uniqueness of their business was the major attraction of their customer base.

> *"It is a way of making you stand out, so people know when they see a logo this is what… this is the company that it is… you know… come up with different ways of standing out. That is, what will attract "di customara" customers or that's what will attract the people you are servicing… that thing that makes you stand out." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Creative Crafts that entrepreneurial branding motivated them to be known in the market and they used professional packaging to promote the brand identity. Innovation motivated their creativity. Coming up with creative ways of being unique in the market, attracted more customers. Making the customer happy was vital for Creative Crafts. Satisfied customers become loyal to start-ups and refer other customers to the business.

6.8.2 Case analysis – Case 2: InoMedia

6.8.2.1 Background

The second case study was conducted with InoMedia, a photography start-up situated in Johannesburg, South Africa. It has also been operating for five years. It is owned and operated by one person, a male. The company specialises in professional

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photography for both individuals and corporate. Their clientele is widely spread across South Africa.

6.8.2.2 Main themes in Case 2

Table 6.8.2.1 shows that the domineering themes emerged in Q4.1 and Q4.2 implying that InoMedia engages the three strategies under study in their start-up. These were followed by themes that emerged from Q2.4 and Q3.2 implying that entrepreneurial branding the most preferred strategy, followed by business networks and lastly innovation.

Table 6.8.2.2: Themes emerging from Case 2: InoMedia

Innovative networked brands (Q4.1 and Q4.2)	
Intention	Brand awareness
Needs assessment	Skills and competence
Communications	Challenges to start-up growth
Future plans	
Business success (Q2.2)	
measurement of growth	Devotion to achieve objectives
Start-up inspiration	Challenges to commitment
Business networks (Q2.3 and Q 3.1)	

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Start-up advertisement	Start-up growth
Start-up innovation	
Entrepreneurial branding (Q2.4 and Q3.2	
Brand awareness	Brand association
Personal fulfilment	Brand quality
Innovation (Q2.5 and Q3.3)	
Creativity	Customer satisfaction

6.8.2.3 Summary of the findings

InoMedia also emphasised that the use of the three strategies in question was for the growth of their start-up. However, they acknowledged that start-ups faced challenges of having one person operate the business which appeared to be unsustainable.

> *"… meaning if I use the strategies …I think it will be growth. Literally my business is…. just me alone, I'm doing the photos, setting up, finances, marketing and it's not sustainable for the long run because like I said being a Pastor, I want that to be my focus and let it run by itself into a large scale or medium scale business." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

The three strategies were used to create awareness about the brand, conduct needs assessment about the needs of their customers and develop or enhance skills and competences of the employees. InoMedia engaged entrepreneurial branding to

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familiarise their customers with their products to distinguish them from others in the market and promote start-up identity.

Business networks were used for the expansion of start-ups, sharing of resources, motivation to innovate and be competitive as well as advertising the start-ups across the networks. Innovation inspired start-up creativity and this led to customer satisfaction.

InoMedia acknowledged the importance of committing to the set objectives and admits to not devoting much attention to the business, hence their failure to reach their intended target.

> *"So, it was a form of just doing something on the side outside of pastoring to have something stable coming." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

6.8.3 Case analysis – Case 3: As You Go

6.8.3.1 Background

As You Go is a fast-food company based in Johannesburg. It has been operating for one year and five months and is owned by one person, a male, who has hired two employees. The company started by supplying fast foods to the on-campus students and later expanded to the general market.

6.8.3.2 Main themes in Case 2

Business networks has the most domineering themes, followed by innovation and innovative networked brands. This implies that As You Go engages the three strategies in their start-up but more especially business networks and innovation.

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Table 6.8.3.2 Themes emerging from Case 3: As You Go

Innovative networked brands (Q4.1 and Q4.2)	
Sustainability	Consistency
Quality	Word of mouth
Responsiveness	
Business success (Q2.2)	
SWOT analysis	Measurement of growth
Business networks (Q2.3 and Q 3.1)	
Quality assurance	Skills and competence
Market testing	Customer satisfaction
Communication	Uniqueness
Monitoring and evaluation	
Entrepreneurial branding (Q2.4 and Q3.2	
Professional packaging	Customer retention
Word of mouth	

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Innovation (Q2.5 and Q3.3)	
Brand awareness	Creativity
Skills and competence	Quality
Professional packaging	Customer satisfaction

6.8.3.3 Summary of the findings

Quality assurance played a key role in building and enhancing business networks. To maintain the quality of their products, networking with various suppliers was essential. As You Go claimed that the quality of their products made them unique.

> *"Well, the only thing that makes me stand out is the quality of the patty that I use and all that." Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Acquiring relevant skills and competences was vital for the As You go. Networking with other start-ups helped them to source out skills and competences they did not possess. Testing their marking was handy and less costly since they used their networks to test their new menus. Constant communication with customers and suppliers was key to ensuring the right supply of raw materials and satisfaction of the customers.

Innovation was also at the centre of As You Go**.**

Brand awareness was at the centre of As You Go. They put more effort into adding new cooking methods and flavours to the current menus to stand out from their competition.

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Maintaining the quality of the products, gave their customers value for money and it led to customer satisfaction.

As You Go acknowledged the role played by business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation in their quest for success.

> *"Without them, I don't think we would be where we are, I don't think would even be anywhere." Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Not only did they expect their start-up to succeed when they engaged business networks, entrepreneurial branding, and innovation but they also expected it to continue growing and become sustainable. They were consistent and timely in offering the goods and services. This motivated customer satisfaction. Their use of packaging differentiated from their competition, and they earned a lot of referrals through word of mouth.

Analysis of the strengths weaknesses opportunities and threats (SWOT) was essential for the start-up to assess the internal and external factors likely to affect the success of the business. They felt that their business was successful, and they measured success by the start-up being able to operate even in their absence.

> *"I assume its successful given at this point the business can run without me being there I think I'd I have to be away for quite some time and if I come back its still running then I say no, this has been a successful business". Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

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6.8.4 Case analysis – Case 4: Weblink

6.8.4.1 Background

Weblink is an information technology (IT) company based in Johannesburg. It is owned and operated by one person, a male. The company is a web development and digital marketing agency. They develop websites for businesses across South Africa.

6.8.4.2 Main themes in Case 4

In this section the domineering themes emerged from Q2.3 and Q 3.1, Q4.1 and Q4.2 and Q2.4 and Q3.2. This implied that Weblink though engaged the three strategies, but they engaged business networks and entrepreneurial branding more.

Table 6.8.4.2. Themes emerged from Case 4: Weblink

Innovative networked brands (Q4.1 and Q4.2)	
Skills and competence	Brand awareness
Competitive advantage	Strategy
Creativity	Monitoring and evaluation
Business success (Q2.2)	
Skills and competence	Challenges to commitment
Business networks (Q2.3 and Q 3.1)	
Subscription to business networks	Market testing

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Mentoring	Quality assurance
Growth	Branding
Patience	
Entrepreneurial branding (Q2.4 and Q3.2	
Word of mouth	Referrals
Digital marketing	Owner branding
Brand awareness	Credibility
Innovation (Q2.5 and Q3.3)	
Digital marketing	Brand awareness
Skills and competences	

6.8.4.3 Summary of the findings

The business networks Weblink was subscribing to, provided some raw materials for them, in addition they used them for market testing. These networks also offered some mentoring programs for them. The other benefits of engaging in business networks was that Weblink could quality assure their business idea, they contributed to their growth and exposed them to things, they were not aware they could use to develop their business.

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Though Weblink did not conduct a lot of marketing, their customers spread the word about their business. As their customers continued to be aware of the brand and associated with it, they continued to spread the word. Making customers aware of the brand, did not guarantee a purchase. However, Weblink argued that once they were aware of the brand they would ultimately buy.

Weblink asserted that the interview had assisted them to contextualise the use of the strategies: business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation, in their start-up. Of the three strategies understudy, Weblink had engaged branding and innovation. Through the interview they realised that if they had engaged business networks as well, they could have saved a lot of money.

6.8.5 Case analysis – Case 5: Convy Store

6.8.5.1 Background

Convy store is a fast food and convenience store operated by one person, a male. The store is based in Pretoria and offers fast foods and convenience items for university students.

6.8.5.2: Main themes in Case 5

Most of the themes emerged from Q2.5 and Q3.3. this implied that Convy Store engaged innovation more than business networks and entrepreneurial branding. Table 6.8.5.2 presents the themes that emerged in Case study 5.

Table 6.8.5.2 Themes emerged from Case 5: Convy Store

Innovative networked brands (Q4.1 and Q4.2)	
Customer satisfaction	Responsiveness

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Brand awareness	
Business success (Q2.2)	
Attributes	Quality of the entrepreneur
Challenges to commitment	
Business networks (Q2.3 and Q 3.1)	
Customer retention	Customer satisfaction
Managing relations	Customer service
Growth	
Entrepreneurial branding (Q2.4 and Q3.2	
Branding and advertising	Customer relations
Word of mouth	Strategy for stability
Innovation (Q2.5 and Q3.3)	
Devotion	Time management
Skills and competences	Customer need

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Uniqueness	Creativity

6.8.5.3 Summary of the findings

Consistent and effective creativity is vital for the changing business climate of the 4IR. Creativity presented an opportunity for Convy Store to win their customers and gain a competitive edge. In the quest to be competitive Convy Store worked on becoming creative and unique and they achieved this by acquiring skills and knowledge and sharing it with the employees so that they knew what was expected of them. Managing time was another attribute of an entrepreneur that gave them a competitive edge. Lack of time management crippled the growth of the start-up.

One aspect of strengthening the business networks was to build and manage good relationships with the stakeholders. As they built their networks, Convy store looked forward to enhancing relationships with their suppliers. Provision of better deals strengthens the start-up business networks. Start-ups were always looking for ways to retaining existing customers and attracting new ones. One of these ways was to get better deals from the suppliers so that the price of the product or service could be reduced.

Providing customers with the good service they needed, also promotes start-up identity and start-ups tend to benefit from free advertising. Branding and advertising are vital aspects of entrepreneurial branding. However, Convy Store acknowledged that their location did not give them enough opportunity to invest in branding and advertising because of their business model. They were restricted to supplying to the university students only.

Convy Store also acknowledged that communication was vital to branding because it enhanced customer relations. They invested more time in getting to know their

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customers to build and nurture their relationships. To satisfy the customers, Convey Store motivates emphasised the importance of responsive and timeous attendance of customer complaints. Being responsive meant resolving the queries timeously and getting to the root of the problem to ensure the customer's needs were met.

6.8.6 Case Analysis – Case 6: Fascinations

6.8.6.1: Background

Fascinations is a female-owned start-up based in Johannesburg. They produce gifts for the South African market. Fascinations has been in operation for three years.

6.8.6.2: Main themes in Case 6

Fascinations engaged all the tree strategies in their start-up. Table 6.8.6.2 shows the themes that emerged from the three strategies. They are summarised in section 6.8.6.3.

Table 6.8.6.2: Themes emerged from Case 6: Fascinations

Innovative networked brands (Q4.1 and Q4.2)	
Skills and competences	Sustainability
Brand identity	Consistency
Needs assessment	Trust
New market	
Business success (Q2.2)	

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Measurement of growth	Persistence
Subtheme 2: Challenges to commitment	
Business networks (Q2.3 and Q 3.1)	
Creativity	Partnerships or collaborations
Customer twinning	Brand awareness
Brand image	Vision
Diversity	Mentoring
Skills and knowledge	
Entrepreneurial branding (Q2.4 and Q3.2	
Brand awareness	Brand reminder
Business brand	Skills and competence
Brand image	Growth
Partnerships or collaborations	

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Innovation (Q2.5 and Q3.3)	
Creativity	New ways
New strategy	Customer satisfaction
Growth	Risk
Costing and pricing	Partnerships or collaborations
Greentrepreneurship	

6.8.6.3 Summary of findings

Fascinations started the business with the intention of making money but as the business began to grow, they realised it could be more than just making money. Successfully engaging business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation to their start-up motivated growth. They perceived the three strategies as being interlinked and consistently engaging them contributed towards the growth of the business. Growth was evident in Fascinations start-up, in comparison from where they started and where they were. Initially, they perceived growth in term of the money they made but as time went on, they perceived growth in terms of the number of entrepreneurs they impacted. They faced the challenge of survival. Even though they overcame the challenge, they acknowledged that it was a universal challenge for start-ups.

> "Very difficult for a start-up business to grow past a year." *Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

The three strategies are said to have made an enormous impact in the Fascinations start-up and has also influenced their way of thinking. They felt fulfilled and proud of

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their growth in the three years of their operations. Acquiring and sharing skills with other start-ups strengthened their start-ups. The strategies promoted sustainability, brand identity and trust among the customers. There was, however, a need for Fascinations to be abreast of their customers' needs and this was realised through needs assessment.

Business networks promoted diversity because start-ups interacted with different people from all walks of life. Fascinations considered engaging in business networks as visionary. They argued that one could engage branding and be innovative in their start-up but if they did not have business networks, they were like a business without a vision. Fascinations engaged in partnerships and collaborations with other well-established organisations for support and to tap into the opportunities for other important yet exciting events for start-ups, such as competitions.

When asked if they employed innovation in their start-up, Fascinations agreed that it was relevant for this era. It gave the customer some assurance that the start-up was relevant. To meet the demands of the disruptive innovation, Fascinations felt that they should keep abreast with the changes, even those that happened in their country, in order to remain competitive. They lamented that some start-ups did not engage in innovation or give it the attention it deserved, including themselves. However, in future they would give it priority.

They embraced creativity and new ways of doing things to keep up with the rapid changes in the market and to prove to their customers that they move with the times. Innovation created new markets for Fascinations. When they started to go beyond their normal market of gifting and created venues for the clients' events, their sales increased. Fascinations considered the reduction of cost and price of products and services as eco-friendliness as innovative.

Fascinations used brand awareness as a tool to reach their customers and to build brand identity. Customers could easily identify Fascinations when they saw the owner, However, they asserted that commitment was necessary if their brand were to compete

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with the big names. Fascinations considered entrepreneurial branding critical for the start-up because they claimed that it could set the tone and the image for the business and sell the product before the market was aware of it.

6.8.7 Case Analysis – Case 7: Le' Consult

6.8.7.1 Background

Le'Consult is a consulting and investment company that is based in Johannesburg. It has been operating for three years and it is owned by one person, a female.

6.8.7.2 Main themes for Case 7

Table 6.8.7.2 shows the themes that emerged from the research question. The domineering themes emerged from questions Q2.3 and Q3.1 and Q2.4 and Q3.2. Generally, Le'Consult engaged the three strategies under study.

Table 6.8.7.2 Themes emerged from Case 7: Le'Consult.

Innovative networked brands (Q4.1 and Q4.2)	
Innovative networks	Innovative solutions
Entrepreneurial mindset	Skills and competence
Start-up funding	
Business success (Q2.2)	

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: Growth	Skills and competences
Strategy	
Business networks (Q2.3 and Q 3.1)	
Skills and competence	Referrals
Growth	Strategy
Business networks	Research
Entrepreneurial branding (Q2.4 and Q3.2	
Owner branding	Measurement of growth
Brand awareness	Strategy
Business networks	Skills and competences
Innovation (Q2.5 and Q3.3)	
Strategy	Brand awareness

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Business networks	Environmental landscape
Research development	

6.8.7.3 Summary of findings

Business networks are an integral part of start-ups.

"Network is important." Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.

From their experience, they have learnt that once they got a network and built trust with them, they remained loyal to them. Their business networks are vital to their start-ups because they share their knowledge and experience with them and provide an update of the trends in the industry. Though they were still in the infancy stage, Le'Consult believed in building their business networks and perfecting them. Business networks motivated them to move out of their comfort zones. Research on start-ups is an area that is emphasised by literature. In their quest to build and strengthen their business networks Le'Consult conduct research to identify the gaps in the market.

Referrals provide Le'Consult with confidence about their start-up. The beauty of referrals is that they can come from anywhere, even outside the networks that start-ups are connected to. Referrals made them feel a more personal connection to their business networks. They are not only meant to bring customers into the business now, but some customers will also at a later stage contact the business and make their purchase. According to Le'Consult referrals depends on the business structure of the start-up, how far they were and how big they had grown to service the customers.

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Growth was the goal for Le'Consult start-up. Growth was expressed in several ways: first it was expressed in terms of brand identity, and strategy implementation. Secondly it was described in terms of engagement in bigger projects. Thirdly it was demonstrated in terms strategy implementation. Fourthly it was indicated by the diverse number of people from different industries and lastly the value addition that business networks, branding and innovation brought to the start-ups.

The main strategic goal of Le'Consult was to become a solution driven start-up, whose aim was to create solutions for their customers. They achieve that through offering strategic advice and service provision. They argued that their interest was on the people, and they believed that the customers had the solutions they were looking for and they in turn could develop solutions by engaging with them. Engaging with customers was a strategy that has been working for them and it contributed towards their growth.

Le'Consult purport that they were still in the infancy stage of their start-up which comprised of only one employee, and they were at owner branding stage. However, they were looking forward to developing into a product brand. They acknowledged that their customers were aware of their brand. Le'Consult embraced the use of brand strategy in their start-up.

Engaging the three strategies under study is anticipated to bring growth to Le'Consult. When asked whether the use of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation brought success to the business their answer was,

"Definitely." Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Le'Consult's main goal is networking and engaging customers. Developing and utilising business networks motivated their brand identity. Furthermore, business networks motivated innovation and this attracted people who desired to work with them.

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> *"… our primary one is networks and engaging… innovation comes through our networks and engaging people… we have got great networks, recommendations, people wanting to work with us…" Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Engaging in innovative solutions ultimately became a branding strategy for Le'Consult. More emphasis was placed on developing and enhancing skills and competences that created positive mindset among the entrepreneurs as that was considered to keep the start-ups alive.

Le'Consult asserted that though funding was an important motivator of start-up growth, there was need to consider the type of start-up being funded. Their argument was that start-ups did not need funding at the same level. Though some needed funding from the onset, some needed to find their ground before they could be assisted. Some start-ups demanded the entrepreneur to have experience in the area they were venturing into, such as venture capital. Le'Consult, perceived that some start-ups could start small and grow into giant businesses, even when they don't get funding, they slowly grow. Additionally, Le'Consult argued that some basic principles needed to be considered when providing funding for start-ups to avoid funding businesses that collapse. They purport that there were cases of start-ups who started without funding, worked their way up and now felt they were ready to get funding for acceleration of the business.

Le'Consult argued that they were in the early start-up stage hence when they compared themselves with the other players in the consulting industry, they were not successful. However, in their small space as a start-up, they felt that they were successful. Their success was measured in terms of the help they provided and the sufficient capital they raised. Le'Consult's strategic goal was to become an adequate start-up that could create value in the long run. Then they intended to expand or invest into other products and services.

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"I m a huge fan of innovation." Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa

Innovation made the start-up stand out, be competitive and generated income. Having a competitive advantage is being able to fit into the system or disrupt it to contribute to better service delivery. They described competitive advantage as the impact and the influence felt by their customers.

To have a competitive edge, Le'Consult layed down two strategic objectives they intended to implement to make them stand out against their competition: being a solution driven start-up and investing in intellectual property rights. They purported that their business was innovative because it was basically about problem solving. The solution driven strategic objective was geared towards finding solutions for the industry. Though they are not utilising the social media branding platforms, Le'Consult felt that their interpersonal relation and understanding made their customers aware of their brand. Additionally, they argued that the impact they made in their clients carried their brand.

One of the vital tasks start-ups needed to engage in was research and development. Huge businesses across the globe like Microsoft invest a lot of money in this activity. Le'Consult find this activity essential for their business to help them come up with innovative ways of thinking and bringing solutions to their business.

6.8.8. Case Analysis – Case 8: Autosave

6.8.8.1 Background

Autosave is an auto mechanic company situated in Johannesburg, South Africa. It has been operating for four years. It has one owner, a male, who has one employee. They do panel beating and spray painting and minor mechanical repairs.

6.8.8.2 Main themes for Case 8

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Table 6:8.8.2. Themes emerged from Case 8: Autosave

Innovative networked brands (Q4.1 and Q4.2)	
Subtheme 1: Reputation	
Business success (Q2.2)	
Skills and competences	Quality
Challenges to commitment	
Business networks (Q2.3 and Q 3.1)	
Skills and competences	Quality
Growth	Costing and pricing
Entrepreneurial branding (Q2.4 and Q3.2	
Word of mouth	Entrepreneurial branding
Referrals	Quality
Brand awareness	

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Innovation (Q2.5 and Q3.3)	
Referrals	Customer satisfaction
Costing and pricing	Quality
Creativity	Skills and competence
Terms of payment	Customer retention
Timeously	Brand awareness
Communications	

6.8.8.3 Summary of findings

For Autosave to be creative and perform a quality job, they needed to have appropriate skills and competences. They applied what they had learned through training, and they performed tasks according to the specifications. Autosave believed in providing quality up to the standard of major players in the market. Their attention to detail left their customers satisfied and coming for more. Satisfied customers eventually became loyal, and they referred more customers to Autosave.

Business networks motivated start-up growth. This was confirmed by Autosave who claimed that networking with service providers helped their business to grow. As a result of the bulk of the work coming from the networks, was able to offer customers some discount. Autosave perceived it innovative and competitive to offer reasonable

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pricing to their customers. They also offered favourable terms of payments to ease the burden of paying the full amount and this motivated customer retention. In addition, they worked within a turnaround time to keep the customers' promises.

Autosave acknowledged that branding was very important. It made the product and services easily recognisable Their branding was mainly done online. However, they did not utilise it fully. The other way to make customers aware of their brand was through word of mouth. Most of the customers identified them by the company name.

> "*They know me as Tim. I introduced myself as Tim a panel beater… most of them they identify us by the company name…" Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Despite the challenges they faced because of lack of resources, Autosave felt that the three strategies: business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation were responsible for the reputation and growth they were experiencing.

> *"What I can say I think our business we are seeing the light in the tunnel because of using those three strategies we are seeing the light in the tunnel." Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

When asked whether their start-up was successful or not, Autosave declared that they were still only headed for success because they did not have all the resources their competitors had. Lack of resources, such as finance to purchase equipment, limited their ability to perform to the best of their ability.

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6.9 Cross case analysis

The cross-case analysis looks at the similarities and difference between the start-ups as well as an analysis of themes derived from the primary and secondary. The similarities and differences between the cases are tabulated in Table 6.9.

Table 6.9: Similarities and differences between the cases

Similarities	Differences
They are start-ups and have been in operation for a period not more than 5 years.	They are in different sampled locations-: six in Johannesburg and two Pretoria
The method used to collect data was interviews.	They are not in the same industry; some are in the service and some in the production industries
	Their length of operation ranges from 1 year to 5 years.
	The sample consisted of 3 females and 5 males

6.9.1 Cross case analysis of primary research question

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Table 6.9.1 shows the themes that emerged in a cross-tabulation format. Each case study had its own unique themes which were either different or similar to the others across the cases. Since the analysis followed a Glaser Strauss approach, it identified the similarities and differences among the eight cases as shown in Table 6.9.2. Similarities are indicated by a tick (√) while differences are indicated by X. When participants were asked if they engaged business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation in their start-ups, the domineering themes were brand awareness and creativity, followed by brand loyalty, referrals, consistency and skills and competences

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Table 6.9.1: Themes from primary research question

Variable	Theme	Creative Crafts	InoMedia	As You Go	Weblink	Convy Store	Fascinations	Le'Consult	Autosave
Business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation	Brand awareness	√	√	√	X	X	√	√	X
	Brand loyalty	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	√
	Creativity	√	√	X	√	√	√	X	X
	Customer satisfaction	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Professional packaging	X	X	√	X	X	X	x	X
	Skills and competences	X	√	X	√	X	X	√	X
	Competitive advantage	X	√	X	√	X	X	X	X
	Advertising	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

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	Communications	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Quality	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X
	Word of mouth	X	X	√	X	X	X	√	X
	Strategy	X	X	X	√	X	X	√	X
	Brand identity	X	X	X	X	X	√		X
	Referrals	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√
	Needs assessment	X	√	X	X	X	√	X	X
	Trust	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
	Sustainability	X	X	√	X	X	√	X	X
	Consistency	X	X	√	X	X	√	X	√

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	Responsive	X	X	√	X	√	X	X	X
	Monitoring and evaluation	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	X
	Intention	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Reputation	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√
	Customer retention	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√

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6.9.2 Cross case analysis of secondary research questions.

Following an individual case study of eight start-ups, this section then made a cross-case analysis of the cases. To answer the qualitative secondary research questions, on business success, the domineering themes were measurement of growth and challenges to commitment. From the question on the use of business networks, the domineering themes were growth, quality assurance and skills and competences. Two major themes emerged from the question on the use of entrepreneurial branding: brand awareness and word of mouth. Lastly, the domineering themes that emerged from the use of innovation were creativity, customer satisfaction, brand awareness and skills and competence.

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Table 6.9.2 Themes from secondary research questions.

Variable	Theme	Creative Crafts	InoMedia	As You Go	Weblink	Convy Store	Fascina-tions	Le'Consult	Autosave
Business success	Measurement of growth	√	√	√	X	X	√	√	X
	Devotion to achieve objectives	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Challenges to commitment	√	√	X	√	√	√	X	√
	Inspiration	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
	SWOT analysis	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X
	Skills and competences	X	X	X	√	X	X	√	√
	Quality of entrepreneur	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	√

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Variable	Theme	Creative Crafts	InoMedia	As You Go	Weblink	Convy Store	Fascina-tions	Le'Consult	Autosave
	Brand loyalty	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
	Strategy	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X
Business networks	Advertisement	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	
	Growth	√	√	X	√	X	X	√	√
	Brand identity	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Innovation	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Quality assurance	X	X	√	√	X	X	X	√
	Skills and competence	X	X	√	X	X	X	√	√

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Variable	Theme	Creative Crafts	InoMedia	As You Go	Weblink	Convy Store	Fascina-tions	Le'Consult	Autosave
	Market testing	X	X	√	√	X	X	X	X
	Customer satisfaction	X	X	√	X	√	X	X	X
	Communication	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X
	Monitoring and evaluation	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X
	Creativity	X	X	√	X	X	√	X	X
	Subscriptions	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	X
	Referrals	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X
	Mentoring	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	X

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Variable	Theme	Creative Crafts	InoMedia	As You Go	Weblink	Convy Store	Fascina-tions	Le'Consult	Autosave
	Growth	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	X
	Customer retention	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	X
	Managing relations	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	X
	Partnerships and collaborations	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
	Customer twinning	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
	Brand awareness	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
	Brand image	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X

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Variable	Theme	Creative Crafts	InoMedia	As You Go	Weblink	Convy Store	Fascina-tions	Le'Consult	Autosave
	Costing and pricing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√
Entrepreneurial branding	Professional packaging	√	X	√	X	X	X	X	X
	Brand awareness	√	√	X	√	X	√	√	X
	Personal fulfilment	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
	Brand quality	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	√
	Brand association	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X

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Variable	Theme	Creative Crafts	InoMedia	As You Go	Weblink	Convy Store	Fascina-tions	Le'Consult	Autosave
	Customer retention	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X
	Word of mouth	X	X	√	√	√	X	X	√
	Referrals	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	√
	Digital Marketing	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	X
	Owner branding	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	√
	Credibility	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	X
	Branding and advertising	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	X

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Variable	Theme	Creative Crafts	InoMedia	As You Go	Weblink	Convy Store	Fascina-tions	Le'Consult	Autosave
	Customer relations	X	X	X	X	√	X		X
	Strategy for stability	X	X	X	X	√	X	√	X
	Brand reminder	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
	Business brand	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
	Skills and competence	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	X
	Brand image	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
	Growth	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	X

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Variable	Theme	Creative Crafts	InoMedia	As You Go	Weblink	Convy Store	Fascina-tions	Le'Consult	Autosave
	Partnerships and collaboration	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
	Business networks	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X
	Owner branding	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X
Innovation	Creativity	√	√	√	X	√	√	X	√
	Customer satisfaction	√	√	X	X	X	√	X	√
	Brand awareness	X	X	√	√	X	X	√	X
	Skills and competence	X	X	√	√	√	X	X	√

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Variable	Theme	Creative Crafts	InoMedia	As You Go	Weblink	Convy Store	Fascina-tions	Le'Consult	Autosave
	Brand quality	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	√
	Professional packaging	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X
	Digital marketing	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	X
	Devotion	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	X
	Time management	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	X
	customer needs	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	X
	Uniqueness	X	X	X	X	√	√	X	X
	New ways	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X

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Variable	Theme	Creative Crafts	InoMedia	As You Go	Weblink	Convy Store	Fascina-tions	Le'Consult	Autosave
	New strategy	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	X
	Growth	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
	Risk	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
	Costing and Pricing	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	√
	Partnerships and colllaborations	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
	Referrals	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√
	Customer retention	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√

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Variable	Theme	Creative Crafts	InoMedia	As You Go	Weblink	Convy Store	Fascina-tions	Le'Consult	Autosave
	Terms of payment	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√
	Business networks	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X
	Business landscape	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X
	Research and development	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X

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6.10 Qualitative research findings

This section presents the findings of qualitative research based on the semi structured interviews. They are as follows:

Innovative networked brands

Q4.1 If you have engaged these strategies, what would you say have been some of the benefits for your business?

Q4.2 How would you rate the success of your business after incorporating these strategies?

Q5.1 If you have engaged these strategies, what would you say have been some of the benefits for your business?

Business success

Q2.2 What is your perception about the use of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation as strategies of success for start-ups?

Business networks

Q2.3 Do you use business networks to grow your business? (if yes or no, please elaborate)

Q3.1 What is your perception about the use of business networks as a strategy of success for start-ups?

Entrepreneurial branding

Q2.4 Do you use entrepreneurial branding to grow your business? (if yes or no, please elaborate).

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Q3.2 What is your perception about the use of entrepreneurial branding as a strategy of success for start-ups?

Innovation

Q2.5 Do you use innovation to grow your business? (if yes or no, please elaborate)

Q3.4 What is your perception about the use of innovation as a strategy of success for start-ups?

6.10.1 Innovative networked brands

The proposed conceptual framework: innovative networked brands intended to find out whether the three strategies combined can promote the success of start-ups. Literature provides the link between any of the two of the strategies: business networks and innovation, but there is limited literature combining the three strategies at the same time. These interviews provided an insight into how innovative networked brands contributed to the success of start-ups.

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Table 6.10.1 Summary of coding - Q4.1 and Q4.2.

	Topic of discussion	**Creative Crafts**	**InoMedia**	**As You Go**	**Weblink**	**Convy Store**	**Fascinations**	**Le' Consult**	**Autosave**
Q4.1	Gain from strategies	Brand awareness Creativity Professional packaging Advertising Growth Strategy Brand identity	Intention Brand awareness Needs assessment. Skills and competence Communication	Quality Customer relations Professional packaging	Skills and competence Brand awareness Competitive advantage Strengthened brand. Opportunity Compete cost effectively.	Customer satisfaction Responsiveness delivery	Identify risks. Brand awareness Commitment Better resources More customers Exponential growth Achieve goals. Beat competition.	Innovative networks Innovative solutions Branding strategy	Reputation Customer retention Consistency

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			Challenges to start-up Growth Branding Business and personal Respond to needs.						
Q4.2	Expectation of business success	Brand loyalty Customer satisfaction Brand identity Ultimate expectation Ways to improve.	Future plans. In touch with people Innovation Organised	Sustainability Consistency Succeed Growth Professionalism Strategy	Strategy Creativity Monitoring and evaluation Contextualised direction	More customers Repeat business. Continuous service	Sustainability High impact Growth Different outlook Exposure	Entrepreneurial mindset Great networks Recommendations	Cover operational costs. Profit

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				Quality assurance	Drive initiative. Planning				
Q5.1	Impact	Networking Advertising Attract customers. Repeat orders	Expansion Established business. Training of young people Networks	Word of mouth Responsiveness Would not be where we are. Built through networks. Quality Consistency Quick response	Not tried networking Help with advice. New knowledge Tested the market. Exploring digital marketing Traffic Customer interaction	Brand awareness Communication Increase sales. Growth Needs assessment. Trust New market	Influence Customer loyalty Referrals Mentorship More sales New markets	Skills and competence Start-up funding	Starting to open up. Sustainability More customers Referrals

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Table 6.10.2 Main themes – innovative networked brands

Q4.1 Gain	**Q4.2 Success Expectation**	**Q5.1 Impact**
(a) Growth (i) Entrepreneurship mindset (ii) Innovation (b) Competitive advantage (i) Responsive (ii) Compete cost effectively. (c) Needs assessment. (i) Skills and competence (d) Brand awareness (i) Advertising (e) Brand identity (i) Professional packaging	(a) Strategy (i) Planning. (ii) Great networks (iii) Monitoring and evaluation (b) Competitive advantage (i) Consistency (iii) Sustainability	(a) Established business (i) New markets (b) Customer loyalty

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Table 6.10.2 shows the contribution of the three strategies combined to the success of the start-ups. As highlighted in the table, five ways start-ups expect to gain from engaging the three strategies have been categorised as follows: Brand strategy, needs assessment, brand awareness, brand identity and competitive advantage. Start-ups indicated that their success was depends on the development and effective planning and execution of their strategies. In addition, they must be competitive to breakthrough the start-up phase. To reach their goals, start-ups needed to achieve customer loyalty, through building relationships and maintaining satisfied customers. They are, however, cognisant of the importance communicating the personality of their brand and continuously conducting a needs assessment to develop and enhancing their skills and competences, create new markets and prepare themselves for competition.

6.10.2 Business success

This section provides an insight into business success and presents themes that emerged from perceptions made by start-ups on the use of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation as strategies for success.

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Table 6.10.3: Summary of coding – Q2.2

Q2.2	Perception of use of business networks entrepreneurial branding and innovation for business success	Creative Crafts	InoMedia	As You Go	Weblink	Convy Store	Fascinations	Le' Consult	Autosave
		Stability Achieve objectives. Devotion Challenges to commitment. Side hassle Profit	Achieve objectives. Start-up inspiration and passion Communication Professional Impact Sustainability Brand image Lack of income	Run without owner. Continuity	Skills and competence Growth Not full time Different view	Customer feedback Customer satisfaction	Not where I want. Difficult to pass first year. Persistence Brand loyalty brand awareness Referrals	Growth Experience Skills and competence Networks assist with research. Impact Expansion Create value.	Skills and competence Quality Profit

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Table 6.10.4 Main themes - business success

Success
(a) SWOT analysis
(i) Skills and competences
(ii) Quality
(b) Strategy
(i) Devotion to achieve objectives.
(ii) Persistence
(c) Measurement of growth
(i) Profit
(ii) Brand image and loyalty
(iii) Owner's absence
(d) Challenges to commitment
(i) Lack of finance
(ii) Not fulltime
(iii) Difficulty to pass the first year.

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Four main themes emerged when participants were asked if their start-ups were successful or not, demonstrated by Table 6.10.4. The domineering themes wre the measurement of growth and the challenges to commitment. Start-ups are cognisant of their need for growth, and they work hard to break through their start-up phase. Start-ups indicated various ways they use to measure their growth. However, they were cognisant of their challenges to committing to their start-up success.

The other important aspect of start-up success were the Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. The SWOT analysis enabled the start-ups to identify areas where they needed to improve to be successful. In addition, start-ups success depended on their devotion to achieve the set objectives depended on their level of communication, their persistent to grow and the strategy of the start-ups. Start-ups were however mindful of the challenges ahead of them that limited their commitment to succeed.

6.10.3 Business networks

Section 6.10.5 presents a summary of the themes that emerged from the study. It provides an insight about the use of business networks by start-ups to promote success and the perceptions held by start-ups for using the strategy.

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Table 6.10.5: Summary of coding for the secondary research question: Q2.3 and Q3.1

	Topic of discussion	**Creative Crafts**	**InoMedia**	**As You Go**	**Weblink**	**Convy Store**	**Fascinations**	**Le' Consult**	**Autosave**
Q2.3	**Use of business networks**	Start-up advertisement Start-up innovation	Start-up advertisement Skills and competence Strategy Branding Motivation Business requirements	Quality assurance Customer satisfaction Communication Uniqueness Monitoring and evaluation	Subscription to business networks Mentoring Quality assurance Growth Branding Patience	Customer retention Customer satisfaction Managing relations Customer service Growth Improved business New suppliers Better relations Better deals Reduced	Creativity Partnerships/ Collaborations Customer twinning Brand awareness Brand image Vision Diversity Mentoring Skills and knowledge Referrals	Skills and competence Growth Strategy Business networks Research Value adding	Skills and competences Quality

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						costs Growth Brand identity			
Q3.1	Perceptions of using business networks	Start-up growth	Start-up growth Start-up innovation Break barriers. Context Inclusivity Close, low cost Unity Inspiration	Skills and competence Market testing Great achievement	Market testing New skills Relationships Experience Exposure	Market relevant service Better pricing	Growth Commitment Intensify networking	Referrals Skills and competence Growth	Growth Costing and pricing

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6.10.6 Main themes - business networks

Use of business networks	**Perceptions**
(a) Strategy i) Vision ii) Growth (b) Managing relationships (c) Skills and competences (d) Start-up innovation i) Advertisement iii) Market research (e) Partnerships and collaboration i) Customer twinning ii) Referrals	(a) Building and enhancing relationships

Table 6.10.6 provides an insight about the use of business networks as a strategy for start-up success. Strategy emerged as a domineering theme among the start-ups. Though this has not been the case with start-ups in the past decades, the findings showed that start-ups are beginning to realise the importance of strategy in contributing to their market research, customer satisfaction, brand identity success. Other contributing factors are innovation, partnerships and collaborations and skills and competences.

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One theme emerged from the start-ups perceptions about using business networks as strategy for success. The start-ups perceive business networks to build and enhance their businesses to build and enhance relationships.

6.10.4 Entrepreneurial branding

This section provides an insight into the use of entrepreneurial branding as a strategy for success. The structured interview questions also used sought to find out the perceptions of start-ups for using entrepreneurial branding as a strategy for success.

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Table 6.10.7: Summary of coding for the secondary research question: Q2.4 and Q3.2

Q2.4	**Use of entrepreneurship branding**	**Creative Crafts**	**Inomedia**	**As You Go**	**Weblink**	**Convy Store**	**Fascinations**	**Le' Consult**	**Autosave**
		Professional packaging Brand awareness	Brand awareness Brand association Advertising Brand familiarisation Quality	Professional packaging	Word of mouth Referrals Digital marketing Owner branding Advertising	Branding and advertising Customer relations Word o mouth Customer satisfaction Good products Better pricing	Brand awareness Brand reminder Business brand Skills and competence Partnerships/ collaboration Quality Enhance branding	Owner branding Measurement of growth Brand awareness	Word of mouth Entrepreneurial branding
Q3.2	Perceptions of	Brand identity	Personal	Customer	Brand	Strategy	Brand image	Strategy	Referrals

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	using entrepreneurship branding	Unique	fulfilment and achievement Brand quality Trustworthy Pride Break stereotype. Sell in global market Make impact.	retention Word of mouth Unique Fulfilment Convenience	awareness Credibility Digital marketing Association Word of mouth Long term view Integrity	for stability See and feel the service. Branding Experience	Growth Lasting impression. Brand identity Brand reminder Advertising Increase sales	Business networks Skills and competences Solution driven. Growth Strategy Find a niche	Quality Brand awareness

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6.10.8 Main themes - entrepreneurial branding

Use of entrepreneurial branding	**Perceptions**
a) Growth b) Brand reminder	(a) Strategy (b) Brand equity (i) Brand quality (ii) Brand image (iii) Brand awareness • Word of mouth • Better pricing

The domineering themes on Q2.2 are growth and brand reminder. Since their businesses are still taking off, customers needed to be constantly reminded of the brand. Being able to communicate their brand was considered a priority.

The perception about entrepreneurial branding was to have relevant branding strategies in place. Entrepreneurial branding motivates start-ups to develop and implement strategies that are solution driven, help them project their long-term goals and ensure their stability. The other theme that emerged was the brand equity. Start-ups expects entrepreneurial branding to create a brand image that will leave a lasting impression in the minds of the customers.

6.10.5: Innovation

The section provides an insight into using innovation as a strategy for success. In addition, the structured interview questions sought to establish the perceptions of start-ups for engaging innovation as a strategy for success.

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6.10.9 Summary of coding for the secondary research question: Q2.5 and Q3.3

Q2.5	**Use of innovation**	**Creative Crafts**	**Inomedia**	**As You Go**	**Weblink**	**Convy Store**	**Fascinations**	**Le' Consult**	**Autosave**
		Creativity Customer satisfaction	Creativity Customer satisfaction Different approaches Accessibility Convenience Demystify ideas	Brand awareness Creativity Skills and competence Quality Professional packaging Customer satisfaction	Digital marketing Brand awareness Skills and competence Creativity Development of website Strategy Generate sales Attract traffic	Devotion Time management Skills and competences Customer need Focus Efficiency Sharing ideas Teamwork	Creativity Growth Costing and pricing Partnerships/ collaborations Greentrepreneurship	Strategy Brand awareness Business networks Environmental landscape Competitive advantage Impact and influence Problem solving Solution driven	Referrals Customer satisfaction Costing and pricing Creativity Brand awareness Communications
Q3.3	Perception about use o	Unique	Competitive	Packaging and	New knowledge and	Uniqueness	New ways	Research development.	Skills and competence

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	innovation	Appeal Creative	Unique Responsive Brand communication Accessible Customer relations	advertising Growth Creativity Skills and competence Preparations Research Consistency	skills Rapid changes of technology New products and services Creativity Competition Growth Being current	Creativity Right concept	New strategy Customer satisfaction Risk Creativity Problem solving	Promotion Strategy Intellectual property Competitive advantage Find and create solutions. Solution driven. Exposure Stand out in future.	Terms of payment Customer retention Timeously

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6.10.10 Main themes - innovation

Use of innovation	**Perceptions**
(a) Strategy i) Growth ii) Risks iii) Solution driven. (b) Digital marketing (c) Time management (d) Partnerships and collaborations (e) Brand awareness (f) Reduction of costing and pricing	(a) Research and development i) New ways ii) New knowledge (b) Creativity (c) Competitive advantage (d) Customer satisfaction

One domineering theme that emerged in Q2.5 is: strategy. Other themes that emerged are digital marketing, time management, partnerships and collaborations, brand awareness reduction of costing and pricing.

Research and development (R&D), creativity competitive advantage and customer satisfaction emerged as the domineering themes in Q3.3. This section provided an insight into perceptions of start-ups towards using innovation as a strategy for success. Success of start-ups is linked to R&D particularly in this era of disruptive technology. It is therefore vital for start-ups to be competitive to survive. Start-ups expected innovation to help them develop and implement solution driven strategies, identify risks and provide their mitigations.

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6.11 Qualitative research discussions

This section provides an insight into the findings of the qualitative research**.** The study indicated the link between the business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation. Innovation was perceived to be pivotal to business networks and entrepreneurial branding. Though there is limited research linking the three constructs as strategies for the success of start-ups, as indicated in chapter 1, some scholars had established a link between business networks and innovation (Belso-Martínez *et al.* 2020:73), business networks and entrepreneurial branding (Morrish & Earl 2021:7; Iglesias *et al.* 2020:1) and entrepreneurial branding and innovation ((Lin *et al.* 2021:12). The sections that follow provides an insight into the engagement of the three strategies in motivating the success of startups. The sections further outline what start-ups expect to gain from using the strategies and the impact they have made in their businesses.

6.11.1. Gain

Table 6.15.2 illustrates the five themes that emerged from what the start-ups expected to gain from using the three strategies and they are as follows: growth, competitive advantage, needs assessment, brand awareness and brand identity.

(a) Growth

Literature has shown that growth, is one of the determinants of success (Leković & Marić, 2015:9,11; Pattanayak & Kakati, 2021:4). Table 6.11.1.1 illustrates that this theme emanated from five respondents. Start-ups perceived business networks, entrepreneurial branding, and innovation to be interlinked and contributing towards their growth.

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Successfully engaging business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation to their start-ups, motivated growth. The three strategies were perceived to be interlinked and contributing towards the growth of the business.

> *"… branding, innovation and networks… it will just rocket, it will just mean success for my business because if I can successfully employ all of those strategies it means that I will be able to broaden my spectrum, I will be able to broaden my territory, meaning I will be getting more clients, I will be getting more knowledge about the industry, better resources as well. It just helps the business grow in exponential rate because all of them are interlinked, all of them work together to achieve a common goal of growing the business and putting it up there and making it a household name." Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> "*Without them, I don't think we would be where we are, I don't think would even be anywhere." Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"I would say, I expect it to succeed and be sustainable within that success. Like it success and then it remains up there or grows from there…" Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"…If I use the strategies …I think it will be growth." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> "*I think the main expectation is growth… having those strategies in place helps the business grow, that is the expectation." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"What I can say I think our business we are seeing the light in the tunnel because of using those three strategies we are seeing the light in the tunnel." Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

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i) Entrepreneurship mindset

Growth is contributed to by entrepreneurship mindset. "An entrepreneurial mindset helps innovators find, interpret, evaluate, and pursue opportunities for their start-ups" (Korte 2018:1). A positive mindset among entrepreneurs is perceived to contribute to the survival of start-ups.

> *"If you are an entrepreneur you will have to have a positive mind, if you don't have you will collapse on the way or at the beginning." Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

ii) Innovation

Kuczmarski (1996:7) describes innovation as a mindset—a fresh way to ruminate about business strategies and processes that motivates businesses to focus on achieving their visions. Innovation is considered as the main determinant of start-up competitiveness and a vital contributor towards sustainable development (Yang and Tan, 2017:864).

Engaging in innovative solutions would ultimately be a branding strategy for start-ups.

> "… builds up into how we come up with innovative solutions… as we get to that stage of innovation and deployment of our innovation the solutions that we would implement would ultimately be a branding for us… " *Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> Innovation promoted creativity among start-ups. Being creative motivated start-ups to build and enhance their brands, going beyond their normal market's needs, creating new markets for the start-ups and this led to increase in sales.

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"… they get to see your product, and it also helps you think about other ways to better your product, better your branding and better your company." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Furthermore, innovation promoted creativity among start-ups through interaction with the customers.

"… you can interact with customers at different point. They call it that purchase funnel… Someone may put a product in a cart and then they leave it there. They don't complete the purchase and then you can come back and just start prompting them to buy by discounting them on those products, or you can give them coupons, or something that can motivate them to just pick that thing."

"Innovation as I said ealier, I want my business to be in touch with people on the ground." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.

"… innovation comes through our networks and engaging people… we have got great networks, recommendations, people wanting to work with us…" Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Table 6.11.1.1: Growth

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Growth	√	√	√	x	x	x	√	√

b) Competitive advantage

This theme emanated from three respondents as illustrated by Table 6.11.1.2. Two subthemes emerged from this theme, and these were responsiveness and competing cost effectively.

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i) Responsive

Start-up growth is also motivated by the responsiveness of the start-ups. Timely response is vital to keep the customers abreast of what is on the ground. For start-ups to experience growth inspired by the three strategies, it was vital for them to be intentional in responding to customer needs. Being responsive to customer needs included among other things, resolving queries timeously and solving problems with the intention to meet customers' needs.

> *"If you missed one step you can tell them that today we didn't do 1,2,3, tomorrow we will do it, then it's easier. The following day you are going to get back to your expected level" Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Being intentional in responding to the customer needs contributed to the growth of start-ups.

> "I am thinking now how more intentional I can be with networking, and with innovation that it would respond to needs. I would like my business to be more intentional in responding to needs". *Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> Being responsive meant resolving the queries timeously and getting to the root of the problem to ensure the customer's needs were met.

> *"You need to see what went wrong in the kitchen, what went wrong with the product from the shelf, whose fault it is, at the end of the day just make sure the customer is happy, satisfied and comes back for what they are needing…" Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Johannesburg. Pretoria.*

ii) Compete cost effectively

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The use of innovation in a start-up was to improve communicates between start-ups and the customers and compete with other businesses cost effectively.

> *"Innovation for me is just so you are able to compete and … more importantly, so you are able to compete cost effectively as well." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Table 6.11.1.2: Competitive advantage

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Competitive advantage	x	√	√	x	√	x	x	x

(c) Needs assessment

To respond appropriately to customer needs, start-ups needed to conduct needs assessment to guide them on what the customers needed and how to meet them. That is, conducting a needs assessment provided vital information to the start-ups about what is needed and how to cater for the customers' needs. Five respondents alluded to the needs assessment theme, as illustrated in Table 6.11.1.3.

> *"You cannot respond to something that you do not know, so it forces my business to be on the ground level to assess the needs, tailor make the business to respond to that. " Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"If it is responding to the needs, it is succeeding." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

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"… to go back to the drawing board and do more research." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

i) Skills and competence

Gaining knowledge and experience placed start-ups in a more advantageous and impactful position. This is supported by Bowen, (2020:377) who claim that skills developed from working experiences are expected to give trainees a competitive edge in the job market. Start-ups expected to gain the knowledge and experience from engaging the three strategies. As they interacted with other start-ups, they improved their skills and competences and that contributed to their growth.

"…have got a wealth of knowledge about the industry… I think that's the opportunity that I would like to gain." Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.

"… networking, would just be…to be able to grow on things that I do not know myself, to hotspot some ideas from others. I think that also could contribute to the innovation, learning from others so that I do not free style like I am now but, organise it better to be not a small business anymore." Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.

"… we gain knowledge, experience and that would ultimately result in the desired impact that people want to see…" Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.

"And then also getting mentorship from people who have been in the industry, in the gift, or service industry, servicing people… getting mentorship on knowing how to work with, work with clients, how to close the sale and things like that, has helped my business and myself." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

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Table 6.11.1.3: Needs assessment

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Needs assessment	x	√	√	√	x	√	√	x

(d) Brand awareness

Brand awareness is positively linked to brand image and brand trust and hence it contributes to the growth of start-ups (Bernarto, Berlianto, Meilani, Masman & Suryawan). This theme emerged from three respondents as illustrated in Table 6.11.1.4.

> *"…if the customers don't know what your store is about, products will stick to only maybe 50 customers a day, but the minute we talk to customers, you might get an additional 30-40 customers each day… that's how you grow the business." Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Pretoria. South Africa.*

> *… "branding will just be to put the business out there… for it to be known so that people can know that if they need anything… this is the way to go … so that it can compete with another brand out there." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"... being put out there and being known by my customers and the other people as well. Yes, definitely, that is the ultimate expectation …" Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

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i) Advertising

One way of making their business known was through advertising, particularly through word of mouth.

> "Like I said, with the photographer, "wa ng advertiser", *advertises me,* … "go re ga a na le a gig" *that if they have an event*, he will advertise to other people, so in that way more customers has come… the advertising part of it, the word of mouth "ya teng", *its*, it helps in that way. *Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Table 6.11.1.4: Brand awareness

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Brand awareness	√	√	x	x	√	x	x	x

(e) Brand identity

Brand identity theme emerged from three respondents as illustrated in table 6.11.1.5. Start-ups perceives the goal of the three strategies to build brand identity.

> "… all of them work together to achieve a common goal of growing the business." *Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

i) Professional packaging

One way of motivating growth through brand identity was using professional packaging to present the products to the customers. This contributed to customer satisfaction and attracted loyal customers. That is, professionally packaged products motivated customers to make repeat business.

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"… there's return of customers and…customer comes back... "e tsisa" *it attracts*, loyal customers to the company. For example, a lady I know on monthly basis "o odara…" *she places an order*, just because she is happy with how it the product is presented to her". *Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Table 6.11.1.5: Brand identity

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Brand identity	√	x	x	x	x	x	√	x

6.11.2 Success expectation

Two major themes emerged in this section: strategy and competitive advantage.

(a) Strategy

Start-ups linked success to strategy. This theme emanated to from two responses, illustrated in Table 6.11.2.1. Start-ups adopt strategies to increase their competitiveness and viability (Slavik, Hanak & Hudakova 2020:125). Three themes emerged under this section: Planning, building great networks and monitoring and evaluating.

i) Planning

Planning was perceived by start-ups as the first phase of strategy. Planning increased the performance and sustainability of the business (Yuliantini, Marlapa, Daru, Srihadi, Rohman & Soelton 2023:135). As a result of planning, start-ups envisaged to expand

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from their localities to other parts of South Africa and eventually to the international markets and planning was perceived as a enabling tool for achieving their goals.

> *"… so those are the plans for the future, to have an established businesses like this, …that it can even have branches around, so that if somebody wants what I'm offering from Cape town, there is already somebody providing that, who's connected…" Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

ii) Building great networks

Some start-ups claimed they were formed through networks; hence, they needed to support and maintain their networks. Building great networks was perceived as a strategy for success. Ntseane (2004:39), purport that business networks are used as a success mechanism.

> *" …networking, I would just be able to grow on things that I do not know myself." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"We started on a network and then we went on to build on a network. I would say, I expect it to succeed and be sustainable within that success. Like it success and then it remains up there or grows from there. You don't expect it to fluctuate, it is a strategy that you employ and then ensure that on the daily you stick by that so that you can be to sustain things. "Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

iii) Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation were also mentioned as critical for the growth of start-ups. Okafor (2021:34), describes monitoring and evaluation as a tool used track the performance of a project at a given point in time. It was critical for start-ups to plan, execute the plan and reflect on what worked and what didn't work.

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"If I plan these things and maybe try the different combination of things… seeing what works, it will help me. "What I have learned this year, which is a takeaway, is that I could have started small" Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Table 6.11.2.1: Strategy

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Strategy	x	√	√	x	x	x	x	x

(b) Competitive advantage

Two themes emerged under this section: sustainability and consistency, illustrated by Table 6.11.2.2. To build and sustain a competitive advantage, start-ups must develop strategies that sustain performance and profitability (Satar 2024:120).

i) Sustainability

Sustainable competitive advantage is desirable for start-ups. They took advantage of the three strategies to promote the sustainability of their businesses.

"*You don't expect it to fluctuate, it is a strategy that you employ and then ensure that on daily basis you stick by that so that you can sustain things like quality, level of professionalism…" Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

"Those three strategies have made my business and myself a success because I had this huge different outlook on life since I saw how my business can stand on its own and be its own brand…" Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

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ii) Consistency

Consistency in engaging the three success strategies and in offering of goods and services was perceived to be critical for the success of start-ups. However, failure to be consistence can lead the start-ups to failure.

> *"…Being consistent in these strategies which will ultimately make sure that my business grows in exponential rate….be consistent and commit myself, I would reach that level or that goal of becoming a household name or even surpassing …. as the leading gift service... probably go beyond the borders to the other countries in Africa." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"(It) has happened to many businesses, someone starts something, they give it to someone, they no longer give it the same passion, they no longer give it the same love, they just start to do things differently and then things are just taking a sharp curve from there…" Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Table 6.11.2.2: Competitive advantage

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Competitive advantage	x	x	√	x	x	√	x	x

6.11.3 Impact

(a) Established business

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One of the goals of start-ups is to get established in the market. Two themes emerged under established businesses: new markets and customer loyalty, illustrated in Table 6.11.3.1.

i) New markets

Innovation created new markets for the star-ups. Understanding the market and taking the advantage to exploit it into profitable, customer-focused action increased the chances of start-up success (Roberts 2000:31). When start-ups went beyond their normal market and created new products and services their sales increased.

> *"And then the innovation I've seen it this year in terms of more sales. I started entering the market of making picnics … for birthdays and anniversaries you can just call me "ratla rooming" come to the room, have a set up and just eat… So, I have seen that opening this new market or this new side of Fascinations has helped with my sales as well." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Table 6.11.3.1: Strategy

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Strategy	x	x	x	x	x	√	x	x

(b) Customer loyalty

The theme emerged from three respondents as illustrated in Table 6.11.3.2. Innovation motivated customer satisfaction which in turn motivated loyal customers.

> *"… when they see the innovative part of me or the cakes that I make, they are happy with me … "le gone," and, they come back that is how it has impacted the company." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

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To get established and remain established in the market, required start-ups to build trust with their customers. Creating strong long-term relationships with the customers in critical strengthening customer loyalty which in turn attract referrals and new customers to the start-ups (Arslan 2020: 11).

> "*So, through the networking and cementing myself or my business as a brand it has helped with the clients to be more comfortable and trusting of the brand and the business and the service as well. So, in turn I get more referrals because if you trust me and I deliver my good job, you going to tell your friend and they going to come back as well…" Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"… so by us continuing to give the best service we can give, that mostly ensuring that the customer comes back and buys the same product or buys something different… just make sure the customer is happy, satisfied and comes back for what they are needing. If the service if not what the customers are looking for, they will come once a month or twice bust generally wont comeback…" Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Pretoria. South Africa.*

Table 6.11.3.2: Customer loyalty

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Customer loyalty	√	x	√	x	√	x	x	x

6.11.4 Business success findings

The contribution of start-ups in the growth of economies around the globe cannot be overemphasised such as creating job opportunities and reducing poverty (Still and Henttonen 2016:5; Atiase *et al.* 2018:644). However, there is limited research done

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on what make start-ups succeed. The business success theme emerged from three respondents as illustrated in Table 6.11.4.1. The findings of this qualitative research provide an insight into whether start-ups consider themselves successful or not and what they interpret as success. For others, success was inevitable.

> *"Let me say we are heading towards success. We are progressing towards success. Why I said we are heading towards the success is because we do not yet have other facilities or equipment which the other bigger establishment have so that's why I said we are heading to success." Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

While for some of the start-ups, going past the first year was a great milestone.

> *"…proud to push past the first year." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Table 6.11.4.1: Business success

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Business success	√	x	√	x	x	x	x	√

a) SWOT analysis

The theme emerged from five respondents, illustrated by Table 6.11.4.2. A committed start-up SWOT analysis is described as an analytical method used in various fields to understand the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of organisations (Akman, 2019:78). It is a vital tool that is used by different organisations, including start-

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ups and it is linked to business success (Sinarti & Churiyah 2023:14). Start-ups identified and took advantage of the available opportunity to set up their businesses.

> *"But like I was saying, I've dived into this opportunity…" Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.*

They also identify their threats and came up with strategies to overcome them. Start-ups identified their strengths and weaknesses and came up with solutions to curb them, such as hiring staff to perform duties they did not have the skill to do while they concentrated on what they knew best.

> *"One of the things I had to look for was to look at my weak points as to where can I reinforce, where can I strengthen, then I realised that in terms of marketing, and sometimes speaking to people, that being part of it, wasn't necessarily my strong hold. So, I said okay, let me get people who will assist with the two, the other person was, one person could deliver and I came in with the cooking and all that…" Transcript 3. Respondent . Johannesburg. South Africa.*

i) Skills and competences

Failure to possess the necessary skills and competences exposes start-up to the risks of failure. Start-ups are normally operated by one person, who is usually the owner of the business and expected to carry out all the other operations of the business.

> *"Before I am the boss, I am an employee, I am a cashier, I am a cleaner, I am... I work in the kitchen, manager, merchandiser, everything before I am the boss." Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Pretoria. South Africa.*

> It is therefore important for them to acquire skills and competences needed in their start-ups.

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> *"I have engaged in the entrepreneurship space in high education… in my own space of a start-up, I did a bachelor's degree." Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

In that way they could be able to drive their start-ups towards success.

> *"…the decision to study entrepreneurship. I think it's opening my mind, so I'm starting to have different view of our business, what I can bring to the business to try to grow it." Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.*

They are supported by Hudáková, Urbancová and Vnouˇcková (2019:2); Lee, Lim, and Suh (2014:81), who argue that start-ups must provide their managers and employees with the appropriate skills and competencies to guide the development of their businesses. However, some start-ups felt they had already acquired the relevant skills for their businesses.

> *"But at the moment we have got expertise, we have got the skills…" Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

ii) Quality

In addition, start-ups suggested the adoption of quality standards as one of the entrepreneur's attributes that could motivate start-up success.

> *"But in terms of quality we are doing the quality up to the standards… we can do the job according to the standard of the quality of the other bigger establishment." Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> They are supported by Andrews, Fazio, Guzman, Liu and Stern (2022:1) who describes the entrepreneurial quality as growth of the start-ups.

Table 6.11.4.2: SWOT analysis

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Respondent	1	4	3	4	5	6	7	8
SWOT analysis	x	x	√	√	√	x	√	√

b) Strategy

Start-ups must commit to achieving their goals; hence it is important to develop and implement strategies that can enable them to effectively achieve them (Slavik *et al.* 2020:125). The theme emerged from three respondents as illustrated in Table 6.11.4.3. The Strategies provide directions to start-ups for achieving their visions (Albukhitan 2020:664). Therefore, they play a critical role in the survival of start-ups. Researchers has attributed the success and failure of start-ups to differences in strategy (Koning, Hasan & Chatterji 2019:2). One of the strategic goals cited by the start-ups was to become adequate start-ups that are creative and could create value in the long run. In addition, they intended to expand the start-ups by investing into variety of products and services.

> *"... be an adequate start up that could create value… expanding into, certain products and services … we believe ultimately in the long run will create value." Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

i) Devotion to achieve objectives.

For them to reach their intended goals, start-ups acknowledged that they had to commit to the set objectives and well as paying much attention to the business Devoting enough time and resources to the start-ups showed commitment, brought positive results and motivated their growth.

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"When I got the time to do what I'm supposed to do, "yone" it does flourish." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Bui (2020:1) support them and assert that devotion contributes to the growth of start-ups.

ii) Persistence

Furthermore, start-ups suggested persistence as another attribute that contributed to their success**.** Due to persistence, they experienced brand loyalty during one of most difficult times of the Covid 19 pandemic.

"Pushing past the first year into Covid and still pushing past Covid and then having our customers come back afterwards and continuing to support me." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

They were supported by Caliendoa, Goethnerb, and Weißenbergerc (2020:617), who purport that persistence is demonstrated by start-up's consistence in maintaining motivation despite the challenges they encountered.

Table 6.11.4.3: Strategy

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Strategy	√	x	x	x	x	√	√	x

c) Measurement of growth

Growth is an essential aspect of every business. The findings of the study support literature that growth is measured differently by different researchers and start-ups. Fiorentino, Longobardi and Scaletti (2020:1525) measure growth by the

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innovativeness of start-ups. The theme emerged from four respondents, illustrated by Table 6.11.4.4.

i) Profit

Growth can also be measured by the profit earned by start-ups.

> "We need to see profit and over a long time how much have we made..." *Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

ii) Brand image and brand loyalty

Though it can be hard to measure, due to circumstances surrounding start-ups,

> *"It's hard to judge. Why I say this is because sometimes I stop because of pressure at work." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Start-ups suggested several ways they used to measured growth and they are as follows: growth was measured by the brand image perceived by the customers.

> *"You know we put our image out into society, into community and we measure ourselves against that…." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Once the customers have identified with the brand image, they become loyal to the brand.

> *"I find myself not even having to actively try to find clients, they always find a way to me." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

These start-ups are supported by Chang (2020:209) who claims that positive brand image is linked to brand loyalty. Furthermore, the interaction of customers with the

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brand leads to brand loyalty and ultimately to the growth of start-ups (Muangmee 2021:1).

iii) Operate in owner's absence.

In addition, to profit, brand image and brand loyalty, growth was measured by the ability of start-ups operate in the absence of the owner.

> *"I assume its successful given at this point the business can run without me being there. I think if I can be away for quite some time and when I come back its still running, then I can say, this has been a successful business." Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa*

Table 6.11.4.4: Measurement of growth

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Measurement of growth	√	√	√	x	x	√	x	x

d) Challenges to commitment

Start-ups were faced with challenges that slowed the success of their start-up. The theme emerged from three respondents illustrated in Table 6.11.4.5.

i) Lack of finances

One of the challenges highlighted by start-ups was lack of finance to purchase required inputs (Autosave) and unsustainable income (InoMedia). They are supported by Kalyanasundaram, Ramachandrula and Hillemane (2021:2071); Bruna & Nicolò (2020:1) who assert that start-up failures are contributed by a lack of revenue.

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ii) Not fulltime

The other challenge to start-up growth was lack of devotion to the businesses. Start-ups were perceived as inferior to other activities undertaken by the start-up owners.

> *"Sometimes I stop because of pressure at work. It is a side hassle for me. I have a 9-5 job, and on the side I do it. So obviously I will put the 9-5 first and then if it is not too hectic at work then I do this." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

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> *"So, it was a form of just doing something on the side outside of pastoring to have something stable coming." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

iii) Difficulty to pass the first year

Failure to pass through the first year of starting up is a common factor among the start-ups across the globe. This challenge is attributed to lack of entrepreneurship skills.

> *"I have seen many people try to get in these businesses and unfortunately, I think they fell off on day on, because they have no idea what it takes to run these businesses." Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Pretoria. South Africa.*

They are supported by (Radácsi & Filep 2021:262), who purport that entrepreneurial skills and competences play a significant role in the success of start-ups.

Table 6.11.4.5: Challenges to commitment

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

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Challenges to commitment	√	√	x	x	√	x	x	x

6.11.5 Use of business networks

Business networks' theme emerged from three respondents as illustrated in table 6.11.5. Start-ups attested to the importance of business networks in their quest for success.

> *"How I look at it myself, it is very important to work with network." Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"Network is important." Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Business networks motivated both the start-ups and the entrepreneurs' growth and the zeal to be more intentional about their businesses. They also assisted the start-ups in closing the knowledge gap.

> *"… it helps when we are networking with other service providers or the work providers: it helps for us to grow the business…" Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

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"… in terms of growing my networks and ensuring that I get expanded, … it also helps me with exposure in some of the things we would want to develop solutions for…" Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Brautigam (2003:451) argues that start-ups pay less attention to business networks. Start-ups were aware of such instances; however, they acknowledged the contribution of start-ups to the success of their businesses.

"…networks… I honestly think that's the one thing that I, as we are speaking now, realise I haven't been focusing much on, but that is the one thing that I think, helps elevate a business". Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Table 6.11.5: Use of business networks

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Use of business networks	x	x	x	x	x	√	√	√

(a) Strategy

The theme emerged from 7 respondents, illustrated in Table 6.11.5.1. The main strategic goal of Le'Consult was to become a solution driven start-up, whose aim was to create solutions for their customers. They achieve that through offering strategic advice and service provision.

"I then offer my services to just help someone who says, I want to be an entrepreneur… I have this idea, but I don't know how to go about it, uhm I offer

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strategic advice how you can implement such things…" Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.

They argued that their interest was on the people, and they believed that the customers had the solutions they were look for and they in turn could develop solutions by engaging with them.

"… my solutions are in the very people we need to service… whether talking to someone on the street, whether talking to someone on a taxi, that's where I want to be that the space, I want to find myself engaging with people that is where we need to develop solutions." Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Engaging with customers was a strategy that has been working for them and it contributed towards their growth.

"… it does help that's one of the fundamentals strategies we have and that helps us grow talking to ordinary South African … for me that have been a strategy I have been using which is working for me… that's me that is one of the strategies that I have adopted as a person and as a company, this is how we feel we can grow." Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.

i) Vision

Business networks motivated start-ups to plan and execute their strategies. They equated engaging in business networks to being visionary.

"You can have the branding and all the innovative ideas but if you don't have direction, you don't know the industry that you are in, how can you go about? then you are just a lost ship, you have all the resources but you don't have the direction or the plan, so I think networking really helps." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

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ii) Growth

Start-ups use business networks to grow their businesses. They perceived that business networks promoted their businesses, attracted more customers and expand their capacity to operate the start-ups. They are supported by Abbas *et al.* (2019:2) who assert that business networks allow start-ups to flourish and be competitive.

> *"They have grown and grown, and customers specially come here to get a certain product. So, for this business I would therefore say networking with customers" Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Pretoria. South Africa.*
>
> .
>
> *"I think it will be growth, even not just of business even on personal capacity, because I am thinking now if I become more intentional with networking..." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.*
>
> *"I think the main expectation is growth of the business. Me being put out there and being known by my customers and the other people as well. So, having those strategies in place helps the business grow, that is the expectation." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Table 6.11.5.1: Strategy

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Strategy	√	√	√	x	√	√	√	√

(b) Managing relationships

The theme emerged from three respondents illustrated in Table 6.11.5.2. Managing the business networks relationships is vital in sustaining the competitive advantage of the start-ups. They are supported by Lin and Lin (2016:1783), who argue that network

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relationships allow start-ups to use embedded connections within the networks to gain an economic advantage.

> *"Networking with customers, speaking to customers, seeing if there's something that customer wants, if there's something they need..." Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Pretoria. South Africa.*

This resulted in start-ups benefitting from better deals, and reduced costs. Provision of better deals strengthens the start-up business networks. Start-ups are always looking for ways to retain existing customers and attract new ones. One of these ways was to get better deals from the suppliers so that the price of the product or service is dropped.

"*With regard to suppliers, we always talk to suppliers trying to find better deals.… we always looking at the product we sell, if we can get it directly from manufacturers … the price can drop for the customer." Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Pretoria. South Africa.*

"We might save them the money when they give us volume of work to support us … that can help grow our revenue which in return can also grow our profitability of the business." Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Table 6.11.5.2: Managing relationships.

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Managing relationships	x	x	x	x	√	x	x	√

(c) Skills and competence

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Developing skills and competence was an integral part of start-ups. The theme emerged from three respondents as shown in Table 6.11.5.3. Business networks were vital to start-ups because they created a platform for knowledge acquisition and sharing and mentorship.

> *"… share that knowledge, their experience… that knowledge sharing, that's how I benefited from my network…I pick up the phone and say hey what are some of these things that are happening in the industry." Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"You can find a mentor; you can find someone who can help you set you straight." Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.*

> *"Give yourself opportunity to learn different things, because as a person you should always be open to learning new things … you are not at the height of knowledge even if you've been in the industry for twenty years, there's always someone who knows something better than you". Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Table 6.11.5.3: Skills and competence

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Skills and competence	x	x	x	√	x	√	√	x

(d) Start-up innovation

The theme emerged from 5 respondents as illustrated in Table 6.11.5.4. Business networks motivated start-ups to become innovative and more intentional about the needs of their customers. For start-ups, being innovative meant being able to stand out against competitors. They are supported by Abbas *et al.*, (2019:3) who posit that

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business networks allow start-ups to grow in a dynamic and competitive business environment.

> *"With innovation that it would respond to needs. I would like my business to be more intentional in responding to needs and obviously, you cannot respond to something that you do not know, so it forces my business to be on the ground level to assess the needs, tailor make the business to respond to that." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"It's important to think out of the box. It's important to think differently than what your competitors are thinking and to come up with different ways of standing out." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"Networking…I think I should do and commit myself to doing it, because that's the only way I can get my brand to be a big name and compete with big names like Net Florist because I see it as my leading competition—it's the leading gift service in South Africa". Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Furthermore, business networks inspired start-ups to be creative and unique. Creativity made the customer happy, and it promoted customer loyalty.

> *"It helps you think about other ways to better your product, better your branding and better your company. It is a way of making you stand out, … that's what will attract customers or that's what will attract the people you are servicing." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> Furthermore, business networks motivated the use of technology among the start-ups. This is a strategy that some of the start-ups would not have initiated on their own.

i) Advertisement

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Advertisement emerged as a useful tool in business networks. It was vital in promoting the success of the business. Being part of the network was beneficial in the sense that they were able to advertise each other's businesses. This was perceived to attract more customers, safe costs and promote the growth of start-ups.

> *""… that is the ultimate expectation that when you network more people get to know about you, they get to see your product." I think it's a great way of advertising di start-up because, advertising on its own is expensive, but now you have people "ba e leng" go re they put you out there and saying to another person – look I know somebody who does cakes, then "ba a go advertisa", they advertise you in a way. And it puts you out there. It helps your business grow and from there more people will know about you. It's a great way of putting another business out there and working together as a network." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"I was talking about things like branding marketing you know how those are important. Puts my work out there…Have my brand on the pictures… a form of marketing… they have changed throughout because traditionally it would have been like on tv, pamphlets and branded billboards and now we have platforms like face book, WhatsApp and Instagram." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

ii) Market research

For business networks to be sustainable, continuous research has to be undertaken to identify the gaps in the market and come up with innovative ways to address them. Business networks play a critical role in the reshaping and innovation of sustainable research (Harrison, Prenkert, Hasche & Carlborg 2023:1).

> *"I can help with certain research and see where the market gap could be…" Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

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"So, in terms of network I would assume it has to be about where to improve, where to report, what changes can one make in order to grow and all that…" Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Business networks were used for market testing. New products and services were tested through networks before they were introduced in the market.

"… we do have people who are regulars, whenever I'm trying new things, new things could be, a different cooking approach, in that regard, I would cook and give them to taste." Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Table 6.11.5.4: Start-up innovation

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Start-up innovation	√	√	√	x	x	√	√	x

(e) Partnerships and collaboration

The theme merged from two respondents, illustrated in Table 6.11.5.5. Partnering and collaborating with other start-ups appeared to be efficient for start-ups. They partnered with other start-ups for support, growth, creating and sharing opportunities and.

"I partner with other small businesses like me. I would rather outsource from someone who is also starting up as I am... like building as we go" … I collaborate with different people… this opens different spaces and opportunities for oneself and other people as well. Networking with other businesses, collaborating as well would help in putting the brand out there and the business out there..." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

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i) Customer twinning

The benefits of partnering and collaboration were that startups were provided with, knowledge and experience and update of the industry trends, mentoring at a lessor cost, their brand got promoted by other networks, in other instances the partners became sales agent for them, and they also enjoyed some referrals. The American international Health Alliance (AIHA) defines twinning as a "partnership that links two entities with shared characteristics to achieve a common goal". This study defines customer twinning as a partnership or collaboration between two businesses to meet their customers' needs. Customer twinning has proved to be beneficial start-ups.

> *"It is working to my benefit because if a supplier is working with me and I have his clients as well who also know about my business, I could sell on their behalf, and they do the same for my business." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

ii) Referrals

Start-ups enjoyed the benefits of referrals from their business networks, from building the start-up confidence to bringing awareness to the stakeholders and marketing products and services on behalf of the networks.

> *"… people refer…given us better confidence…we get business through someone recommending us outside of our social network, someone saying, I think I should try that company because someone told me about it…I think it assist us in the long run whether someone remembers it today after they have spoken to someone or someone may say oh…I remember this person talking about this person, they can always call to that person and say give me that number of that person." Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

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"So those suppliers then in turn refer their clients when someone wants a gift they say Oh, It may be you can pair this mug that I'm offering you with something that Fascinations can give you so that we make a package…" Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Table 6.11.5.5: Partnerships and collaborations

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Partnerships and collaboration	x	x	x	x	x	√	√	x

6.11.6 Business networks perceptions

(a) Building and enhancing relationships

The theme emerged from two respondents, illustrated in table 6.11.6.1. Start-ups are always looking for ways to retain existing customers and attracting new ones. Though business networks they were able to make better deals with the suppliers and the customers as well as strengthen the relationships between all their stakeholders. They are supported by Pilarz and Kot (2019:647) who argue that they build and enhances stronger relationships between start-ups and the customers.

''...develop those relationships and nurture them such that, you know, they fit into your business in terms of growing... and …sometimes you are not doing things because you don't want to, you just don't know you should be. And it's through those connections that you can be exposed." Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.

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Provision of excellent customer service allows the start-ups to interact with customers and enhances their relationships. Though in some instances it may not impact the business from the onset.

"Networking with customers, speaking with customers, seeing if there's something that the customer wants…it is something the business can invest in that won't impact the business straight away." *Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Pretoria. South Africa.*

Table 6.11.6.1: Partnerships and collaboration

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Building and enhancing relationships	x	x	x	√	√	x	x	x

6.11.7 Use of entrepreneurial branding

Start-ups acknowledged the importance of engaging entrepreneurial branding to promote the success of their businesses. They are supported by Bresciani and Eppler (2010:1) who assert that branding is a vital activity for the successful establishment of a start-up. The theme emerged from five respondents, illustrated in Table 6.11.7.1

Start-ups associated entrepreneurial branding with brand awareness integrity.

"Branding is very, very important…" Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.

"I think, branding is, honestly, it's very important …like it sells the product before you even tell people that brand and becomes that brand that face. I think it is

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very, very important…" Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

"And I think that's where entrepreneurial as you describe it and as how I understand it as marketing, becomes important because you have to give your products that integrity…" Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.

"Absolutely, branding is very crucial in any business. I mean, you must brand your business, for people to know what your business is about." Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Pretoria. South Africa.

According to Delaperche (2018:48), branding can be explained from three dimensions: product, founder/leader, and business dimensions. However, Peters *et al*. (2010:1), assert that entrepreneurial branding is popular among start-ups where a brand is associated with the enterprise reputation. Some start-ups brands were identified by their business names.

"Most of them don't even know my name or where I operate, they know me as Fascinations... other people know the business more than they know me…" Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

"… most of them they identify us by the company name…" Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.

"One thing "e ke leng" which I am fortunate "ka yone" about, is that people when they see me, they see my company." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

However, some start-up brands were identified by the owner of the business.

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> "… people know my personal brand. I believe I have built my personal brand, ultimately that personal brand then fits into my business more…" *Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

i) Growth

Branding was considered essential for the growth of small businesses.

> "I think it is very crucial, very important part of business and making sure that a small business grows." *Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> "… by my personal brand as uhm… growing, I utilise it in terms of speaking for me… and what I do in my company the company will ultimately speak for itself…." *Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

ii) Brand reminder

Start-ups perceived branding as a tool that reminds the customer of their existence long after they have disposed the packaging of the product or service.

> "Because branding is a thing that gonna stay with the customer, long after you've left, so even if they buy something "*wa e ja wa e latlha"* they eat and throw away, the branding is still there… "It's this thing that keeps reminding you…if you see "*ke tla reng? Lebotlolo la",* what would I say, bottle of juice with M written on it, already you know that's Macdonald if you see something in container e red with a "*mokgalabye" oldman* on it you know *go re "ke"* it is KFC. So branding is the first thing that comes." *Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Table 6.11.7.1: Use of entrepreneurship branding

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

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Use of entrepreneurship branding	x	x	x	√	√	√	√	√

6.11.8 Perceptions of using entrepreneurial branding

One main theme emerged from this section: brand equity.

(a) Brand equity

The theme emerged from six respondents, illustrated in Table 6.11.8.1. Eggers, Eggers and Kraus (2016:428) relate brand equity to marketing outcomes generated by the brand name, such as corporate image, a better product and lower price sensitivity by consumers. Aaker (1992:28); Severi & Ling (2013:125) assert that brand equity is underpinned by brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand associations, brand image and brand quality.

i) Brand quality

Maintaining the quality of branding made the start-ups stand out against their competitors. Start-ups believed in providing quality products and services and this attracted customers and broke the stereotype of locally made goods.

> *"… after they have seen the quality of the work that we are doing they bought our services." Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"Another thing that I did on my side to improve myself…so that I could put some quality work into my business." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"Quality also breaks down stereotypes that our work is not only for here "mo magaeng" in the villages, but it can go out to the world." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

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Branding also made the customers associate their products with quality and made them develop trust in them.

"They associate my work with quality…. something trustworthy... something to pay for, now seeing your brand take that form… it can be used, it can be trusted." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Brand quality is perceived to mediate the relationship between brand equity and brand image (Severi & Ling 2013:125).

ii) Brand image

Keller (1993:3) described brand image as what the customer perceives about the brand after associating with it and the impression it left in their minds. Entrepreneurial branding was perceived to set the tone and build the image of the start-ups.

"Branding is crucial because it sets the tone and the brand image for the business and that is the thing that stays with the customer. It will be able to advertise itself because it has an image now." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

iii) Brand awareness

Branding is a strategy that start-ups used to differentiate themselves from the rest of similar businesses in the market. It was one way of familiarising their customers with their products to distinguish them from others in the market.

"…that would be to put my work out there and so like on my pictures you know have my brand there….people are familiar with that…. if they happen to see it somewhere it should say this is mine." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.

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Creating awareness among the consumers leads to the success of an enterprise (Erenkol and Öztaş, 2015:1139). It also made customers associate with the brand. Customers would identify with the local brand as much as they would do with an international brand.

"That awareness that is created about your business. The more they hear about it, the more they see it." Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.

"When it is well branded, it is easier for people to recognise it. It can help the business to be well known…" Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Start-ups used entrepreneurial branding to introduce their brand in the market. Creating awareness around the brand was perceived to build integrity for the brand. Customers got to hear, see and associate with the brand.

"Yes, they should…I…. It's a way of making you stand out, so people know when they see a logo this is what this is the company that it is you know…" Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.

"There is something about seeing …." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.

"You must give your products integrity. People get that through awareness created about your business. The more they hear the more they see, the more they associate with it." Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.

iv) Word of mouth

Word of mouth is another form of brand awareness. Start-ups perceived it as a critical aspect of branding.

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"Because if there is anything about our line of business we rely mostly on word of mouth. You can post all you want, but word of mouth it's the bigger one that you can't even pay for." Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.

"… like I previously said, telling a friend, rather go to that store for whatever given reason, … It is very important for every business aspect no matter what." Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Pretoria. South Africa.

"The more they can associate with it, maybe through those word of mouth, maybe someone can validate, vouch for you in that sense. It becomes important…" Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.

On instances where start-ups did not do a lot of marketing, their customers spread the word on their behalf.

"*The branding mostly has been through word of mouth, people that I have done work for. As I mentioned, I haven't put a lot of effort in terms of advertising, but I have been getting work, like I would do some work for someone and while I have left the business and moved on to other things. So, it would just be word of mouth through people that I do work for." Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Pretoria. South Africa.*

v) Better pricing

Better pricing and better services motivated customers to spread the word about the start-ups. This also attracted referrals for the startups.

"... they kind of would talk about this store because the price is better, quality is better, the service is better. In terms of marketing, we market our friendly service, good products, good pricing, where we can get better pricing, we do." Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Pretoria. South Africa.

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"I would just get a call from someone else saying you know what? someone said you did this." Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.

Table 6.11.8.1: Brand equity

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Brand equity	√	√	x	√	√	√	x	√

6.11.9 Use of innovation

The theme emerged from two respondents, illustrated in Table 6.11.9. Innovation is about new ways of doing things, arousing the customer's curiosity, developing effective and interactive relationship between the brand and the customer. Wong, Lee and Der Foo (2008:45), describe innovation as a new idea that benefits a business and its stakeholders. And therefore, start-ups must keep up with the changes to remain relevant in this era (Khan & Ullah, 2021:219).

"And the way I understand … I understand innovation as well you could also just be… Look, if you are trying something new in your business attributed to the market that you are selling. It doesn't necessarily have to be a new thing completely, but if you are trying it for the first time and you are trying it for the first time on the market that you have, you know you continue to do that..." Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.

"I think it's very crucial especially in day and age. You show customers that you are moving with the time….so I think innovation is very crucial. But what you can do is make something that is already there, make it better." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

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"I also believe it's also important … maybe for me …because I speak from that lens of view in the IT space". Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.

Since the world is changing at a fast rate, start-ups should keep abreast with the changes, to remain competitive. They are supported by Mayera and Oosthuizen (2020:2), who assert that start-ups need to prepare for the rapid technological disruptions of the 4IR through creation and management of greater networks, upskilling of technological capabilities and digital readiness.

"I think it's very crucial to think innovatively and outside of the box and always try to solve the problem with your business so it's very crucial." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

"You continue to have that outlook as to what your competitors are so that you can continue to grow, you can continue to compete for the same market. So, I think that it is important to not lack behind … for you to also grow." Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.

"Because things are changing, things are evolving, what you need to do over the time, so you don't become stagnant… we are in the 21st century things are moving fast, we are entering the fourth industrial revolution in our country, so we have to adapt …" Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Table 6.11.9: Use of innovation

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Use of innovation	x	x	x	√	x	√	x	x

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(a) Strategy

The theme emerged from three respondents, illustrated in Table 6.11.9.1. Disruptive innovation theory is linked to the learning of new skills. Due to rapid changes in technology, there is always something new to learn and start-ups needed to change their strategies to keep up with rapid changes in the market.

> *"Things have got a short lifespan because there's always something new that … the right word is technology … changes quickly, at a faster rate." Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.*

> *"You need to change up your strategy and be innovative in order to match times that we are in, the things that are changing…" Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Innovation motivated the knowledge of customer's strategy. Start-ups interest in what their customers needed and quest to improve on their products and service was termed the knowledge of customer's strategy. In their quest to keep up with the times start-ups labelled the knowledge of customer, a good strategy. Wilhelm, Gueldenberg and Guttel (2013:662), argue that it is important to determine the kind of knowledge the customer wishes to receive to be able to close the knowledge gaps.

> *"Yes, the good strategy for start-ups is knowing what your audience wants, what your potential market wants, otherwise we can recreate the wheel a thousand times and brand it something else, but eventually people realise it's the same thing at the end of the day…" Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

i) Growth

Fascinations believed that being innovative was a way of showing start-up growth. They took baby steps, but at the same time they created an experience for their customers, and this ensured customer loyalty.

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> *"So, bit by bit we are trying to expand from just your normal to creating that experience… and then expanding and broadening your territory as well." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

ii) Risks

Risks play a fundamental role in innovation. As a result of the disruptive technologies start-ups find themselves facing new risks that also presents new opportunities for them (Mhlanga, Ndhlovu & Hofisi 2021:1014). Hence, they found themselves having to step out into new unfamiliar grounds.

> *"I need to start stepping out of my comfort zone and going into areas that I know I might be inexperienced in but worth looking for." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

iii) Solution driven

Innovation also motivated solution driven strategies geared towards being ahead of problems and creating solutions beforehand, hence the need to incest in research and development. The solution driven strategic objective was geared towards finding solutions for the industry.

> *"… in terms of innovation … we have problem to solve…our innovation as a company is that we need to take, we need to find solution and create solutions…I feel like I want to focus on not just having people bridging problems to me but to ,I need to identify problems that we can create solutions to… we don't want people to come with problems we want to get to clients with the solution…" Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"…the highest revenue is no longer about sale it's about innovation… in the market of today their intangible assets is innovation …" Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

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Innovation also motivates new or improved strategies that enable start-ups to keep up with the rapid changes in the market, for example it motivated greentrepreurship, that is start-ups who embrace ecofriendly products and services. Greentrepreneurship is described as entrepreneurs who embraced eco-friendly products or the use of eco-friendly materials. Fascinations promoted a green business; they perceived eco- friendliness as their innovative plan.

"I'm promoting the green friendly, you know, eco-friendly message, so that is something that we try to do being ecofriendly and I would put that as part of my innovation plan." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Table 6.11.9.1: Strategy

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Strategy	x	x	x	√	x	√	√	x

(b) Digital marketing

The theme emerged from two respondents, illustrated in Table 6.11.9.2. Through innovation, start-ups were motivated to embrace digital marketing to stay relevant in the industry. They are supported by Gunawan and Sulaeman (2020:2548), who argue that innovation has a positive effect on digital marketing.

"What I felt was innovative, from my point of view, was the introduction of digital marketing". *Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.*

Just like any technology, the use of digital marketing posed a challenge to the start-ups. It wasn't only about placing the content online, but also about having the skills to make the content attractive to the viewer.

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"I tried to sell these things online. It's just some organic product...I thought I wasn't doing well.... I would get frustrated with my attempt because it just could not sell… selling things there, you need to have a marketing strategy, digital strategy that drive people to your website…just such that maybe they can generate those sales". Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.

Start-ups appreciated the move from analogue to digital platforms as this allowed them to reach more customers in a short space of time.

"I was talking about things like branding, marketing, you know how those are important and how they have changed throughout because traditionally they would have been on tv, pamphlets and branded billboards and now we have platforms like face book watsapp, Instagram." Transcript 2. Respondent 2. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Table 6.11.9.2: Digital marketing

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Digital marketing	x	√	x	√	x	x	x	x

(c) Time management

The theme emerged from two respondents, illustrated in Table 6.11.9.3. These two aspects of innovation were perceived to contribute to the growth of start-ups. Managing time was another attribute of an entrepreneur that gave start-ups a competitive edge.

"… we work towards quick turnaround time to attract and retain customers…if the customer said, I want to do the service as soon as possible, our response

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will be , if you are available, we can even come now to fetch the vehicle or tomorrow…" Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Lack of time management on the other hand, however, crippled the start-up growth.

"If you are going to be the person that comes in late as a boss, and I have seen that in many businesses, you're not going to grow your business." Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Pretoria. South Africa.

It was critical for start-ups to work quickly to attract and retain customers. Autosave claimed that they worked within a turnaround time.

Maintaining the quality of the products, gives the customer value for money and it led to customer satisfaction. However, As You Go cautioned that at times start-ups ceased being innovative and maintaining the quality of their products and this led to failure of businesses.

"And over the years it has happened to many businesses, someone starts something, they give it to someone, they no longer give it the same passion, they no longer give it the same love, they just start to do things differently and then things are just taking a sharp curve from there…. Yes, being innovative and maintaining the quality thereof…" Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Table 6.11.9.3: Time management

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Time management	√	x	√	x	√	x	x	x

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(d) Partnerships and collaborations

Start-ups were aware that partnerships and collaborations were key to sustainable innovation and for staying relevant in the market. The theme emerged from three respondents, illustrated in Table 6.11.9.4. Given the nature of the disruptive innovative theory with its limited predictive power, new entrants in the market such as start-ups lacks the ability to compete against established businesses hence, they should collaborate with other businesses (King & Baatartogtokh 2015:87). Collaboration enhances the quality of the products and services and increases start-up competitiveness (Mano Raj 2021:101).

> *"Also collaborating with young entrepreneurs, like me, there's always room for fresh new different ideas helping each other grow as well, giving each other connections and stuff like that …" Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"…in our early stages that what we are trying to build from the ground on our network… try and find those loopholes and continue to build from that until we find a very good key solution that we can present it to the multi stakeholders, and we can get project going up on the ground." Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"We were also able to talk to other work providers to help us in terms of the systems how do they approach the situation." Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

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Table 6.11.9.4: Partnerships and collaborations

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Partnerships and collaborations	x	x	x	x	x	√	√	√

(e) Brand awareness

The theme emerged from two respondents, illustrated in Table 6.11.9.5. The link between the consumer and the brand cannot be overemphasised. An innovative start-up created brand awareness and attracted customers to the business. Petrovic (2017:204); Mano Raj (2021:101), support the linkage between the brand and the consumer motivated by the internet of things since it increases the competitiveness of start-ups.

> *"If it's just an online post just sitting there and maybe just listing it somewhere and people are seeing it but you won't necessarily drive people to that site. I create that brand awareness, that people would know about the website, would know about the product that are listed there..." Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.*

> *"… impact and the influence that I have made in the people I have assisted and that carries my brand …" Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"Through the innovation we were able to attract customers." Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

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Table 6.11.9.5: Brand awareness

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Brand awareness	x	x	x	√	x	x	√	√

(f) Reduction in costing/pricing

The theme emerged from two respondents, illustrated in Table 6.11.9.6. Start-ups considered the reduction of cost and price of products and services as innovative, competitive and contributing to the retention of customers. They are supported by Petrovic (2017:203), who argues that direct linkage between the internet of things and the brand does not only reach more consumers, but it also contributes to the reduction of costs.

> *"… reasonable pricing that the customer can be able to afford makes their lives easier… it helps to retain the customers." Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> "*The thing that drives me and my business is reducing or providing gifts at an affordable price. So, one of that means reducing my overheads. For example, the cost of making a gift. I take used boxes and then I essentially make my own packaging to reduce my overhead cost." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

In addition, offering favourable terms of payments eased the burden of paying the full amount.

> *"… would find that they do not have the money at their disposal to pay… we allow them to pay the amount in instalments, paying what they can afford at that moment to ease the burden of paying the full amount … and the we can*

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make arrangements to two to maximum three months for them to finish up the balance." Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Table 6.11.9.6: Reduction in costing/pricing

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Reduction in costing/pricing	x	x	x	x	x	√	x	√

6.11.10 Innovation Perceptions

(a) Research and development

The theme emerged from eight respondents, illustrated in Table 6.11.10.1. One of the vital tasks start-ups needed to engage in was research and development(R&D). Huge businesses across the globe invest a lot of money in this activity. Start-ups find this activity essential for their business to help them come up with innovative ways of thinking and bringing solutions to their business. R&D contributes to innovation and productivity (Audretsch & Belitski 2020:2).

"… as we look at Microsoft, they pump a lot of money in research development…you also start research and start to think of innovative ways." Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.

i) New ways

Innovation is about new ways of doing things. This includes, being authentic, doing things differently, arousing the customers' curiosity and maintaining an effective and interactive relationship between brands and customers.

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"You need to evolve and always be fresh, be authentic and always, just keep people guessing…Now things have changed, advertising has changed, type of relationship you have with the client has changed, now clients want a personal relationship, they want to feel like you understand them you are talking with them directly, they are the only people that matter." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

ii) New knowledge

Solving complex problems and creating new solutions requires new knowledge and skills suitable disruptive innovation era. Start-ups acknowledged the importance of acquiring of new knowledge and skills and they sustained this through lifelong learning to keep up with the developing trends. They are supported by Mayera and Oosthuizen (2020:2), who argue that to keep up with competition in a more technology intensive and digital future start-ups must better their education.

"This is where I felt I needed like, you know, go to some course. …getting enough knowledge on how to do it. It's important to continue learning new things because you almost just feel like it's important for you to continue learning new things and speaking from a business point of view, it's important to innovate." Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.

"… what are they saying? What is science saying with food today? What is the food for thought? What is out there that I can read and introduce to the business? "how do I catch up with them, so it would be like you can't, I wouldn't think there would be anyone to follow in the same line and then get it done, because outside gaining the quality, the science behind doing everything step by step, packaging the product, going into the market it's like it's a lot of departments." Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.

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To perform a quality job, it is necessary to possess the appropriate skills and competences required. In addition everyone in the team has to should be empowered so that they knew what was expected of them. The created teamwork environment allowed sharing of ideas to that took start-up to greater heights.

> *"What I can tell you what I have added to my business is just my way of being taught how to work, that I don't just keep to myself, I often talk to my staff, I often tell them how obviously I want things done…because of the way I have been taught and I have seen the way things have been done. If they got ideas of how they see something must work better, we look at it and see if it can improve the business, if it can make the business efficient uhm… I would often just run through my head what they said and what I said, to see can I see this working, or it not going to work…" Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Pretoria. South Africa.*

> *"… which we have learned through when we learned the training. So, we are doing the repairs according to the specs almost to the original to the state that vehicle was when it came from the dealer." Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Table 6.11.10.1: Research and development

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Research and development	x	x	√	√	√	√	√	√

(b) Creativity

The theme emerged from five respondents, illustrated in Table 6.11.10.2. Consistent and effective creativity is vital for the changing business climate of the 4IR. Creativity allows start-ups to win customers and gives them a competitive edge over competition.

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This is supported by Acar, Tarakci and Knippenberg (2019:96) who argue that initiating creative ideas and changing them into innovations is vital for competitive advantage.

> *"And it is about whether you've got the right concept or not, whether you can think out of the box on how you're going to market, how you going to grab the customers walking past." Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Pretoria. South Africa.*

> *"Just trying to be creative around what you have so that the next person cannot find the monotony in buying." Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"So, it always forces you to think outside the box and produce something that your client has in mind." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"… I'm trying to be innovative bit by bit…" Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa..*

In their quest to be creative, start-ups must think about being unique to gain competitive advantage over their competitors. Innovation provides ample opportunities of uniqueness.

> *"So, when coming up with businesses plans and what you trying to do, you got to be able to think outside the box, you can't try to copy someone's idea and make it yours. It can work but most of the time it wouldn't work. You have to come up with some difference and uniqueness … and there are thousands of opportunities out there." Transcript 5. Respondent 5. Pretoria. South Africa.*

> *"So, most of the time on the alternative part some of them they fit properly some we have to do some adjustments in order for them to fit but we do the adjustment properly so that the customer would not see the different between the original part and alternative part." Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

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"*Keep them wanting more and something different because "ntho ya go tshwana ya bora"— getting same thing every time is boring, at some point annoying and you start getting used to it and there is no excitement anymore, so if you keep switching it up, here and there bit by bit, just pushing the boundaries on what gifting should be…expand from just your normal "ke o file", I gave you a present "ya le" of box, "e na le mablom", with flowers and have this whole day planned … they are going to take us here and then after that we are going to go there so we are creating that experience…" Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

"… packaging them and then putting them out there as different bills different from what we are currently doing or sometimes just a matter of saying, what can we do? can we make combos?" Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Table 6.11.10.2: Creativity

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Creativity	√	x	√	x	√	√	x	√

(c) Competitive advantage

The theme emerged from two respondents, illustrated in Table 6.11.10.3. Innovation gave start-ups a competitive advantage against their competitors. When the start-up invests creative and efficient ways of conducting a business, they gain competitive advantage; that is, competitive advantage can be attained through innovation (Liaqat, Haron & Bhatti 2021:4). Start-ups perceived competitive advantage as being able to fit in the system or disrupt it contribute to better service delivery. Start-ups with a

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competitive edge could compete and even outsmart their competition. Farè (2021:1081) support this and asserts that there is a positive relationship between innovation and competition.

"…I'm a huge fan of innovation … my competitive advantage is actually the impact and the influence that I have made in the people I have assisted… so, innovation is that one key element that stand out… it gives you that competitive advantage and makes you generate income through innovation." Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Start-ups claimed that that if they took small steps at a time and started thinking innovatively, they would reach their brand identity goal in the years to come.

> *"… baby steps you get to be exposed to the industry and get to find problems… start to think of innovative ways… what we believe is that, in the next coming years would make us stand out as a company Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Varadarajan (2020:8) asserts that "the new source of competitive advantage is customer centricity", which is described as knowing your customers' needs and satisfying them better than competition.

> *"I also believe it's also important maybe for me because I speak from that lens of view in the IT space. The way I understand innovation as well you could also just be trying something new in your business attributed to the market that you are selling. It doesn't necessarily have to be a new thing completely, but if you are trying it for the first time on the market that you have, you know you continue to have that outlook as to what your competitors are so that you can continue to grow, you can continue to compete for the same market. So, I think that's where it becomes important to not lack behind … for you to also grow," Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.*

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Table 6.11.10.3: Competitive advantage

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Reduction in costing/pricing	x	x	x	x	x	√	x	√

(d) Customer satisfaction

The theme emerged from four respondents, illustrated in Table 6.11.10.4. Maintaining the quality of the products, gives the customer value for money and it led to customer satisfaction. However, once start-ups ceased being innovative and maintaining the quality of their products their businesses tend to collapse.

> *"And over the years it has happened to many businesses, someone starts something, they give it to someone, they no longer give it the same passion, they no longer give it the same love, they just start to do things differently and then things are just taking a sharp curve from there…. Yes, being innovative and maintaining the quality thereof is critical…" Transcript 3. Respondent 3. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Innovation strengthened the relationship between the start-ups and their customers. In addition, it brought a sense of fulfilment to both the start-ups.

> *"… I'm a very relational person. I respond to what people think or how they feel…you have to try and make sure that the customer gets that. I think that's innovation." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

Customer satisfaction was also brought about by the start-up's creativity, branding and customer service and this motivated repeat business.

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"When somebody sees the packaging, and they are impressed with it, "e ira gore ba boe", it motivates them to come back. So, it's a returning customer, there's a return of customers." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.

"And then also I'm also thinking when a client says, I don't have the amount "e o nchargitseng yone" you charged… this is how much I have, you know, some people are not willing to go down with price, but I can negotiate down the price with the client." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.

"Customer was not able to drive all the way from her house to us we drove from our workshop to go pick up the vehicle and fixed it and took it back to her. We even prepared to work overtime even during the weekends just to accommodate the customers. She was a happy customer and she even confirmed that now I must put you on the list of my panel beaters." Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.

Making the customer happy is vital to having a successful start-up. It gave them the assurance that you could satisfy their needs; hence, they became loyal to the business.

"When they see the innovative part of me or the cakes that I make, they are happy with me "le gone" they come back that is how it has impacted the company." Transcript 1. Respondent 1. Johannesburg. South Africa.

"… must say a number of customers that we have helped in that way we have kept them by us they are not going anywhere else." Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.

"Show your clients that you can move with them you can grow with them, and they can just be with you until, until…" Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.

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Table 6.11.10.4: Customer satisfaction

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Customer satisfaction	√	x	√	x	x	√	x	√

6.12 Conclusion of the qualitative research findings

The study makes the following conclusions of the qualitative research findings:

1. The conceptual framework proposed that business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation contributed to the success of start-ups. The qualitative research findings confirmed that business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation contributed to the success of start-ups.

2. The conceptual framework proposed that innovation, was at the centre of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation. The qualitative research findings confirmed that innovation was at the centre of the two strategies under study.

6.13 Summary

Chapter 6 provided a discussion of the qualitative research findings. The discussions highlighted the use of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation as strategies for start-up success. Firstly, a case-by-case discussion of the findings was done. Following the case-by-case analysis, a holistic case study analysis of the start-ups was conducted, and the findings were supported by literature. A cross-case

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analysis was then conducted to establish the similarities and differences between the cases. The qualitative research findings have confirmed the proposed conceptual framework that: (1) business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation contributed to the success of start-ups. (2) innovation was at the centre business networks and entrepreneurial branding.

The following chapter discusses the findings of the qualitative and quantitative research and draws some conclusion of the study.

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Chapter 7: Conclusions, and recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This study was demarcated as follows into eight chapters. Chapter 1 provides the background of the study. A brief literature review on start-ups, business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation form the foundation for the background of the study. The study outlines the problem statement and the purpose statements. Quantitative and the qualitative research goals, objectives and questions are also outlined. The study then provides the significance of study, meta-theoretical assumptions and the grand theory. Furthermore, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks, limitation and delimitation of the study are outlined. Lastly, this chapter outlines the demarcation of the chapters and the summary of the chapters.

Literature review is covered in chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 2 covers the literature review on start-ups, starting with the global view, moving down to Africa and finally focussing on Botswana and South Africa. Chapter 3 covers the literature on the three strategies in question: business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation.

Chapter 4 presents the research methodology of the study. First it discusses the research philosophy underpinning the study. Since the study used a mixed method approach to data collection and analysis, it assumed a pragmatic philosophy. Qualitative results were presented with qualitative findings. A survey was used to collect the qualitative data and an SPSS was used to analyse the data. A total of 212 respondents filled in the questionnaire for the first phase of the study (i.e. quantitative analyses). Participants were start-up owners or managers whose businesses were in Gaborone, Maun and Serowe. The study described start-ups as businesses that had been operating between 0 and 5 years. Therefore, only businesses that had been operating for a duration of 0-5 years were selected. Data analysis started with descriptive analysis, followed by factor analysis. Furthermore, the qualitative analysis used a case study approach to data collection and analysis for the second phase of the study. Eight cases were selected through snowball sampling and structured interviews

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were used to collect data. The data analysis took a grounded theory approach and Galzer and Strauss comparative analysis was used to compare the cases.

Chapter 5 presents an analysis and findings of the quantitative research. The quantitative research analysis addressed the primary research question that aimed to find out if business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation led to the success of start-ups. Chapter 6 presented the qualitative analysis of the study. The chapter outlined the background of the cases and explained how the process of coding was done. The analysis took a grounded theory approach. Open codes were identified and reduced into axial codes and finally selective codes. Themes emerged from the selective codes and these themes were used to support the proposed conceptual framework.

Chapter 7 covers the proposed conceptual framework, conclusions and recommendations. In addition, the chapter outlines the contribution of the study to future research and makes recommendations for future research. Since the study used the mixed method approach, qualitative findings were used to confirm the quantitative research findings.

The study was conducted in Botswana and South Africa. These are African countries in Africa South of the Sahara. They are also part of the Southern African Development Community and the South African Customs Union. However, they differ in size, ethnicity and gross domestic product (GDP). Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be used for comparison. Instead, the researcher used the findings to establish whether start-ups in both Botswana and South Africa benefit from business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation.

7.2 Conclusions

The main aim of the study was to investigate business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation as strategies for start-up success and propose an innovative

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networked brands framework as a strategy for the success of start-ups in Botswana and South Africa.

7.2.1 Conclusion quantitative primary research objective

The primary quantitative research objective is to determine the impact of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation, on the success of start-ups. This was addressed through the analysis of the survey with the aim, to establish if start-ups in Botswana use business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation to contribute to the success of their businesses.

Table 7.2.1: Hypotheses testing.

Hypotheses	Outcome
Ho 1: Business networks have no significant impact on the success of start-ups. Ha 1: Business networks have a significant impact on the success of start-ups.	There is insufficient evidence to support the alternative hypothesis. Null hypothesis is accepted.
Ho 2: Innovation has no significant impact on the success of start-ups. Ha 2: Innovation has a significant impact on the success of start-ups	There is insufficient evidence to support the null hypothesis. Alternative hypothesis is accepted.

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Ho 3: Entrepreneurial branding has no significant impact on the success of start-ups. Ha 3: Entrepreneurial branding has a significant impact on the success of start-ups.	There is insufficient evidence to support the alternative hypothesis. Null hypothesis is accepted

7.2.2 conclusion secondary research objective

The quantitative primary objective was further elaborated by the secondary quantitative research objectives. Table 7.2.1 presents the outcome of the significant test.

To examine the effect of business networks on success of start-ups.

The quantitative research findings showed that the impact of business networks on start-ups' success was negative and insignificant (b= -.131, t= -2.199, p= .028) supporting Ho1. This implies that business networks do not have a significant impact on business success. It is worth noting that the start-ups were not at the same level of qualifications, experience and operating at the same locations. Hence their uptake of and implementation of the business network strategy may not have been at the same level. The qualitative research finding show instances where the participants cited that they were not aware that they were engaging business networks as a strategy in their business.

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> **"***You know, I think I must thank you for this opportunity to be honest (laughs) because these are things that I have learned about and I've been thinking about, but I think that you are introducing them to me in this manner, you know, sort of contextualise the direction at which you could help drive your initiative… well, they could have saved a lot of money ... the one that I have not tried very well is this networking one and I feel ... and I only realise now that it would have helped me to, you know with the advice…" Transcript 4. Respondent 4. Pretoria. South Africa.*

To examine the effect of entrepreneurial branding on success of start-ups.

The impact of entrepreneurial branding on start-ups' success was positive and insignificant (b= .113, t= 1.934, p= .053), supporting Ho 3, implying that This implies that entrepreneurial branding does not have a significant impact on business success. Branding is perceived as a costly undertaking for start-ups. The results of the findings may have been influenced by start-ups who are either not engaging branding strategy or those who are minimally using branding as a strategy for success.

> *"... not much on the branding yet. "Transcript 8. Respondent 8. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

However, researchers recommends that start-ups must invest in branding, particularly during this era of disruptive innovation if they desire to be relevant and competitive (Keller, 1998;301; Wong & Merrilees, 2005:155; Ojasalo *et al.* 2008:93; Flikkema *et al.* 2019:1341).

To examine the effect of innovation on success of start-ups.

The main contributor to start-up success was innovation. The impact of innovation on start-ups' success was positive and significant (b= .671, t= 8.671, p= ≤.001), rejecting Ho 2. Innovation played a key role in making start-ups stand out against competitors. This is supported by Bereznoi (2014:15) who purports that innovation has become a

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critical tool in controlling markets and protecting them from competitors. The findings of the qualitative research also confirmed the quantitative research findings.

> *"I think it's very crucial especially in day and age. You show your customers that you are moving with the time....so I think innovation, it's very crucial...I think it's very crucial to think innovatively and outside of the box and always try to solve the problem with your business so it's very crucial." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"... our innovation as a company is that we need to take, we need to find problems and create solutions..." Transcript 7. Respondent 7. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

> *"I'm promoting the green friendly, you know, eco-friendly message, so that is something that we try to do being ecofriendly and I would put that as part of my innovation plan." Transcript 6. Respondent 6. Johannesburg. South Africa.*

7.3 Recommendations

The researcher presents the following recommendations of the study to the managers:

- Managers must engage business networks as a strategy for the success of their start-ups. This applies to all start-ups regardless of the size of business and the length of operation. The strategy was considered critical in contributing to pertinent issues such as market research, customer satisfaction, skills and competences and brand identity.
- Managers must develop and implement relevant branding strategies that are solution driven and could help them project their long-term goals and ensure their stability. They must also create a brand image that will leave a lasting impression in the minds of the customers.

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- It is essential for managers to understand the critical role played by innovation during the 4IR, hence emphasis must be made on the importance and the implementation of innovation strategy in an organisation.
- Integration of the three strategies is essential to achieve the success of start-ups. The strategies enable managers to achieve their set goals, prepare them for competition and aids them to breakthrough the start-up phase.

7.4 Future research

- Future research could focus on the new proposed framework: innovative networked brands, to empirically test how the three strategies combined contribute to the success of start-ups. Furthermore, the study could examine the extent to which the three strategies impacted the start-ups. In addition, the study could examine the extent to which start-ups engage in business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation. The focus of the respondents was on the engagement of individual strategies while others were not even aware that they were engaging them. Therefore, future research should focus on sensitising start-ups on how the use of the three strategies could be applied to motivate success of their businesses.
- The study could also be turned about, i.e. surveys can be conducted in South Africa and structured interviews in Botswana. The findings of the study confirmed some of global entrepreneurship and marketing literature from Europe, Asia and USA, implying that it can be conducted in other parts of the globe as well.
- The findings of the study could also be implemented in government policies. Government policies across the globe are geared towards the support of innovation and artificial intelligence. Since innovation lies at the centre of business networks and entrepreneurial branding, policies can adopt the strategies in support of the survival and success of start-ups.

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7.5 Contribution to new knowledge

The discussions on theoretical framework in chapter 1, indicated that there were no literature implicating the use of the three strategies understudy; entrepreneurial branding, business networks and innovation combined. The study however, used the mixed method approach to data collection and analysis. A grounded theory approach was used in the qualitative research. Grounded theory is used when there is limited research in the area understudy. Literature has revealed that these strategies when paired, can lead to the success of start-ups. This led to the proposal of the new conceptual framework entitled: innovative networked brands suggesting the use of a combination of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation as strategies for start-up success.

As a contribution to new knowledge, the study presented the final framework in figure 5.10, derived from AMOS, demonstrating the impact of the three strategies combined on start-up success. The impact of business networks on start-ups success was negative and insignificant, the impact of entrepreneurial branding was positive and insignificant, while the impact of innovation was positive and significant. SEM was used to test the fitness of the model and it proved to be fit and recommended for use by other start-ups and other researchers.

The findings of the study have shown that the three strategies understudy: business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation are critical to the success of the start-ups. Hence, to grow their businesses, it is recommended that start-ups in Botswana and South Africa, engage these three strategies particularly innovation.

7.6 Research Limitations

As the quantitative research used a small sample size (212), the study cannot be generalised to a larger population. The sample size for the qualitative research was 20, but the researcher only managed to get eight participants through snowball sampling. The researcher had trouble in identifying eligible respondents. At one point the

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respondent could not identify other start-ups eligible for the interview and had to stop data collection for a period of 12 months.

In addition, the Covid 19 restrictions in Botswana and South Africa made data collection and analysis slow, and in other instances difficult. Issuance of research permits in Botswana took a long time. Furthermore, the researcher did not use Atlas ti because they did not get training from the University during the time the training was offered. However, despite the research limitations, the study was able to achieve its aims and objectives and answer the research questions.

7.7 Summary

This chapter summarised and concluded the study. The study took a mixed method approach to data collection and analysis and used a pragmatic approach to philosophy. The main purpose of the study was to find out whether business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation contributed to the success of start-ups. The qualitative data confirmed the findings of the quantitative data. The hypothesis analysis has confirmed that innovation lies at the core of the other two strategies: business networks and entrepreneurial branding. Furthermore, it indicated a positive and significant contribution of innovation to the start-up success. The analysis however has shown that business networks and entrepreneurial branding's contribution to start-up success is insignificant. This may be alluded to the claim made by start-ups that they were not fully engaged in the strategies. The positive relationship between the three constructs has been confirmed by both the literature and the findings from the survey and case studies.

This implied that start-ups in both Botswana and South Africa could use business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation to promote the success of their businesses. The findings of the study show that when business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation are interlinked, they contribute to the success of startups, however, they have never been engaged at the same time.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Dear respondent,
You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Tebogo Mokwene, a PhD student from the Department of Business Management at the University of Pretoria.
The aim of this survey is to investigate the use of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation as strategies that can promote the success of start-ups.

Please note the following:

- This study involves an anonymous survey. Your name will not appear on the questionnaire and the answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential. You cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to us. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- Please answer all the questions as completely and honestly as possible. This should not take more than 10 minutes of your time.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. We will provide you with a summary of our findings on request.
- Please contact our study leader, Dr. D.A.J. Bornman, on tel. (012) 420-5339 (e-mail: dawie.bornman@up.ac.za) if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please select the "Yes" option below to indicate that you have read and understood the information provided above and you give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis. Alternatively, select the "No" option if you do not wish to complete the survey.

o Yes, I wish to complete the survey.
o No, I do not wish to complete the survey.
o

Please answer all the questions truthfully by placing a cross (✘) in the appropriate block. There are no right or wrong answers.

Section A

1. Are you a business owner/manager?

Yes	1
No	2

If **yes** go to Question 2
If **no** the respondent is not eligible to fill in the questionnaire.

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2. How long have you been operating your business?

Less than 1 year	1
1-2 years	2
3-4 years	3
5 years or more	4

If the business has been operating for more than 5 years then the respondent cannot continue with the questionnaire.

3. What type of business are you operating?

Education & Training	1
Farming	2
Finance	3
Food processing	4
Health & Beauty	5
Law firm	6
Manufacturing	7
Retail	8
Tourism & Hospitality	9
Transport & Logistics	10
Other (please specify): _____	11

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4. Do you know about business networks?

Yes	1
No	2

If **no** go to Question 6
If **yes** go to Question 5

5. Are you engaged with any business network?

Yes	1
No	2

If **no** go to Question 6
If **yes** go to Question 7

6. Why are you **not** engaged in any business network?

_____
_____
_____

Go to Question 14

7. How can you engage in business networks?

_____
_____
_____

8. How did you join a business network?

By invitation	1
Self-joining	2
Through association(s)	3
Other (please specify): _____	4

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9. Which of the following types of business networks is your business engaged in?

Formal network	1
Informal network	2
Both	3

10. Do you benefit from business networks?

Yes	1
No	2

If **yes** go to Question 11
If **no** go to Question 14

11. What is your main purpose of engaging in a business network?

Access to knowledge	1
Access to markets	2
Competitive advantage	3
Financial support	4
Meeting the supply quota	5
Sharing of resources	6
Other (please specify): _____	7

12. How do you rate your competence in managing your relationship with other business networks on a scale of one (being not confident at all) to four (very confident).

	Not confident at all	**Less confident**	**Confident**	**Very confident**
I rate myself confident in managing my relationship with other business networks	1	2	3	4

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13. How do you rate your network relationships? One being very weak and five being very strong.

	Very weak	**Weak**	**Neither agree or disagree**	**Strong**	**Very strong**
External relationships	1	2	3	4	5
Internal relationships	1	2	3	4	5

14. On a scale of 1-5, indicate your awareness about your brand? One being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree or disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
I am aware of my brand	1	2	3	4	5

15. Are your customers familiar with your brand?

Yes	1
No	2

If **yes** go to Question 15
If **no** go to Question 16

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16. If yes, what component of the brand are they familiar with?

Business name	1
Owner/manager	2
Product	3
All of the above	4

17. Why are customers not familiar with your brand?

_____
_____
_____
_____

18. How would you ensure that your customers are familiar with the brand?

_____
_____
_____

19. How would you rate the level of perception of the stakeholders about the brand? One being very low and five being very high.

	Very low	**low**	**Neither high or low**	**High**	**Very high**
Internal stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5
External stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5

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20. On a scale of 1-5, one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree, how do you rate yourself with regards to the promotion of your brand?.

	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree or disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
I have a branding strategy in place	1	2	3	4	5
I disseminate information to stakeholders	1	2	3	4	5
I have secured financial resources for the business	1	2	3	4	5

21. What innovative strategies have you put in place for the success of your business? Rate your answer with one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree.

	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree or disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
I have put in place innovative strategies to make my brand stand out against competitors.	1	2	3	4	5
I have put in place innovative strategies to enhance the business networks.	1	2	3	4	5
I have put in place innovative strategies to enhance the entrepreneurial brand.	1	2	3	4	5

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22. Rate your perception about the contribution of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation to the success of your business, one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree.

	Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree or disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
I engage in business networks to grow my business	1	2	3	4	5
I use entrepreneurial branding as a strategy toward the success of my business.	1	2	3	4	5
Innovation plays a role in the success of my business.	1	2	3	4	5

23. How would you rate the success of your business in terms of the following variables? One being very unsuccessful and five being very successful.

Construct	**Very unsuccessful**	**Unsuccessful**	**Neither successful or unsuccessful**	**Successful**	**Very successful**
Employee growth	1	2	3	4	5
Profit	1	2	3	4	5

24. Explain you answer in question **21** in terms of employee growth and profit.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

25. Do you think the success of your business is linked to the following strategies? One being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree.

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Strategies	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Business networks	1	2	3	4	5
Entrepreneurial Branding	1	2	3	4	5
Innovation	1	2	3	4	5

26. Does your brand have any link with the business networks you are in?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes go to Question 25
If no go to Question 26

27. If **yes**, how does the business networks promote the brand?

_____
_____
_____
_____

28. If **no**, why is there no connection between your brand and the business networks?

_____
_____
_____

29. Does innovation have an impact on your brands?

Yes	1
No	2

If **yes** go to question 28
If **no** got to question 29

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30. How has innovation contributed to the strength of your brands?

_____

_____

_____

31. Does innovation contribute to the success of business networks?

Yes	1
No	2

If yes go to question 30
If no got to Section B

32. On a scale of 1-5, one being strongly disagree and five being strongly agree, indicate how innovation has contributed to the success of your business networks.

	Strongly Disagree	**Disagree**	**Neither agree or disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
It has strengthened the relationship between the networks	1	2	3	4	5
Our network has increased in numbers	1	2	3	4	5
We have a more competitive advantage	1	2	3	4	5

_Section B: Demographics

1. What is your gender?

Male	1
Female	2

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2. What is your marital status?

Married	1
Single	2
Divorced	3
Widowed	4

3. How old are you?

18 – 29	1
30 – 40	2
41 – 50	3
51+	4

4. Where do you live?

Gaborone	1
Serowe	2
Maun	3
Other	4

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5. What is your educational level?

Lower than BGCSE/grade 12	**1**
BGCSE/grade 12/equivalent	**2**
Certificate	**3**
Diploma	**4**
Bachelor's Degree	**5**
Postgraduate	6

6. What is the size of your business?

1 employee	1
2-3 employees	2
4-5 employees	3

Thank you for completing the survey.
We appreciate your assistance.

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Appendix B

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UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Consent for participation in an academic research study Dept. of Business Management

Business Networks, Entrepreneurial Branding and Innovation: Strategies for Promoting the Success of Start-ups

Research conducted by:
Tebogo Mokwene Moagi: u16310668
Cell: +26773127478

Dear participant,

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Tebogo Moagi, a PhD student from the Department of Business Management at the University of Pretoria.

The purpose of this mixed method study is to investigate the use of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation as strategies that can promote the success of start-ups.

Please note the following:

- This study involves a semi-structured personal interview. Your name and that of your organisation will not appear in the final research report and the answers you give during the interview will be treated as strictly confidential. You cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give.
- Your participation in this study is very important to me. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences.
- The interview will take about 45 minutes to a 1 hour of your time.
- The results of the study will be used for academic purposes only and may be published in an academic journal. I will provide you with a summary of the findings on request.
- Please contact my study leader, Dr. D.A.J Bornman, on tel. (012) 420 5339 (e-mail: dawie.bornman@up.ac.za) if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided above.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

_____ _____

Participant's signature Date

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DISCUSSION GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Good day and thank you very much for your time and willingness to participate in my study. My name is Tebogo Mokwene Moagi. I am a PhD student at the University of Pretoria. I am investigating the use of business networks, entrepreneurial branding and Innovation in promoting the success of start-ups.

The interview will be between 30-45 minutes. I would like the interview to be informal and conversational. Please feel free to add any details or ask questions if any aspects are unclear. You also do not have to answer questions with which you are uncomfortable and you may stop the interview at any given time. The interview, your name and the organisation's name will be confidential. With your permission, I would like to record this interview for myself to ensure that I document all the details for transcribing the data. I will also be taking notes on the main ideas that are expressed.

Will you please read and sign the informed consent form to confirm that you understand the nature and purpose of the interview.

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

1. What is your title/position and main responsibility at the X (organisation's name)?
2. How long have you been working at X (organisation's name)?
3. How long has the business been in operation?

MAIN QUESTIONS

1. Employees

1.1 What kind of business are you engaged in?

2. The understanding

2.1 Can you tell me more about your business (industry / sector)?

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2.2 Would you say your business is successful or not? (and why?)

2.3 Do you use business networks to grow your business? (if yes or no, please elaborate)

2.4 Do you use entrepreneurial branding to grow your business? (if yes or no, please elaborate)

2.5 Do you use innovation to grow your business? (if yes or no, please elaborate)

3 The perceptions

3.1 What is your perception about the use of business networks as a strategy of success for start-ups?

3.2 What is your perception about the use of entrepreneurial branding as a strategy of success for start-ups?

3.3 What is your perception about the use of innovation as a strategy of success for start-ups?

3.4 Have you engaged in these strategies in your business? (and why?)

4 The expectations

4.1 What do you expect to gain from using the strategies suggested?

4.2 Are you expecting your business to succeed when you engage the three suggested strategies? (and why?)

5 The effects of

5.1 If you have engaged these strategies, what would you say have been some of the benefits for your business?

5.2 How would you rate the success of your business after incorporating these strategies?

5.3 Does using the three strategies make you stand out from your competitors?

5.4 Which one of the three strategies has the most impact in your business?

5.5 Have the strategies been effectively used to warrant the success of the business? (why would you say so?)

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CONCLUSION

We are at the end of the interview. Is there anything else that you wish to add or share with me?

Thank you again for your time and sharing your knowledge and experience with me. Would you mind if I send you a copy of the interview transcription to confirm that your response was what you intended?

Appendix C

Transcription Case 1 Creative Crafts

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Interviewer	Interviewee	Open Codes	Axial Coding	Selective Coding	Theme
What is your business about	1.Bake baked food				
Would you say the business is successful or not?	Laughs…. em…. 1. Its really hard to judge. 2.Why I say this is because aaahm, sometimes I stop because of pressure at work. 3. When I got the the time to do what I'm supposed to do, yone it does flourish. 4. It is a side hassle for me. 5. I have a 9-5 job, and on the side I do it. 6. so obviously I will put the 9-5 first and then if it is not too hectic at work then I do this. 7. But	1. laughs… hard to judge 2. Pressure at work 3. When devoted time it flourishes 4. Side hussle 5. Priority given to 9-5 job 6. If judged by profit: No	Hard judgement Pressure Devotion Side hussle Priority judgement	Measurement Emotions Devotion/achieve objective Stability and sustainability	Start-up commitment

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	yah…if its a black and white matter, then I would say no. 8. "Coz akr" we need to see profit and over a long time how much have we made staff like that.				
Do you have any networks relating to your business, like do have other businesses that you work with that	1.Yes. 2.Are you gonna ask me for the names? Laughs 3. Okay so one is a florist, 4.	1. Laughs 2. Florist, Supplies, Photographer 3. Adverstisement 4. They do the same	Suppliers Advertisement	Stakeholders Advertisement	Marketing of start-ups

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you share resources with? No…no…no… I just want to know if you have… you work with those networks and how do they help you.	sometimes people want flowers on their cakes 5. so I ask them from that lady. 6 and the obviously where I am getting my supplies#### 7. and then aah… I also have a photographer “o e leng go re” if he has a gig, he advertise for us as well “go re” I got this person “o irang” di cake 8. and I also do				

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	the same for him.				
Now I heard you talking about branding at the beginning of the interview. How do you use branding to grow your business?	Ee mma… 1. So the packaging is branded. 2. We are delivering for example biscuits, the containers has our label on it and contact details. 3 We also have business cards. 4. Just to go back to the other question, then we also have the guy who does the stickers and ####	1. Branded packaging 2. Containers has labels and contact details 3. Business cards 4. Stickers	Branded packaging Labels Contact details Business cards Stickers	Packaging Labels Contact details Business cards Stickers	Brand identity
Can you say you use some kind of innovation to grow your business?	Silence…. Network break….	1. Silence 2. Network break 3. Silence 4. Dont think Im innovative to stand out. 5. I Challenge myself 6. Emo Silence	No innovation Challenge myself	Innovation Decline Creative	Competitive advantage

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Silence…. Or can you say mh, I didn' ask for the name of your business, I don't have to record it but in your baking business can you say you have been innovative enough to stand out from other competitors? Ntahbeleng did I loose you? Did I loose you? Eemh… if you… okay let me go		7. Network break. 8. Laughs 9. Trying to be innovative 10. Don't turn down orders. 11. I make creative designs. 12. I challenge myself in creativity. 13. Negotiates price down for low budget clients. 14. Make client happy	Innovative Don't turn down orders creative designs challenge self in creativity Negotiates price Happy client	Negotiate Customer satisfaction	

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back to the question again Okay I wanted to find out from you if you use…. eemh…. some innovation in your business. Can you say you are using innovation so much that your business can stand out from your competitors? Okay… How innovative are you?	Silence….. Uumh…No, no I don't think I am being innovative to stand out. Silence… Look, I try to challenge myself to… Silence… Sorry about that Aus Tebby, there was a call coming in. Network break				

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No problem, those are the challenges of using the online… online interviews Sound of reconnection Welcome back Ee mma. Thank you so much	Laughs 1. Okay let me rephrase, let me say, yes I am trying to be innovative. 2. I don't let ..eeh…turn down any order. 3. So I try by all means to eemh… "ga ke itse go re ke e be e yang" but to… to not do the.. the normal cake "tse e leng go re" just round…you know.. I would do a design "e tshwanang le" play station ###. 4. ### I challenge my self in that way.				

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Please go ahead Okay	Eemh.. and the also…sorry Okay. 5. And then also…Im also thinking when a client says, I don't have the amount "e o nchargitseng yone"… this is how much I have you know.. 6. some people are not willing to go down with price. 7. But I can negotiate down the price with the client…				

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	8. just to make the client happy				
Thank you. Now we are going to talk about…eeh… your view or your perception about using business networks for the success of the start-ups, not only yours but the start-ups in general. What is your view on using the business networks? As one of the strategies…okay Please go ahead	As one of the strategies? “O ne o re” as one of the strategies? 1. I think its a great way of advertising di start-up 2. because,	1. Ask question to get clarity 2. Great way of advertising 3. Advertising is expensive 4. Have people who out you out there 5. They advertise you and put you out there 6. Helps you business grow 7. Great way of putting a business out there	Way of advertising Advetisement People out there Advertisement Growth Advertisement	Advertising Growth	Marketing Measurement

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Mmaah…. Yes.. For… of… of…. the growth of start-ups. Tsone di business tse e leng go re they are starting up.	advertising on its own is expensive. 3. But now you have people “ba e leng go re” they put you out there and saying to another person… uumh… look I know somebody who does cakes, 4. then “ba a go advertisa” in a way. And it puts you out there. 5. It helps your business grow. 6. And from there more people will know about you. 7. Its a great way of putting another business out there and working together as a network.				

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Okay. Orite.. and then how about branding? Branding… branding.. Eeh.. What is your perception about start-ups using branding as one of the strategies for success? Do you think they should use branding and why?	How about? 1. Yes they should… uumh, 2. its a way of making you stand out, 3. so people know when they see a logo this is what… this is the company that it is you know… 4. Because if I'm selling cakes and there is no branding on it, how will people	1. Asks question for clarity 2. Way of making you stand out 3. People know when they see a logo 4. If no branding how will people know? 5. Not give company identity if no branding 6. If there is branding there is company identity (emphasis)	Stand out Identity No branding no identity Identity identity	Unique identity	Identity

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Okay	know who I am? 5. It does not give the company and identity, you know if there is no branding. 6. If there is branding there is identity to the company, we are able to identify the company… yaah… we are able to identify the company and… yes				
How about innovation? Do	Silence	1. Silence 2. Important to think outside the box	Think outside the box	Innovative Creative Unique	Innovation/creative

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you think its a… What is your view on start-ups using aaah… innovation strategy as strategy for success? Do you think aah… Okay	It's important 1. It's important to think out the of box. 2. It's important to think differently than what your competitors are…thinking 3. and to come up with different ways of standing out 4. Because that's what will attract "di customara" or that's what will attract uumh…the people you are servicing. 5. Because of that particular thing that make you	3. Think differently than competitors 4. Come up with different ways of standing out 5. That will attract customers 6. That particular thing that make you stand out	Think differently Stand out Attract customers Stand out	appeal unique	

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	stand out. Yaah.				
Okay. Uumh… I'm not gonna ask you this one because you have already said you use innovation, you use branding and you use business networks.	Yaah..				
Okay. Among the three strategies that we've talked about, business networks, branding and innovation, which one do you think has the most impact in your business?	Silence Uumh… networking 1. For me that is the starting point. 2. That is where somebody is telling somebody about me, 3. And then I get to do the product 4. And	1. Silence 2. Networking 3. It is the starting point 4. Somebody telling somebody about me 5. I get to do the product 6. They see the brand 7. Experience my innovation	Networking Starting point Telling about me Do the product See the brand Experience innovation	Networking Foundtaion Advertising Produce Identity Innovation	Marketing Identity Innovation

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Why	they see the branding 5. and that's when they get to experience my innovative mind.				
Thank you.. eeh.. Im going to admit Dr Sefhedi just now. Morning Doc Doc can you hear me? "I did mute my mic, how are you? Good morning everybody. Sorry… Margaret(Suodo name) how are	"Mmaah…" No no no its fine Laughs We've been having our own### with Tebogo.				

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you? I hope you are not upset with us". "I hope you are not upset with us. Sorry for delay" Ee mma welcome Doc.. ee mma " Thank you so much" And thank you for joining us "Sorry for being delayed. When you think things					

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are in order, there is always a hiccup” But I am enjoying my chat with Nthabe. “That’s wonderful” Ee… “That’s wonderful” Okay “Good she looks bubbly and very ready” you need to be ### calm you know… just ### experiences about	Okay				

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what we are just about to start on right now, Be as free as you can"					
Okay Nthabe… eemh… the next question we are looking at your expectation, go re what do you expect to gain from this strategies that we have mentioned… the business networks, the innovation and the branding?	1. I think the main expectation is growth of the business, umh.. 2. Me being put out there and being known by my customers and the other people as well. 3. So we having those strategies in place it helps the business grow, that is the expectation ###	1. Main expectation is growth 2. Being put out there and being known 3. Having strategies in place helps business grow	Growth Advertusement and identity Strategies for growth	Growth Advertisement Growth	Measurement Marketing
Okay. Are you… okay we talked about growth,	1. Yes. Definitely, that is the ultimate expectation that 2. when you	1. Yes ultimate expectation 2. When you network more people know about you	Ultimate expectation Identity	Expectation Identity Innovation	Identity Innovation

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and… can you say you are expecting your business to succeed when you engage these three strategies?	network more people get to know about you, 3. they get to see your product 4. and it also helps you think about other ways to better your product, better your branding and better your company.	3. They see your product 4. Help to think about other ways to better product, brand and company	Identity Help think of ways to improve		
Okay. Uumh How would you describe the impact or contribution of using business networks, branding and innovation in your business Okay How would you describe the	Elaborate for me please Silence	1. Asks for clarity and goes to silence 2. Networking: Advertising 3. Tells people about my cakes 4. More customers come 5. Branding: When they see the packaging and impressed they come back 6. Return of customers(emphasis) 7. Innovation: when see innovative part of me or cakes	Networking Advertising Advertising Attract customers Advertising Word of mouth Branding Come back Return of customers	Networking Adertising Attract customers Branding Loyalty Satisfaction	Networking (Marketing) Branding (Satisfaction and loyalty)

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impact or contribution.. how do you describe the contribution of these three strategies in your business so far? How has they contributed to the… probably the growth as we have earlier mentioned? Okay	1. In terms of networking, uunmh… like I said, with the photographer, "wa nadvertiser", 2. go re ga a na le a gig, he will advertise to other people "go re" no.. there is a baker that I know that who can make the cake for you, unmh… 3. so in that way more customers has come. 4. And in terms of branding, when somebody sees the packaging, and they are impressed with it, "e ira gore ba boe", 5. so its a returning	8. Happy with me 9. They return 10. Yes they do 11. Branding: Happy when they see the package 12. The customer comes back, 13. I have loyal customers 14. Repeat orders on monthly basis because 15. they are happy with product presentation 16. Networking: advertising, word of mouth works	Happy Come back Loyal customers Repeat orders Happy Innovation Innovative Happy Return	Innovation Satisfaction	Innovation (Satisfaction)

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Mmaah? Are you allowed to use….? “Yaah… its fine... its fine” “Code switching and translanguaging I think it is okay to keep interjecting with the local language, the home language, it is fine, I think it is fine, we will be able to translate it, we will put it in the	customers, there’s returns of customers and 6. when they see the innovative part of me or the cakes that I make, 7. they happy with me 8. “le gone” they come back that is how it has impacted the company. Sorry am I allowed to use the NEC? Am I allowed to use the NEC?				

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paraphrase Tebby when you transcribe because that's how you facilitate the flow of your conversation. Orite umh…so in your view, would you say when you look at your business this far, would you say they account to the growth or success of your business? Would you confidently say they do account to	Yes they do				

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the success of your business? And why? What is it that you see in your business that you could confidently say eehm… they have made that contribution? Okay “So there is customer, in a way you are saying that because of this branding or this	Silence Okay… so.. as I ###for branding purpose or I terms of the barnding, “go re”when somebody sees the product and they are happy with firstly the packaging, and				

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three strategies, you are able to return, retain, customer retention, because of the trust and the quality they see in your product. Not only that they are able to bring more customers because they keep on advertising you." "Orite"	how it looks, the customer comes back "ke na le gatwe ke eng?… e dira" the word has just escaped, but… yes loyal customers, "e tsisa" loyal customers to the company. For a example, a lady I know on monthly basis "o odara" just because she is happy with how it is presented to her. Umh… in terms of				

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	network, networking… the advertising part of it, the word of mouth “ya teng”, it helps in that way. Thank you				

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Okay… is there anything you would like to add?	No				
Nthabe, this brings us to the end of our interview and I would really like to appreciate you giving us time, I know you are driving to work, and we really appreciate that you have given us this	Not a problem, thank you… pleasure… I hope “le lona” you’ll advertise me. Laugh…	Advertise me			

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time to have this interview with you. Laughs Yes we will definately because if we hear anybody needing your services in Joburg, then we will give them your number	Thank you… you have a and the sbest with your research				

Transcription Case 2 InoMedia

Interviewer	Interviewee	Open Coding	Axial Coding	Selective coding	Theme
The first question is I would like to know the position of responsibility in	Okay… I am the founder and the owner of the organisation yes	1. owner			

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your organisation					
How long have you been running the organisation? 2017, its about 5 years now. Okay	Since 2017	3. five years			
Is that the time you started your business? 2017? Okay	Y….. yes				
What kind of business are you engaged in? Business industry or sector	Its a media production company, so your photography and video, 1. Umh….So covering of events, 2. profiling of individual, businesses or companies in terms of media				

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Okay thank you. Would you say your business is successful or not. If yes or no please elaborate Okay	Haa… I think its an interesting question so starting the business so "waitse go re rona ka Baruti" you know, the salary is not necessarily guaranteed so it was a form of just doing something on the side outside of pastoring to have something stable coming. 1. So in terms of success, where I wanted it to be and how much I wanted to make, I would say no, 2. but considering that I don't have any form of income able to sustain me for the month.. uhm…yaah…3. but also me starting it was	1. Haa… emotion of uncertainty 2. Interesting question 3. Pastors salaries not quaranteed 4. Form of doing something on the side 5. Have something stable outside pastoring 6. Where I wanted it to be and how much I wanted to make, I would say no. 7. Don't have any stable income to sustain me 8. Starting it was inspired by love and passion for people 9. Create a platform for young people to appreciate themselves 10. We put our image in society/community and measure ourselves against that 11. Cause of depression or being fulfilled 12. Help young people appreciate who they are 13. Professional shoot	1. Salaries not guaranteed 2. Something on the side 3. Stability and sustainability 4. Target, 5. Achieve objectives 6. Stability and sustainability 7. Inspiration and passion 8. Platform of appreciation 9. Image, measure ourselves 10. Depression and fulfilment 11. Appreciation 12. Professional 13. Different 14. Inspiration, faith 15. Communication 16. Tools for inspiration, used by God 17. Measure success 18. Impact	Stability and sustainability Achieve objective Inspiration, Appreciation Measurement Emotions Professional Innovation Communication	Start-up commitment

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Wow! interesting	inspired by my love and passion for people. 4. So.. I wanted to create a platform, where I have especially young people, to appreciate themselves because image is everything today, 5. You know we put our image out into society, into community and we measure ourselves against that so.. 6. that also is a cause of either being depressed or feeling very feeling fulfilled 7. and I wanted to help young people to appreciate who they are 8. because, you know, having a	make you see yourself differently 14. My business inspired by faith 15. I guess a chance to talk to youth people regarding their looks 16. To see their look as a tool used by God to inspire others 17. I measure my success this way 18. Havent made the impact I want			

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	professional shoot, you see yourself differently you… sometimes it will highlight things that you don't want to be seen, but it is there and basically, also my business is also inspired by my faith you know that 9. I get a chance to talk to especially young people through what they have gone through that appears on their body that they don't like 10. to help them accept the look beyond that and even see it as a tool that God want to use to inspire even other people. 11. I would also measure my				

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	success against that if I was able to do it successfully, 12. I would say , not where I wanted… hasn't made that impact that I wanted it to make as yet. Uhm… yaah				
Do you use any business networks to grow your business? If you are why? If you are not why not?	Yaah… so when I started the business, like I said it was also just a form of income, I didn't clearly have a plan to say this is what I want to achieve in 5 years. If anything it was just getting more clients and that but umh….and I didn't have like business education, it was more of a thing that I did on the spot because photography basically was my	1. Business was just a form of income 2. I didn't have a plan of what I want to achieve in 5 years 3. Aim was to get more client 4. Don't have business education but a passion for photography 5. Just a hobby 6. Wanted to make money out of it 7. The bare minimum I knew was to register the business and do training 8. Corporate work requires a business account 9. You need to register on CSD 10. Just wanted to have those other aspects	1. Form of income 2. No Plan, achieve, strategy 3. Aim, more clients 4. Education, passion 5. Hobby 6. Make money 7. Least, business registration 8. Corporate business account 9. Registration 10. Acquire skills 11. No education 12. Wish, knowledge 13. Age, responsibility, priority, no business networks 14. Informal networks 15. Helpful use of networks 16. Lack of knowledge 17. Registration	Business background Registration Requirements Skills, knowledge, education Age, responsibility, priority, Networks Motivation Marketing Strategy development	Business reuirements Acquisition of knowledge and skills Motivation Marketing Strategy development

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Do you have eehm…any businesses that you	thing, it was just a hobby, so I took it I just said I wanted to make money out of it. So the bare minimum that I knew was to register the business and just continue with the training because companies they want… if you have to do corporate work, you need to have a business account and you cant have that unless you are registered, you need to be registered on the CSD… ahh.. you know things like that so 1. I just wanted to have those so other aspects of business I had not, I didn't have that education around	of business I had not 11. I didn't have education around it 12. My wish to know 13. Age brings much responsibilty and one prioritises, so no business networks 14. I think I have informal networks like NPOs just partnerships 15. Helpful in the sense of how I use networks 16. Didn't know what to do 17. Like registration, they helped me out wih requirements of small business 18. Motivation 19. Branding, marketing are important and changed from regular to social media 20. How to develop strategy for the market	requirements 18. Motivation 19. Marketing important, dynamic 20. Strategy development		

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engage or they engage you time and again or its businesses that you share resources with or you share information? Networks it can be formal it can be informal as long as these are businesses that one way or the other help or in terms of resources, in terms knowledge, in terms of motivation, in any other way	it…and it was my wish you know but the older you grow so much responsibility and prioritise some over others so I'm not having any business networks. 1. I think its just informally so like you NPO's that I worked with just partnerships.. Okay… yes… yaah Yes				

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So that means you use your network? Can you probably elaborate how you use those networks. How are they useful to you? Sorry, I lost the network No No no I didn't	Silence… mhh.. so.. Network break Helo I don't know you if you heard what I was saying? I was just basically saying that 1. it was helpful in the sense of how I used the networks. Like I said earlier that I didn't know what exactly to do so 2. like your registration, 3. they help me out with that what are the requirements to be a small business in				

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Perfect	South Africa and just even things like I have seeing something and I forgot.. and 4. just motivating, 5. I was talking about things like branding marketing you know how those are important and how they have changed throughout because traditionally would have been like on tv, pamphlets and branded bill boards and now we have platforms like face book watsapp, instagram and 6. how to develop even a strategy to market the business.				
So umh do you	Aahh…Any	1. Ask for clarity 2. Yes	1. Out there, advertise 2. Branding	Marketing	Marketing

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use any branding to grow your business? Do you, is there any branding, do you brand your business? Why do you use branding?	branding? Aaahh…If you can just elaborate Oh yes… I do 1. Aahh…. that would be to put my work out there and so like on my pictures you know have my brand there. 2. Its a form of marketing so that its…3. people are familiar with that 4. they associate my work with quality 5. If they happen to see it somewhere it should say this is mine. 6. And also just for copy right because of the digital space we are in when people upload the work it should not be claimed as somebody elses but should be clear that its mine because people can use such	3. Put my work out there 4. Have my brand on the pictures 5. Form of marketing 6. People are familiar with 7. Associate my work with quality 8. Recognise it if they see it somewhere 9. For copy right because of digital space 10. Not be claimed as somebody else's but mine 11. People can use images for own gain.	3. Marketing 4. Familiarisation 5. Associate, quality 6. Recognition 7. Copy right on digital space 8. Intellectual rights 9. Own gain, Pirating	Identity Quality Digital space precautions	Identity Quality Risks

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	images to make money for themselves.				
How about innovation	Im not sure, 1. I know that I try take different approaches so when I started out, I would go to things like events and shoot there and people would ask if I have a studio and I said I didnt have and I started thinking of ways to make studio more accessible in terms of not having people because they can be at places that are far and might choose somebody else so 2. I try to have a mobile studio where I come and set up there at your house at the 3.	1. Not sure 2. Try take different approaches 3. People ask if I have a studio and I didn't 4. Started thinking of ways to make studio accessible 5. Not have people because they are far might choose somebody else 6. Try to have a mobile studio 7. Set up at client house 8. Comfort of your house 9. Demistify idea of photography can be done at certain place at certain times	1. Uncertain 2. Different approaches 3. Lack of resources 4. Accessibility 5. Loose clients, distance, alternative, risk 6. Mobile service 7. Convinience 8. Comfort 9. Demistify idea	creativity Resources Accessibility Risk Mobile service Convinience, Comfort Demistification	Competitive

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	comfort of your place do the shoot there so it was also just to 4. demistify the idea of professional photography can be done at a certain place at a certain time to see that that can also be done in the comfort of your home so that one of the ways I can think of now				
Perception about Business networks	I think so. 1. It can really be a lonely world in the business space, 2. you think of the seminars that would be done at least in my view they would be costly and done at a place that is far, they are not as easily accessible and	1. I think so 2. Lonely world in the business space: 3. Seminars that are costly and 4. done at far places 5. and not easily accessible 6. Language sounds foreign 7. Networking breaks these barriers: 8. Idea of context 9. Someone speaking are in a different	1. Yes 2. Isolation 3. Costly seminars 4. Far places, distance 5. Not accessible 6. Language inclusivity 7. Break barriers 8. Context 9. Not inclusive 10. Context 11. Understand 12. Break down, easy, understandable 13. Partners 14. Close, low cost	Absence of networks Break barriers Context Partners Convinience Motivation, inspiration Unity Growth	Break barriers Inspiration Unity measurement

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	sometimes the language sounds foreign, so 3. networking breaks these barriers 4. because the idea of context where you find yourself, it may not be the same if you go to a seminar and somebody is speaking they maybe finding themselves in a different world than where you at. 5. Networking with people who around, understand the place you are at who are able to break it down for you in a very easy and understandable way that you can partner with as well who are not too far	world and 10. Networking with people around you: 11. Understand the place you are at 12. Able to break it down in easy and understandable way 13. You can partner with 14. Not too far from you, reduces the cost of travel 15. Just a throw away 16. For motivation 17. Covid proven standing by ourselves may not be enough 18. Fall into depression 19. Business not doing well 20. Network not just for your own gain but also for what you can do together 21. Through times like these, it inspires one to continue 22. Growth because you can dream beyond what you can imagine by yourself.	15. Near 16. Motivation 17. Isolation 18. Depression 19. Business failure 20. Not for own gain, unity 21. Inspiration 22. Growth, inspired innovation		

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	from you that 6. you have to now calculate the cost for the airplane ticket in order for you to work together but you are just a stone throw away but 7. also just for motivation, I think the times of 8. covid has proven that we standing by ourselves may not be enough because we fall into depression, 9. business is not doing as well so just to not only network in what you can just gain for yourself but what you can also do together 10. even through times like that I think its inspires one to continue and even for				

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	growth because can now dream beyond what you alone can imagine I think by yourself.				
Perception on branding	I think branding is important in my view. 1. There is something about seeing, 2. just even for personal fulfillment see your brand on an item 3. to think that you have made it 4. you know that you can sell a product, 5. Growing up brand like OMO, LG, Nike Addidas, those were seen to be quality and 6. something trustworthy and 7. something to pay for, now seeing your brand take that form	1. I think branding is important 2. Personal fulfilment to see your brand on an item 3. Think you have made it 4. You know you can sell a product 5. Growing up, big brands were seen to be quality 6. Trustworthy 7. Something to pay for 8. Seeing your brand takes that form 9. Brings sense of pride 10. Break down stereo types that our work is only for local market 11. But can go out to the world 12. Can be used and trusted 13. Associated with	1. Yes 2. Personal fulfilment 3. Achievement 4. Selling strategy 5. Quality 6. Trustworthy 7. Value for money 8. Fulfilment 9. Pride 10. Break stereo type 11. Global market 12. Trust 13. Quality 14. Impact	Fulfilment, achievement,pride Selling strategy Quality Trust Value for money Stereotype Global market impact	Satisfaction Achievement/reach objective Break barriers Quality Demistification Measurement

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	8. I think it brings the sense of pride , bring a sense of , 9. also break down stereo types that our work is not only for here “mo magaeng” but it can go out to the world,10. it can be used, it can be trusted, and associated with quality, 11. it can be bring a difference most of all where you find yourself. I think its important.	quality 14. Bring a difference where you at 15. Its important			
Perception on innovation	I think so. I think we as 1. individuals, although we may be doing the same thing but we are different, 2, innovation can also be your form of personality taking form in your business,	1. I think so 2. Although we do the same thing but we are different 3. Form of personality taking form in your business 4. Sets you apart 5. Bring yourself into the business not replicating what is already there 6. Responds to	1. Yes 2. Unique 3. Personality 4. Competitive 5. Not replicating, original 6. Responsive 7. Communication 8. Accessibility 9. Meaningful 10. Gain, benefit 11. Connection	Inspiration Personality Competitive Communication Accessibility Benefit Connection, relationship Quality	Inspiration Competitive Communication Relationship Quality

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	3. it can set you apart inthat sense that you are bringing you into this business and 4. not necessarily replicating what is already there and 5. secondly I think also responding to needs, its, 6. you want your brand to, or atleast in my view, you want your brand to speak to people not only people who are up there and even those who may not be able to afford photography in their life, 7. how do I make it accessible to them 8. not only that becomes meaningful to them, 9. that they would take away something from it 10.	needs 7. You want your brand to speak to people of different levels. 8. How do I make it accessible to them? 9. Becomes meaningful 10. To take away something from it? 11. When look at a brand it brings certain feeling and emotions 12. Have picture of similar quality like Beyonce 13. Taken from your home 14. In a place you	12. Quality 13. Convinience 14. Creativity 15. Break barrier 16. Relationship 17. Convinience 18. Fulfilment	Convinience Fulfilment	Satisfaction

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	that when they look at the brand it brings a certain feeling and emotions 11. to think that you could have a picture like similar quality of lets say Beyonce but it was taken at your home, it was taken in a place that you would never think of, you think that you have to go to the United States to have something like that, 12. so innovation can break those kind barriers and 13. form a special kind of relationship between you and the concumers because 14. it makes the consumers life easier and makes them feel even special.	never think of 15. You think you have to go to the USA to have something like that 16. Innovation break barriers 17. Form a special relationship between you and the customer 18. Make consumer's life easier 19. Make them feel special			

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Which strategy has the most impact in your business?	Aaahh…..Thinking about it now. I would say innovation, 1. because I'm a very relational person 2. I respond to what people think or how they feel. So I…. yaah…. I know earlier I couldn't think that my business was innovative, you know…but as I speak more I am seeing how it is so I think thats 3. what should stand out, because 4. photography is a from of art and forces you to think outside the box to do things differently 5. there are locations where you should do outdoor and in door like a	1. Innovation 2. Im very relational 3. Respond to how people think and feel 4. Earlier I couldn't think my business was innovative 5. As I speak more, I am seeeing how it is 6. I think that should stand out 7. Photography is a form of art 8. It forces to think outside the box 9. Do things differently 10. Locations where you do indoor and outdoor weddings 11. Look at the picture and say was it the same place? 12. Forces you to think outside the box 13. Produce something your client has in mind 14. Send an idea of what they want 15. You figure out where it can best be 16. Can take a picture	1. Innovation 2. Relational 3. Responsive 4. No idea about innovation 5. Enlightened 6. Stand out 7. Art 8. Creative 9. Innovative 10. Decision making 11. Quality 12. Innovation 13. Creativity 14. Creativity 15. Customer satisfaction	Innovation Relationship Communication Background Knowledge Advertisement Creativity Quality Customer satisafction	Innovation Relationship Communication Skills and knowledge Marketing Inspiration Quality Satisfaction

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	wedding 6. where you look at the picture and be like was this the same place where I was at 7. so it always forces you to think outside of the box and produce something that your client has in mind, they woud send you an idea of what they thinking is what they want and 8. you have to figure out the location where that can best be, because they can take a picture from China and here in South Africa and say we want it to look like that and you 9. have to try and make sure that the customer gets that. I think that	from China and want it to look the same in South Africa 17. Make sure the customer gets that			

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	innovation….				
What they expect to gain from the strategies	Meaning if I use the strategies ….I think it will be growth, even not just of business even on personal capacity, because I am thinking now if how more intensional I can be with networking, and with innovation that it would respond to needs. I would like my business to be more intentional in responding to needs and obviously, you cannot respond to something that you do not know, so it forces my business to be on the ground level to assess the needs,	1. Seeks clarity 2. Growth of business and personal capacity 3. How more intensional I can be with networking 4. An with innovation that it will respond to needs 5. I would like my business to be more intensional in responding to needs 6. You cant respond to something you don't know 7. Forces my business to be on the ground level to assess the needs 8. Tailor make the business to respond to that 9. Branding will be to put the business out there 10. To compete with other brands	1. Growth and capacity 2. Intensional with networking and innovation 3. Responsive 4. Intensional and responsive 5. Respond to knowledge 6. Needs assessment 7. Tailor business responsiveness 8. Branding for advertising 9. Competition	Growth Intension Communication Needs assessment Advertisement Competition	Growth Intension Needs assessment Advertisement Competition

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	tailor make the business to respond to that and branding will just be to put the business out there so that it can compete wiith other brand out there.				
Are you expecting the business to succeed because you are engaging these three strategies	Mhh…These three strategies, I mean I only, I Know of them like independently, in a way that I know of innov…. I….. I don't know them as strategies in business, I only hear from you now. Yes I could say I do. Aah…1. Innovation as I said ealier, I want my business to be in2. touch with people on the ground 3. if its	1. Mhh…Expression of uncertainty 2. I only know of them independently 3. I don't know them as strategies in business 4. I only hear from you now 5. Yes I could say I do 6. Innovation: I want my business to be in touch with people on the ground 7. If its responding to the needs 8. It is succeeding 9. Branding: For it to be known 10. If they need anything this is where to go 11. Networking: Be able to grow on things I don't know	1. Knowledge, independetly 2. Not as strategies 3. Hear now 4. Yes 5. Innovation: connect 6. Responsive 7. Success 8. Branding:Knowledge 9. Networking 10. Growth 11. Hotspot, draw ideas 12. Learn from others, knowledge 13. Organise	Background Connect Communication Success Knowledge Brand awareness Growth Organise	Innovation (connection, communication) Branding (Acquire Skills and competences , Brand awareness Networking Growth Acquire skills and knowldge, organise

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	responding to the needs 4. it is succeeding 1. and branding 2. for it to be known so that people can know that 3. if they need… this is the where to go 1. and netwoking, would just be 2. to be able to grow on things that I do not know myself, 3. to hotspot some ideas from others, 3. I think that also could contribute to the innovation, learning from others so that 4. I do not free style like I am now 5. but organise it better to be not a small business anymore. Whats the opposite of small business medium…	12. Hotspot some ideas from others 13. I think that also contribute to innovation 14. Learning from others so that I do not free style 15. Organise it better to be not a small business anymore.			
Any questions or comments	I don't think I have questions.The	1. The interview has made me reflect on my business	1. Reflection 2. Different perspective 3. Profit orientation	Reflection Perspective	Identity

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	interview has made me reflect on my business in a way that I havent had time to… the only reflection that I made was to see that its making money. I would appreciate it… based on the interview, if you have any suggestions to recommend or any resources I would also appreciate , but like I said now umh….literally my business is…. just me alone I'm doing the photos, setting up, finances, marketing and its not sustainable for the long run because	2. In a way I havent had time to 3. The only reflection I made was to see its making money 4. My business is just me alone 5. I'm doing photos, setting up, finances, marketing 6. Its not sustainable for the long run 7. I want Pastoring to be my focus 8. Let the business run by itself into a large or medium scale 9. Those are my plans for the future 10. Have an established business 11. Training young people under the principles laid out of the business 12. Have branches acround 13. If somebody wants what Im offering from Capetown they can be provided for by someone connected to our business	4. Sole 5. Not sustainable 6. Focus 7. Growth 8. Future plans 9. Established 10. Training on institutional culture 11. Growth 12. Connections	Profit orientation Sole Sustainability Focus Growth Future plans Knowledge Connections	Vision Stability and sustainability Measurement Acquire knowldge and Skills Connections

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	uhm…like I said being a Pastor, I want that to be my focus and let it run by itself into a large scale or medium scale business, so those are the plans for the future, to have an established businesses like this, training young people under the principles that are laid out of this business, that it can even have branches around, so that if somebody wants what Im offering from Capetown, there is already somebody providing that, whose connected….				

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Transcription Case 3 As You Go

Interviewer	Interviewee	Open codes	Axiel coding	Selective coding	Theme
The second one is how long have you been running this business? Okay	It's a 1-year uhm… 5 months now				
What kind of business is this? Okay	It's a fast-food business.				
Okay, can you just tell me a little bit about the fast food business that you are in?	Okay, umh… well I started at about a year ago, we were on campus and university cafeteria were under renovation and were not operational and we the type of options that a person had to look for	University cafeteria under renovation Not operational Options for food was to get a	Cafeteria under Renovation Closed	Opportunity	Start-up commitment

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	food on campus, it was either you get to eat a quarter or you get to eat a meal that has a heavy starch, a heavy meal and we all know that in a given environment ----are sometimes a bit difficult. I said to myself, why not bring items like your burgers, wings, beef ribs, pasta, tarquos, casey deals and all around that.	quarter, heavy starch, heavy meal	Non convenient food		
	Then I said okay, given I got the skills let me, these things together, and one of the things I had to look for was to look at my weak points as to where can I	Why not bring burgers, wings, beef ribs, pasta, tarquos, casey deals I got the skills.	Bring convenient variety	Strength	

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Okay	reinforce, where can I strengthen, then I realised that in terms of marketing, and sometimes speaking to people, that being part of it, wasn't necessarily my strong hold so I said okay, let me get people who will with assist with the two, the other person was, one person could deliver and I came in with the cooking and all that, but as time went on, academics started being a bit overwhelming that I had to get a few people who I could train and then	I looked at my weak points. Where can I reinforce, strengthen? Marketing, speaking to people not my stronghold Get people who can assist	Skilled Weaknesses Reinforce Strengths Marketing Communication not my strengths	Weaknesses	

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Interesting May be this one is not on the questionnaire but I would like to know which university are you at?	one of them was able to step in and cook, that'll be that for now.	One could deliver I came in with the cooking Academics started being overwhelming Get a few to train and one step in and cook	Hire staff Delivery Cook Overwhelmed Trained staff Cook	Strength Strength Strength Threat Strength	

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So at this point can you say your business is successful or not? Okay	Uhm, I assume its successful given at this point the business can run without me being there I think id I have to be away for quite some time and if I come back its still running then I say no, this has been a successful business.	Successful Run without me Away sometime if I come back it is still running	Run without owner/manager When owner/manager away still runs	Continuity	Measurement of Success
Do you by any chance have any businesses that you are networking with? Not necessarily	Uhm in the food line? Oh yes, I do have. Umh… if it has to do				Creativity

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	with, given an example with the food one like I said it's the most common, so in terms of network I would assume it has to be about where to improve, where to report, what changes can one make in order to grow and all that, so I'm generally a food person, I do food from an academic point of view, scientific point of view and also receiving point of view meaning that I would cook something as much as I would like to receive it or how the other person	Where to improve, report, changes to make in order to grow Skilled in food	Improve Feedback Changes Growth Skill	Monitoring and evaluation Skills and competence	

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	would receive it. So now in terms of getting my food, my best network is shops. I would like to get quality products, so I speak mostly with managers of various shops, Meat world for example, I get my ribs from Meat world. Aah.. initially you get the ribs, sometimes they would have a lot of fat sometimes it is not the right perfect quality, but now when you get to speak to the Manager and tell them what is it that you want or what is it that you hope to acquire when you buy	Cook something as I and the other person would like to receive it Best network is shops Like to get quality products Speak to managers	Quality Best network Quality products Communication	Quality Best network Quality Communication Quality	

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	their product then they able to sometimes meet me halfway to say okay fine, no since you said you want this and that, then it means you can only get ribs when we cutting this ------- or we can only make for you when you have this number of items if you don't have we won't make for you. And same with burgers, a burger, well, some would say a burger is just a burger but ordinarily more than that, it goes even beyond it being just a burger, so I, uhm… I	Supply of meat is not standard If you tell the Manager what you want, they are able to assist	Supply not standard Communication of needs give assistance	Communication	

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	use at most 95% beef, given that the 5% will have to be for the other items, if it not so much then you take a 6-90% beef and that is, that has to be made fresh pretty much daily and for you to acquire that level, you need to network with the number of people, check various shops, umh…like I say, in case this shop does not have business has to go on you must be able to get someone who is next in line, but that person who is next in line, you need to have tried and	Can only make for you when you get this number They say a burger is just a burger but there is more to it	Quota Skill and competence	Qouta Skills and competence Various ingredients	

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	tested them before and not get someone who is going to give you something for the first time that you never ordered , so I've checked a number of shops even Pick and Pay at one point I went in there to say okay fine I'm looking for buns from your shop, I need this bun, but sometimes they are not available when I need them and it's a problem. How can we affect the problem. Then we exchange numbers from there so we start to build the network, so in my line I	Use beef and other items. Has to be made fresh daily. For you to acquire that level, you need to network with shops. If one shop does not have products, business has to go on	Product entails various ingredients Fresh requires network with shops. Source from different shops	networks networks	

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	would say the network is mostly built with suppliers than people who buy. And then, in terms of now the client, we do have people who are regulars, whenever I'm trying new things, new things could be, a different cooking approach, in that regard, I would cook and give them to say okay fine, can you check this and then and outside of that, I will introduce what we call, before the kitchen can open I normally get one or two to expedite the menu, so if it's a batch	Get next on the line. Must have tried and tested them before to avoid disappointment. Checked shops, met with them told them what I wanted and	Try and test for convenience. Check shops and communicate my requirements.	Quality. Communication Non delivery	

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	of wings, I get may be two wing, give them to someone to say can you check and tell me the salt content, whatever, whatever, so that once I have sold, if someone comes and says the salt is a lot, I would not find wanting yes of course from an admin point of view when you are dealing with the customer, you have to come from a point of apologising, but you know if someone is chasing clouds or just trying to complain when there is nothing to complain about. But	sometimes they don't deliver which is a problem. To address the problem I have to network with suppliers Supplier network is stronger than	Non delivery is a challenge Networking addresses problems Strength of networks	Networking Networks Quality	

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	now if there is no one to expedite the meal it becomes difficult to tell if the person is correct or not. Aah…. I would say a burger is not my strong hold because, Mh..hh Well, the only thing that makes me stand out is the quality of the patty that I use and all that. Uhm… meal that I try myself in doing, umh… I introduce fresh pasta in a rural area like that was, that was when I saw that I was flexing. Like I've made pasta	customer network. We have regular clients I use to try new products, different cooking approaches	Regular customers test food.	Quality	

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	from flour to pasta and make it an Alfredo, so that was my biggest flex in the business the other thing, the rib is just about seasoning well of course we not all season them, Silence …….The other thing, not so much, anyone I can train to do, but with the fresh pasta I tried to train a number of people and there was no success, they told me that this one is Yaa… it is just special, if you say difficult then. Yaa.. its special Sorry come again. Yes I think, I should do that, I will definitely try	They check salt content to avoid getting bad feedback from the customers.	Test food to curb negative feedback.	Apology	

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Wow! Interesting Uhm… if you were nearer to Pretoria, I would taste your burgers.	to put it down here is the recipe get it out there, but also, I got the pasta from a student from UP, kana what her name? Aahh. I forgot her name, it has been some time some lady she's probably doing her PhD as well, so we met on cook pad and she shared the recipe of fresh pasta and I said okay, let me try this and instead not go the traditional way of using eggs and what not, because other people, they… They don't like egg that much.	When dealing with customers you have to apologise for the wrong, but they may complain for no good reason.	Apologise for the wrong even for invalid complaints.	Quality assurance	

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	I was like let's remove eggs just make use of only and that was it and probably maybe the type of flour to use, I introduced dura weed of which most Italian restaurants would introduce on making so as was a normal flour, but I got the basic of recipe from her of how to make a fresh pasta. But now turning it into an Alfredo that is a different thing altogether.	Once you did not quality assure it becomes difficult to tell if the customer is right or wrong Burger not my stronghold What makes me stand out it the quality of patty	Quality assurance Quality makes stand out.	Quality Quality	

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It is difficult haa.. Its special Maybe you should franchise it. I'm saying Maybe you should		Introduced fresh pasta in a rural area I realise I was flexing I made pasta from flour to pasta and made Alfredo. Biggest flex in business Seasoning the ribs	Fresh Flexing Making a famous pasta Great achievement Seasoning	creativity Great achievement Seasoning Untrainable	

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franchise the recipe. They don't like eggs.		Tried to train a number of people with no success They said it was difficult(special) I think I should try franchising, Get it	Not succeed with training Challenge Franchising	Challenge Franchising Recipe	

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Okay, okay, orite		on the recipe and put it out there I got the pasta from a student from UP Probably doing her PhD Shared the recipe of fresh pasta Let me try this instead, not got	Adopted recipe Fresh pasta recipe Eggless recipe	Quality creativity Customer preference	

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		the traditional way of using eggs. Because other customers don't like eggs Remove eggs I introduced dura weed	Customers hate eggs Introduction of other ingredients Original the recipe	Ingredients Creativity	

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		I got the recipe of how to make fresh pasta but turning to Alfredo was original			
How about branding? Do you use entrepreneurial branding to grow your business?	Ahh… Not sure if I quite got the question, umh… but if, from how I understand it, Yes, like I said, I have to give a product that is complete, when I went to the market with the, so I had a friend who designed the logo, but it was on a professional basis, you had to	I have to give a product that is complete for the market. Designed a logo	Complete product	Well packaged Professional logo	Packaging

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	umh… send a quote, I had to make a payment then sent the logo full set from… just a lot of things, I think it's a PNG, I forgot the other items but say if you are printing this is the logo, if you are doing web development this is the logo, if you are Silence After getting the bags, the brown bag, normally we call them the brown bags. We get the brown bags in the restaurant they just call them the dogy bag, so, you got those brown bags, then you take the sticker, you	Professionally.	Professional logo		

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	attach it on the bag, then add your condiments, add your bill in there comes a totally complete professional package for someone who wants to pay a few bucks to get it of which it has been something that you rarely find in the rural areas.	Take sticker and attach to the brown/dogy bags. Add condiments and bill	Stickers on dogy bags	Stickers Professional package	

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		Complete professional package. Rarely find it in rural areas.	Professional package Rare	Unique	
Uhm… Im just going to ask you about umh… innovation. Besides that you have already told me about your innovative pasta, is there anything that you would like to add on to umh… some kind of innovation that you use in your business?	Like how I stand out, say may be what makes the cooking to be different. I am a science person, so food is basically Science, and just to share the knowledge because it's a platform, Mostly, there different elements when one is	How I stand out What makes the cooking to be different. Science person and food is science and just to share knowledge.	Stand out Different Knowledge and Skills.	Creativity Different Knowledge and Skills.	Creativity

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	cooking and one has to satisfy all of these elements. And then, in a physiology point of view, they tell you that the tongue have 5 taste sensations and then now, as a person who is cooking you need to satisfy, or satisfy all these sensational wants, to have your meal not lack anything. If your meal satisfies only one, someone will be like, “okare e shota” something, probably missing something, but I don’t know why? Because it’s not hitting all the notes on the	Three different elements when cooking and all has to be satisfied. Physiology, tongue has five sensations. Satisfy all the 5 sensations so the meal does not lack anything.	All to be satisfied. Five sensations Satisfy all the 5 sensations.	Satisfaction Sensations Sensation satisfaction	

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	tongue. But now, if you can be able to grab a meal, and it covers all of these, then you are done. So, I will give an example with chicken. Chicken, how you prepare it, it's a, its basic so most of the time, someone would say you need to brown your chicken. But browning, what is it in the science point of view? As a person who study science. I would know that it was brought up by a scientist called and then he turned the entire process of	If you satisfy one customer would say "there is something missing". If a meal covers all the sensations, you are done.	Satisfaction insufficiency All the sensations	Satisfaction Sensation	

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	browning, a mirrored reaction, meaning you are introducing multiple flavours all at once, so that is something that is different, someone out there would say, no these are just wings, just fry them, just put them there, these are just, do it like that but now , If you find someone like me, who's following Science, to get food to be done the right way, looking at also the taste sensations that needs to be met, then you are left with no choice, but to say every time I've	Chicken, how you prepare. Brown your chicken	How you prepare Brown chicken Multiple flavours	Preparation Preparation	

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Okay	had this meal I have been left with admiration to say this is actually quite nice how was it done and all that, so that would be what makes us to stand out and what would be a bit difficult for maybe someone else to try and fill in the same steps again to say okay fine how do I catch up with them, so it would be like you can't, I wouldn't think there would be anyone to follow in the same line and then get it done, because outside gaining the quality the	When browning you introduce multiple flavours all at once That is something that is different. Someone following Science	Different Skills and competence	Preparation Creativity	

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	Science behind doing everything step by step, packaging the product, going into the market it's like it's a lot of departments.	get food done the right way. Takes into consideration the taste sensations to be met. Leaves customers with admiration makes us stand out.	Taste sensations Admiration Stand out.	Skills and competence Sensation Admiration Creative	

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		Bit difficult for someone else to try and fill in the same steps. Would be like I can't. Wouldn't think there would be anyone to follow in the same line and then get it done. Besides quality the science	Difficult to fill in same steps. No one to follow same line. Quality, science, packaging, marketing	Hard to copy Complicated Process	

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		behind, packaging, going into the market, it's a lot of departments.			
So, let's look at the.. your perceptions about okay, using the networks as the strategy for your start-ups Uhm… What is your perception about using it as a strategy for your start-up?	Start-up of the same company, or different company?				

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No same company	Because this one is already, ooh.. same company? It is quite tricky, because everything has been already within motion, and, uhm… may be just to speak a bit on how I started. The start-up part of it, you know I did a, marketing is psychological, if I would say, what I did, I just said okay fine let me put the reading that was on the menu at once, then invite my friends, tell them that they should bring their partners. It's like this is	Everything has been already within motion. marketing is psychological.	Motion Marketing /Psychology	Motion Marketing	

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	for you and yours, you pay this amount, you get to taste all the meals and then, that was the network that I used, I used my friends, then invited them, the only thing they had to do was to make a payment beforehand, so I could buy the items, and I wasn't planning on starting the following day, I was planning to say this week we are doing, umh.. we are just doing the food tasting with friends, but you would have to pay for it of course. Umh…	let me put the reading that was on the menu at once, Invite friends and asked them to bring partners. Pay a certain amount and get to taste all the meals. That was the network I used.	Execute Friends and partners Payment for food tasting Network used	Execute Networks Sensation payment Networks	

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Okay So it has really worked for you?	surprisingly the following day, or same day rather where is the food? we want to taste, where is the food? And had to assure them that you know what, the following day, you are going to get your meals all packed and done. It has been one year, five, six months, now since we made that promise and we've seen to it that we fulfil it every day.	My friends Made payment beforehand so I could buy items. Planned to do food tasting in a week's time but friends wanted it the following day	Friends Payment Plan vs need	Network Payment Execution	

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		Assured them that the following day they will get meals.	Assurance	Assurance	
		It has been 1 year six months since the promise and we fulfil it everyday.	Promise fulfilled	Fulfilled promise	

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Now, how about, okay, you have already mentioned that you have done the logo and you are actually using bo di dogy packs, with the logo on… It's a… So, what, what? Okay, umh…what I wanted to find out is your perception about using umh… the branding as	Come again, I missed that. Oh yes…..when I…				Professional packaging

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strategy for your business. Or using all of these logo, dogy bags with the logo on. Umh… what can	Umh… when I…when I introduced them, one of my clients when they received them , they were like, this is so professional, we never had something like this in the rural, in the rurals when you buy it's all about convenience but now you're introducing not only convenience but you are bringing convenience and also make it professional, like someone would order a burger, when they get a burger, they	When I introduced dogy bags and condiments clients said it was so professional	Professional dogy backs and condiments.	Professional packaging	

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	get it complete, they get a burger inside a container, you get condiments, catch up, pepper salt, serviette, if its ribs you can get you even get a toothpick, if its pasta there's a fork for that, someone will be shocked to say but, you know I go to Cap I never get this kind of treatment, how do you guys manage to give us such so big, so professionally packaged, like that is the value that we have in our clients, to say if someone is to receive something let it be in a	We never had something like this in the rurals It is always about convenience, but you are also introducing professionalism A meal complete with condiments, catch up, salt and pepper, serviette, tooth pick, fork	Rare Convenience and professionalism Professional package	Unique Convinienvce Professionalism Professional packaging	

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	manner that even tomorrow they come back for it because if there is anything about our line of business we rely mostly on word of mouth. You can post all you want, but word of mouth it's the bigger one that you can't even pay for.	know I go to Cap I never get this kind of treatment, How do you manage to give	Competitive	Competitive	

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Okay		us such big, professionally packaged. The value that we have in our clients. if someone is to receive something let it be in a manner that even tomorrow, they come back for it. We rely on word of mouth.	Professionally packaged Customer value Word of mouth	Professionally packaged Value Word of mouth Word of mouth	

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		Word of mouth supersede posting. You can't even pay for it.	Word of mouth supersede posting. priceless	priceless	
Then umh.. the other one is your perceptions about using innovation as a strategy for the success of your business?	Umh… yes like I have already highlighted to say, I'm a Science person, and food is science, so most of time I would check _____ but if anything there are books that written by Science people to explain the different science models that happen when you are preparing food, so most of the time I would check this things to say okay fine here, what are they saying? What is	I'm a science person and food is science. Consult books written by science people to explain different science models in food preparation.	Skills and competence Research In food preparations	Skills and competence Research	Creativity

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	Science saying with food today? What is the food for thought? What is out there that I can read and introduce to the business? Because overall, the business thrives mostly on how we cook, but so far we don't want to now change how we cook, ----------these ones we cook them like this, if we are introducing a new item, how can we make it? Like I may be try multiple flavours of wings, preparing them a bit differently, packaging them and then putting them out there as different bills than maybe what I am doing, or sometimes just a matter of saying, what can we do, can we make combos, just trying to be creative around what you have	Most of the time I check what science say about food today What is food for thought? What can I read and introduce to the business?	Trends Reflections Read and introduce.	Trends Reflections Application	

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	so that the next person can find the monotony in buying the person who wants to buy burger every day, so that was one of the things that_____ okay Monday, let's have a different menu for Monday, Tuesday, lets have a different menu for Tuesday, but overall lets there be patterns that are consistent and our place is normally just a burger and ribs place, so it's either to say burgers and ribs are going to be there throughout, the other things not like that.	Business thrives on what we cook. We don't want to change how we cook. If introduce a new item, how can we make it?	Business thrives. No changes Introduce new items. What is the process? Variety	Growth Certain Innovation Process Creativity	

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Okay		Try multiple flavours, prepare a meal differently, package and put them out there. Can we make combos. Try to be creative around what you have So customers don't find	Packaging and advertising Packaging Creative Don't find Monotony in buying.	Packaging and advertising Packaging Creativity No Monotony	

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		monotony in buying. Different menus each day but have patterns that are consistent.	Different menus Consistent patterns.	Variety Consistency Consistency	

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		We have burgers and ribs throughout, but other things come on other days.	Consistent		
Now which one of the three strategies that we have talked about, business networks, branding and innovation do you think has the most impact in your business?	For our line of business, I would say the quality of the product, the other items it's a cherry on top. Branding, if we don't have branding today, the person can still buy the food, but should I lose the quality, even my closest network	Quality of the product Other items are cherry on top. Branding, if we don't have branding the person can still buy food.	Quality Additions If no branding customers can buy food	Quality Additions No effect	Competitive advantage

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Okay, so amongst the three you are saying being	would leave me to say, but we this is not how we make our friendship to be or our network to be now we've lost it and over the years it has happened to many businesses, someone starts something, they give it to someone, they no longer give it the same passion, they no longer give it the same love, they just start to do things differently and then things are just taking a sharp curve from there Yes, being innovative and maintaining the quality thereof	If I lose quality, my closest network will leave. It has happened to many businesses. Someone starts something, they give it to someone, they no longer give it the	Loss of quality means loss of network Common experience Lack of consistency	Quality Experience Consistency	

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innovative in other words. Okay	In fact, all of them sort of play a role but, the quality is the one that stands out.	same passion, love Doing things differently, things take a sharp curve. Being innovative, maintaining the quality. All play a role, but quality stands out.	Non consistency leads to failure. Innovative, maintaining quality. Quality stands out.	Consistency Innovation Quality Quality	

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Okay, umh… as a business if you employ all the three strategies in your business, what do you expect to gain?	Umh… number one would be, like it's about customer retention, we want to retain customers, so if you are to implement any of those, the first thing that you are looking at is to retain the customer. If you giving a someone a fully packaged and professionally done item, its like before you get the food, already the packaging on its own speaks to you and then now the quality of the food, rubber stamps everything, so	Customer retention Retain customers Retain customers Giving someone a fully packaged and professionally done product.	Customer retention Retain customers Retain customers Fully packaged and professionally done	Customer Retention Professional packaging	Customer retention

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Okay	all these techniques, they all come together to make one perfect item.	Before you get the food, packaging speaks volumes. Quality of the food rubber stamps everything. All these techniques come together to perfect the product.	Packaging speaks volumes Quality rubbers stamps everything Techniques make perfect product.	Packaging Quality Perfect	

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Okay, umh… this other one is related to the one that I've just asked, but umh…I want to know if what you are expecting, are you expecting your business to grow engage these three strategies and why?	I would say, I expect it to succeed and be sustainable within that success. Like it success and then it remains up there or grows from there. You don't expect it to fluctuate, it is a strategy that you employ and then ensure that on the daily you stick by that so that you can be to sustain things like quality, level of professionalism, like just those small activities that are there. Oh yes the reasons for that is, no. 1, I would say these, all of these, umh.. techniques that we use they speak to quality assurance in a	I expect it to succeed. be sustainable within that success. Succeed and remains up there or grows from there. Don't expect it to fluctuate. Strategy to employ And ensure you stick to it daily	Succeed Sustainable Succeed or grows Consistency Strategy to employ. Stick to it daily.	Succeed Sustainable Succeed/ Growth Consistency Strategy Consistency	Success

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Okay Okay, I didn't hear the why part.

		Reference to the type of quality or way you want things done. If I'm absent, the person who follows the laid-out steps are most likely to achieve same success I achieve.	 Way you want things done Person who follows processes Most likely achieve same success	Processes Processes Same Success	
Umh…I would like you to tell me how you would describe, the contribution, umh..these strategies have	That would be big. Without them, I don't think we would be where we are , I don't think would even be anywhere because like at first when we	Without them, I don't think we would be where we are.	Wouldn't be where we are Nowhere	Status Status	Feedback

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brought in your business so far.	started, we started over a network, we built our business over a network, so you can imagine, already that tells you to say we started with a network then we go on to build on a network. Now people telling their friends to say, you know, you got to try this, this is good and most of the time, people would be honest to say, okay fine, today I tried this, there was something a bit different, what changes did you make, what could have been	Won't be anywhere. Started over a network, Built a business over a network. Started on a network, and go on on to build on a network. Now people telling their friends about our product.	Network Network Network Network Telling their friends	Network Network Network Network Word of mouth	

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	wrong, sometimes it's the ingredients, you tell them no, if it's anything it has to be the ingredients, but we'll look into it thanks for the feedback. It tell me that people are more inclined to quality that we have almost all the time if something goes wrong, they able to become foot soldiers to say, we have identified, something is not right today, please fix it before things go wrong, that is also the network that we have, if was people that are not a proper network, they	You got to try this, this is good. People would be honest to give us feedback. Sometimes it's the ingredients. We'll look into that thanks for the feedback.	Try this Honest feedback Ingredients Consider Feedback	Taste Feedback Ingredients Feedback	

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	wouldn't comeback to tell you something that is negative, they will be the first to speak to others to say, no things have changed, whereas sometimes its just a split second, it only happens at that time, and the reason for it is a its maybe due to shortage of stock, change of supplier, like those small issues, but people are quick to pick up small changes that happen.	People are more inclined to quality Foot solders, Identifies errors and tell us to Fix it before things get out of hand. Great network,	Inclined to quality. Foot solders Feedback Quick response Network	Quality Foot soldier Feedback Response Network	

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		if it wasn't proper network, they would not comeback to give us negative feedback. They will rather tarnish the business. Sometimes the error just happens in a short span of time due to shortage of stock, change of supplier.	Network Feedback Tarnish the business. Error may be temporary.	Network Feedback Feedback Error	

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		People are quick to pick small changes.	Pick small changes.	Changes	
So, in your view can you say all these strategies account for the success of your business? Okay and why do you say that?	Yes, they definitely do, most definitely. Like I already highlighted it speaks to the quality assurance, so if you use the major terms of reference you are going to maintain a certain level of delivery, if its delivery, the delivery being the ---------- if say, you are saying you want to give people this, and then you follow this thing every day, then you are not going to go wrong you are not going to have a day where if someone comes to say but	Definitely Most definitely Speaks to quality assurance. If use major terms of reference You maintain a certain level of delivery.	Definitely Most definitely Quality assurance Terms of reference Maintain level of delivery	Definitely Most definitely Quality Processes Consistency	Quality

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	something is different and if they come, already yourself you know which one you didn't follow, so you are able to be able to say the reason for that is because of this, you are not now found wanting, to say I also don't know, check, I don't know what is happening. If someone says this tastes different today, if you followed everything there, you would be sure but if you missed one step you are able to tell them to say, no today we didn't do 1,2,3, tomorrow we will do it, then its easier. The following day you are going to get back to your expected level, but if you don't have terms of reference, your ship will not have direction, you will just	Then you follow this thing every day, Then you are not going to go wrong. You would not have a day when	If you become consistent in your offerings Then you would not go wrong. Consistent	Consistent Succeed Consistent	

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	be sailing with the waves, today its moving, tomorrow it's stuck and all that.	you offer a different item from your standard. If it happens, you will be aware of the step you have missed and not be caught unaware.	Standard. Aware of the steps you missed. Not caught unaware.	Standard Awareness Awareness	

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		If there is a query you are able to address it right away and promise to give a quality product next time. The following you get back to your expected level. No terms of reference, your ship will not have direction.	Quick response Promise quality product. Return to expected level Lack of terms of reference leads to failure	Response Quality Quality Process	

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Okay, I think this brings us to the end of our interview, I really have enjoyed the interview and I'm going transcribe this interview and share with you so that you can confirm. I'm going to transcribe the interview so that you can confirm that it is what you have said to me in this interview.	Lovely speaking with you… I missed that. Not a problem. I feel it was very short, few things with a bit of similarities here and there but overall it was nice speaking to				

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	someone about some of the things that one had done, I mean in terms of one's entrepreneurship journey, there are many businesses that couldn't see light of day, others struggle, others are still to be born, but when we have one that is you know showing positivity, that's something to speak of. Not a problem, hopefully next time we meet you'll be Dr Tebogo				

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Yes, and I would like to say, thank you so much for taking your time umh…. to make me have this interview with you and Umh… I believe we will keep in touch because I still must come back to you with the transcript. Ha a ha Thank you so much Abednico Thank you and bye bye	Highly appreciated mam Bye bye				

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Transcription Case 4 Weblink

Interviewer	Interviewee	Open codes	Axiel coding	Selective coding	Theme
Yeah. .. So …emm .. The first question, our first question is: .. emm.. I would to know the position of your…..your position in your business.	Ok So…Maybe.. Can I give … urr … a small background just ???? (*Tebogo interjection:Ok…Ok..We are going to come to the small background later but it is ok even if you start with the background). (Interviwee interjection: Should I ???). (Tebogo interjection: We'll skip it We'll skip it later….yes.*) Ok…So I'm also ..I'm studying intreprenuership, emm …Emm.. I'm currently now doing Post Grad Diploma and I'm also	Small Background Small background Studying entrepreneurship			

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	planning to move on and study Masters Degree in Entreprenuership, I've applied for it. *(Tebogo Interjection: Ok*) Urr … but urr … and this is not necessarily my … my … my career path because I'm coming from the IT profession so i'm full time where … where I want to get to with regards to my employment is that I'm full time IT professional but I'm I think urrmm … I've been trying to do startups from my side but its just been a struggle and ???????? just go through and learn entrepreneurship and to may be hopefully come	Post grad diploma to move to masters. This is not my career. Coming from IT profession. Full time It Professional			

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	back and fit that into this initiatives I'm trying to do. So I'm not sure I should be talking about my employment as part of this ??????????? or I should speak of my small startups that I have that I have registered a company it's it's really it's started but … urr … you know its on and off cause I'm studying and currently working I'm not necessarily to give it much attention as I would like. Urrmm … yeah so that where I am there. So I just wanted to … so that maybe ??? so that we can give justice to the question. From which perspective	Trying start-up but has been a struggle Go through and learn entrepreneurship Fit in the initiative Registered a company.' It's on and off coz Im studying and working.			

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Ok	you want me to answer these questions? From the smaller startups I'm trying to do or from my …Yeah? Alright. That's fine, I can follow through.	Not given much attention. Smaller startup I'm trying to do			
So Urrmm what is your position in the business?	Ok. The Business is a sole Proprietorship. Im the only urr urr person in the company, I'm the declarator???. I am the Director but I would like to	One person in the company Director			

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	call myself Technical Director … urrmm … but I'm currently the only person urrmm … in the business. ????Just intervene. I feel I could just elaborate longer. If you feel like I'm elaborating more than I'm suppose to, just say it No I'm saying if you feel like I'm elaborating elaborating … urr … longer just let me know. I tend to just go on and on. .	Technical Director Only person in business.			
Ok. Urrmm…How…. Sorry?					
No! So far so good. (laughs from both)	Urrmm I registered the business in 2017 but where	Registered in 2017			

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So far so good And! How long have been running this business?	I started to actively…'cause in 2017 when I registered it I had intention to start but then I started by….I was admitted for my Masters in 2018. So then I just registered it… I packed it???. Then I finished my Masters in 2019 then it was in 2020 during COVID where I started to actually … urrmm … invest myself in it and learned all the other things that I needed and started to operate it from there.	Intention to start. Admitted for masters in 2018. Registered and packed Finished masters in 2019. 2020, Invest myself in it started operation			
Ok. What type of business is this one?	It's a web development agency and also digital marketing. Urr…The mix of the two services ????.	Web development agency and digital marketing mixed.			

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(Pause) Ok…Urrmm… Can you tell me more about the industry the you are in Urr I don't know whether you call multimedia or you call it IT aaand *(Interviewee interjection: Information Technology)* . So can you tell me a little bit about urrmm…the business or the industry you are in. Just a little background about the business.	The industry itself is broad. … Urr … its multidisciplinary in the sense that almost sometime as you may travel ??? this place, you may find yourself wearing many hats. There is the technical side 0f things wherein you develop or you're a network specialist or ??? you've got cloud people. In short there is the technical side of the business and there is also the management side of things wherein you could be a project manager, you can be a business analyst, you could be urr all these	Industry is broad. Multidisciplinary because you find yourself wearing many hats. Technical side, develop or network specialist. Technical and management side of business. Project manager, business analyst, governance roles.			

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	governance roles in the corporate space … Urrmm ... So Yeah yeah … so ... Urrmm … so yeah I think for me I understand ??? even in the technical there are many roles: database specialist, network specialist, hardware specialist and then you move on to the other side and you have those other roles ??? architect, business analyst, and so on and so forth that are in governance.	Technical has many roles. Other roles.			
At this point, can you say your business is successful or not?	At this point I wouldn't say it is.	I wouldn't say it.	Not successful	Unsuccessful	Start-up commitment

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Why?	Urrmm … most of the reasons are that because of work and me studying this year, I'm just not able to invest myself into it and give it and grow it as I would like it. But like I was saying, I've died of this opportunity, the decision to work and study entreprenuership. I think It's opening … open my mind so I'm starting to have different view of our … what I can bring to the business to try to grow it.	Work and studying, Not able to invest into it and grow it as would like it. Decision to work and study entrepreneurship. Opened my mind. Starting to have open views of what to bring to the business to grow.	Not full time No growth Skills and competence Open mind	Not full time No growth Skills and competence Open mind	

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			Open views of business growth	Growth	
Mmm … Urrmm… In your business, do you use any kind of business networks? Do you have businesses that you are networking with?	Mmm (Sighs) … Look, there are services around consuming, that are provided as a service and that that that fit into operational process of what I do. Urrmm … urrmm … What you call raw materials for me, it is these tools that I… that I'm using, and this IP that is owned by	Provided as service that fit into operational process. What you call raw materials it is these tools IP owned by a particular	Fit operational process. Tools owned by Ip organisation.	Operational process Supplier	Star-up stakeholders

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	this particular organization that I've been subscribing to and I use as input to the work that I do. So I'm not sure if networking you are saying in the sense of business partners or … you know … mentors *(Tebogo interjection: Yes…yes…yeah)* You are saying in that manner?	organisation I subscribe to. Use as input to the work I do. Not sure if networking means business partners or mentors.	Input Business partners or mentors	Input Business partners or mentors	
Yeah … yeah … Yes….Mmm … or people you share resources with…share information with...yeah.	Urr … Ssso … so far it has been a solo endeavour (laughs). Yeah it has been a solo endeavour. I do have friends that sometimes I run things fast like … no man look at this website, tell me what you	Has been a solo endeavour. Has been a solo endeavour.	Solo Solo	Solo Solo	

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	think … . In the early days when I was still not…when I was still not sure of my thing I would ask a friend of mine to just test … urr … but look, I felt it was just too much to ask sometimes, to ask too many times and I felt maybe as the business grows I would just hire????. To be honest for now it has just been me doing this thing and just consuming services elsewhere where I needed them.	Have friends I run things through. Early days I ask a friend to test. If it was too much to ask, when the business grow I will hire.	Friends Friend When business grows I hire.	Friends Friend Growth Employees.	

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		Just be me doing this and consuming services elsewhere I needed them.	Consuming services elsewhere	Suppliers	
Ok. Urr what about branding? … Urrmmm … here we talk about entrepreneurial branding. Urr … It speaks to … urrmm … your product , people knowing or customers knowing your product or services or people	Mmm … (*Tebogo interjection: Eee)* (Sighs) I think whaturr … the branding is mostly has been through word of mouth, people that I have done work for andurr ... Look and I think, as I mentioned, I haven't put a lot of effort in terms of advertising…but I have been getting work, like I	Mostly has been word of mouth. People I have done work for Havent put a lot of effort on advertising	Word of mouth Effort on advertising.	Word of mouth Advertising	Start-up identity

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knowing you as an entrepreneur. Akere you know that in other instances, we know businesses by their owner. O utlwa gotwe, “kwa ga David”.	would do some work for someone and while I have left the business and moved on to other things, I would just get a call from someone else saying you know what? someone said you did this …So it would just be word of mouth through people that do work for. Urr … urrmm … yes … andurr… mmm … But other than that yes I think I’ve got some online presence wearing… urr.., thats where I try to brand the organisation as a whole … Andurr ... Yeah.	Been getting work. Do work for someone and get a call from someone else. I would just be the word of mouth. I’ve got some online presence.	A call from someone else. Word of mouth Online presence	Referral Word of mouth Online presence	

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		That where I try to brand the organisation as a whole.	Organisational branding	branding	
What about innovation? I know we can't talk about your business without talking about innovation. Urrmm…Do you say you use innovation to grow your business? Ok. Any point. As long as it's a small	Mmm…Maybe let me ask this question???. Is it innovation from the point of view of process or innovation from the point of view of creating … Urrmmm … something?	Is innovation from process point of view? Or from point of view of creating something.	Process Creating something	Process Creativity	Digital Marketing

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change or a major change.	For me where I…I…I *(little daughter walks into the interview venue and father talks softly to her: … My daughter is walking in please hold on now. Daddy is in a meeting right. I'm in a meeting.) (Tebogo interjection jokingly: [laughs softly]. Do you have another entrepreneur? Wanting to join the meeting?) (both laugh). (Father continues to attend to daughter softly [rattles/bubbles from father and daughter in the background])*. So…sorry about that! *(Tebogo interjection: That's ok)*. It happens a lot. So … there				

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	has been a number of businesses that I have started by the way. They are the ones that I'm talking about. They're just utopic. I've started a photography business and I've also started …urr…an organic …urr…What do call this thing?... (pause, rattles). I tried to … This is where I felt I needed like, you know, go to some course. I tried to sell these things online. Urrmm … Its just some organic product...I thought I wasn't doing well. These are some of the labels I was printing. So, I have always wanted to go on a proper???…getting	Number of businesses I started Photography business Organic	Number of start-ups Type of business	Number of start-ups Type of start-up New skills	

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Ok. Yeah! umm In terms of … urr … in terms of the…the … the business you are running on web development and digital marketing, urrmm…can you probably talk about how innovative have you been urr	enough … urr … knowledge on how to do it. I would get frustrated with my attempt because it just could not … you know, you'll be selling these things…they are not buying it!??? Yeah! Sorry about that. Let's just go back to the topic. (Pauses and sighs) What I felt was innovative, from my point of view, was the introduction of digital marketing services … urr … to compliment the ecommerce solutions or the website solutions. So, a lot of the times you develop…my business is	Felt like I needed to go for some course. Tired to sell things online. Organic product I thought I wasn't doing well. Labels I was printing. Getting enough knowledge how to do it. Frustrated with the attempt.	Needed training Sell online Type of business Wasn't doing well Labels Enough knowledge	ecommerce Type of start-up Not successful Labels New skills Frustration	

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… in these two areas since you started the business. Any small changes that you have made or major changes?	about developing websites. And ha o developa o'website na you develop websites for people and I knowooo???….a lot of the times see when I develop a website for someone, it would just be another website that's just sitting there, people are not visiting it… Andurr…and I think when I was learning about this industry or this services, I realized that …urr… digital marketing is the key …urr…services that you should then have and I think in entrepreneurship they do say, if you start a business you just have to put a lot of	Selling things and they are not buying it. Innovative was introduction of digital marketing services. Complement ecommerce or web solutions. Business about developing websites	Frustration Sell things not bought Introduction of digital marketing Ecommerce or web solutions Type of business	No sales digital marketing Ecommerce Type of start-up	

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	effort on marketing in the first few, I don't whether its a few months or years you should really invest on marketing. *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* ??? When you have that website or its a commerce store there, you are selling things there, you need to have a marketing strategy, digital strategy that drive people to your website *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* …jus, just, just… such that …such that maybe they can generate those sales. *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. Cause if its just an online post??? sitting there and	You develop websites for people Just another website sitting there with no visits Digital marketing is key.	Develop websites No visits Digital Marketing	Type of start-up No traffic. Digital Marketing	

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	maybe just listing it somewhere and people are seeing it *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* but you won't necessarily have effort to drive people to that site *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* to create that brand awareness, …urr...that people would know about you, would know about your website, would know about the product that are listed there, then it just becomes … end up some of our customers would not necessarily find value in with having this website cause it would just be something that's just sitting	If start a business put a lot of effort in marketing. First few months or years, invest in marketing. You need to have a marketing strategy, digital strategy to drive	Marketing Invest in marketing.	Marketing Marketing	

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	there *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* ??? *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. Kana we have a website as well that you guys can go check. But it was through this …urr… efforts …urr… of digitally marketing this site in social platforms that can then translate to sales. You get people from all over South Africa *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. When I started doing that I started to get people from everywhere *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* enquiring about my products *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmhh).* Even though some were	people to your website. Maybe they can generate sales If its just online post sitting there or listed People are seeing it but wont necessarily have effort to drive people to the site.	Marketing strategy, digital strategy to drive people to your Generate sales. Post sitting there or listed. Visible but not drive people to site.	Marketing strategy, digital strategy. Sales Inactive post Visible with no traffic.	

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	not binding *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*, you could see if you continued to do this this thing, you know eventually some…some sales would generate… *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* for … that urr … for this type of business. Even if its not for me, whoever I create a website for, they need to compliment the services.	To create brand awareness. Know about you, your website and product. They are listed there it becomes. Customers won't find any value on the website'. Just sitting there We have website so that people go check.	Brand awareness Brand awareness No value on website	Brand awareness Brand awareness Valueless	

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		Efforts of digitally marketing the site social platforms can translate. People from everywhere enquiring about products. Even though some were not binding, if you continue to do this thing, some sales would generate.	Inactive Active website Effort of digital marketing translate to sales. Attract a lot of people.	Inactive Active website Digital marketing Traffic	

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		Whoever I create a website for they need to complement the services.	Persitent marketing digitally generate sales. Complement the services	Sales Digital marketing	
Yeah! Ok. Now we are going to be talking about your perceptions about	Interjection with a sigh: And urr Look here! To answer this question, I would leverage ???, I'm				

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… urrmm … the use of business networks as a strategy for startups. What do you think *(Interviewee interjection: Mm)* of … urrmm … startups really engaging in business networks to ???... Ok. Did you…Did you hear me?	losing there, I'm losing you there! I … I heard you when you … sss … when you … sss				

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Ok Ok. Let me repeat my question. Umm…You are… I want you to talk about your perception about startups using business networks as a strategy for the success of their businesses. Hhmm! I lost you! *(Silence continues)* Hmm I lost you Dave! *(Silence still continues and even longer.)*.	… were talking about the business … urr … urr … connections. That's where … that's where ??? Ok. For this I will borrow from what I have been learning in this year, which I wasn't doing. … Urrmm … *(Went silent…)* *Suddenly a click and a soft:* Hello!				

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Yes! I don't know if it was your network or mine! But I lost…. Yes I can hear you now. You were going to talk about your perceptions about startups…urr… using networks…	I just saw you as disconnected from my side. *(Silence again…)* Can you… *Bubbles*…I don't want to be disrupted again. I … I don't remember. Was I answering…. Their networks … Is … Is … I start works???. Oh				

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	yes! … Urr … what I said was … Urrmm … This is … I will speak from what I learned this year *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmhh)* during …urr… my studies *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. Urr … That … urrmm … those connections are important … urrmm … aand … You know… I think in big corporations you have advisors *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*, board members that assist you to run the business or advise you. But I think what they spoke about on a smaller scale, when you are a startup, you know you	What I learned during my studies.	Learned	New skills Connections	

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	could always leverage your professors, or …urr…someone who has already done??? *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* Someone who is in the same type of business *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* and then … urr … just take the advice. You know…you can poach…approach someone who is doing the same thing and just speak to them about the ideas. Test some of the ideas *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* you have, take their input in that … urr… in that sense *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* to	Those connections are important. In big corporations you have advisors, board members. Assist to run the business or advise. Small start-up leverage on professors or those already in same type of business.	Connections important Advisors and board members Business operation and advise. Professors and business owners	Advisory Advisory Advisory	

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	see how you can bring it back here and I think that …that … and dev … dev … develop those … those… those relationships and nurture them such that, you know, they fit into … into your business urr … urr … in terms of growing *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. Urrmm … yeah … and sometimes what they say, you … you don't know what you don't know *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. Urrmm … sometimes you are not doing things because you don't want to *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*, you just don't know you should	Take advice. Approach one doing the same thing and speak to them about ideas. Test some of the ideas. Take their input. See how you can bring it back here. Develop those relationships.	Advice Approach other businesses Test ideas Receive input Implement	Advisory Advisory Advisory Advisory Advisory	

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	be *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. And its through those … those connections that you can be exposed to urr … urr … things. Urrmm … sometimes it takes experience *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* … urr … to learn some of these things *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* so ??? that's why you … you … will be able to get that experience that you need …Yes! … *(Tebogo interjection: Yeah! Ok)*.	Nurture them to fit into your business growth. What they say you don't know You don't do things because you don't want to.	Build relationships Nurture relationships for growth. You don't know what they say. Not doing things because	Relationships Relationships Lack of knowledge.	

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		You don't know you should be. Through connections you can be exposed to things. Takes experience to learn some things. You will be able to get the	you don't know you should. Connections exposes to things. Experience to learn things.	Lack of knowledge Connections Experience	

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		experience you need.	Get experience you need	Experience	
Urr … How about your perceptions on the use of entrepreneurial branding? Urr … for startups to grow their businesses?	Urrmm … its important, its important! Because iturr … iturr … aandurr … look, in the early days, thats when I feel that, as I was talking about digital marketing, I'm saying that its important *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*, and I think the mistake that I did was to look for profits *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* … urrmm,…as … in the … in the beginning *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. But I think you almost need that	Its important, Its important In the early days digital marketing is important. The mistake I made was to look for profit in the beginning.	Important Digital marketing important Looked for profit.	Important Digital marketing Profit	

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	long term view *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* and I think that's where entrepreneurial branding *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*, as you describe it and as how I understand it as marketing, becomes important because you have to give your products that integrity and people get that though … urrmm … that awareness that is created about *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* your business. The more they hear about it, the more they see it *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*, the more they can associate with it, maybe through those word of	You need that long term view. That where entrepreneurial branding as marketing becomes important. You have to give your products integrity.	Long term view Entrepreneurial branding and marketing Give products integrity.	Long term Entrepreneurial branding and marketing Integrity	

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	mouth, maybe someone can validate, vouch for you in that sense. It becomes important there … urr … in the sense that, look if you invest in more effort there you can then start looking to benefit urrmm … when that urr … your business is thaturr …thaturr … its not integrity ??? Whats that important word ???…Credibility! *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* when it ??? has gained that credibility through the effort that you put through entrepreneurial branding *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*.	People get that through awareness created about your business. The more they hear the more they see, the more they associate with it. Through word of mouth, validate, vouch. Becomes important.	Awareness created by business. Hearing, seeing, associate with. Word of mouth. Important More effort brings benefits	Awareness creation Association Word of mouth. Important More effort	

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		If you invest more effort there you can start looking to benefits. Credibility. Gained credibility Through effort put through entrepreneurial branding.	Credibility. Gained credibility Effort put through entrepreneurial branding.	Credibility. Credibility. Effort	
And how about innovation? What	(Sighs) … I also believe its also important … urrmm …		Important	Important	

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is your perception about startups using innovation?	and I think its … its alsooo … urr … urr … urr … maybe for me cause I speak … I speak from that lense of view *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* in the IT space urr … its important to continue learning new things cause urr … things have got a short lifespan *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* because there … there's always something new that … that urr … wurr … wurr … the right word is technology changes quickly *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*, at a faster rate *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* andurr urr…you almost just	I believe it is also important. In the IT space it is important to continue learning new things. Things have a short life span. There always something new	Continue learning new skills. Short life span Something new.	New skills Life span New knowledge. Rapid changes	

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	feel like it's important for you to continue learning new things and speaking from a business point of view, it's important to innovate *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. Urrmm … and the way I understand … I understand innovation as well you could also just be urrmm,… look, if you are trying something new in your business *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*, attributed to the market that you are selling. It doesn't necessarily have to be a new thing completely *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. But if you are	Technology changes quickly at a faster rate. Important to continue learning new things. From business point of view, it's important to innovate.	Changes quickly at faster rate Continue learning new things. Important to Innovate.	New knowledge Innovation	

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	trying it for the first time and you are trying it for the first time on the market that you have *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*, you know you continue to do that, urr … you continue to have that outlook as to what your competitors are doing *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* so that you can … you can continue to grow, you can continue to compete for the same market *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. So, I think that's where it becomes important to not lack behind *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* … urrmm … urrmm … for you	If you are trying something new in your business, Attributed to the market you are selling. It doesn't have to be a new thing completely. Trying it for the first time on the market you have.	Try something new Market you are selling to. Improved product/service Try for the first time.	New product/service Target market Innovation New product/service Competition	

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	to also grow *(Tebogo interjection: Yeah!)*.	You continue to have outlook as to what your competitors are doing. You continue to grow, you continue to compete for the same market. Its important to not lack behind for you to also grow.	Outlook on competitors Grow and compete for the market. Not lack behind for growth	Growth and competition Current	

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Ok. Urrmm … Do use the three strategies that you have talked about in your business? I guess you have mentioned that earlier that you do use some networks you do use some branding, and innovations. So my question is going to be, … urrmm ... which one of these three strategies do you … does make a lot of impact in your business?	Urrmm … (Sighs) Before, before, I used to think that innovation is the best, well, is one to go with. I kept myself busy by continuing to learn the stuff, I thought it will make me a success. *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*But after my studies in this year, I realized that branding *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* or marketing is what is important and the patience thereof … urr … urr … obviously you know, you …you … you … was to invest in … in … in ... yes the patience thereof ... but	I used to think that innovation is the best. Is the one to go with Kept busy by continuing to learn stuff. I thought it will make me a success After my studies I realise that branding or marketing is important.	Rate innovation highly Innovation is key. Busy learning new stuff Make success. Branding or marketing important. Patience	Rating Rating New knowledge Success Rating	

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	to answer the question, the branding *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* is the more important in my personal view *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* and I think that's what I would do going forward with my business *(Tebogo interjection: Ok)* urr … yeah! *(Tebogo interjection: Ok)*	The patience thereof Was to invest in the patience thereof. Branding is more important. That's what I would do with my business going forward.	Invest in patience. Branding key Going forward	Patience Patience Rating Future plans	

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So, as a startup, what do you expect to gain from using these strategies, branding, networking and innovation?	So urr … innovation, branding and networking? *(Tebogo interjection: Yes!)* Urr … the one that I think urrmm … the networking, let me start there, maybe to gain from the lessons learned urr … of the people that urrmm … you know, are big in this industry *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* … , are big in this industry, have got a wealth of knowledge *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* about the industry *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* urrmm … andurr … and also … yes and I think that's the opportunity that I would like to gain *(Tebogo*	Networking, lessons from people who are big in the industry. Have got a wealth of knowledge about the industry.	Lessons from industry Wealth of knowledge	Gain knowledge. Wealth of knowledge	

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	*interjection: Mmmm)*cause urr … yeah …. So, for branding, that's what I would like to gain … for networking, that's what I would like to gain. For branding urrmm … I think for branding, its just important urrmm … to … to strengthen urr … the business, urr … to strengthen the brand in itself *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. Branding that's where I put cause people are not keen to just buy stuff *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm, Mmmm, Mmmm)*. I can give … I can give you an example of this, its just me putting my own label,	That's the opportunity I would like to gain. For branding, that's what I would like to gain. Branding, important to strengthen the business, strengthen the brand.	Opportunity to gain. Would like to gain. Branding strengthens business and brand	Gain opportunity Gain Business and brand.	

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	but this is the same thing that people buy elsewhere *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* but because, you know, they don't know, they don't know this name, they don't know, they just don't know, they just … people are just not trusting *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. So, the more you invest in creating awareness and exposing yourself out there, the m people see your brand. I … I think that's where I feel branding will help my business *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. Andurr … innovation for me is just so you are able to	Branding that where I put. People are not not keen to just buy stuff. Putting my own label, but this is the same thing that people buy elsewhere. They don't know this name, They are not trusting.	Where I put it Not keen to buy. Same label as anywhere. No knowledge	Rating Same product/service No knowledge	

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	compete *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* andurr … more importantly, so you are able to compete cost effectively *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* as well.	Invest in creating awareness and exposing yourself out there. More people see your brand. That's where I feel branding will help my business. Innovation is just so you are able to compete.	Not trusting Create awareness and expose self. Brand awareness Branding will help business.	Not trusting Create awareness Brand awareness Branding	

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		You are able to compete cost effectively.	Competitive edge Compete cost effectively.	Competitive edge Competition	
(Pause) Ok … Urrmm … urr … Are you expecting to … your business to succeed … urrmm … when you engage in these three strategies? Initially *(Interviewee interjection: So definitely So*	(Sighs) Urrmm … You know, I think I must thank you! … I must thank … I must thank you for this opportunity to be honest (laughs) because these are things that you … I have learned about *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* and I've I've been thinking about but I think that you introducing them to me in				

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definitely) you had said that your business was not successful at the moment. Yeah! … So … urr … *(Interviewee interjection: So!)* Ok *(Interviewee interjection: Sorry! I think you are still finishing)* Yes! … I would like to know if you expect the business to succeed if you invest in these three strategies and why you say so.	this manner *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*, you know, sort of … sort of, you know, contextualise the direction at which you could help drive *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* your iniatiative *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. You know, ??? there will be different things you could do in innovation, there will be different things you could do in branding *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. It sort of creates some models, not a business model but some model that can guide you around driving these things *(Tebogo interjection:*	Contextualise direction. Which you could drive your initiative. Different things you could do in innovation.	Contextualise direction. Drive initiative Different things Different things	Strategy Initiative Creativity Creativity	

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	Mmmm), keeping these things important *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* as you walk along this journey *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* of entrepreneurship *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* . So, I definitely do if … if … if I plan these things and maybe try the different combination of things, each of those things if I go along, seeing what works, it would definitely help me *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* succeed *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* to be honest. I believe that, I believe that …aandurr …	Different things you could do in branding. Sort of create some model not a business model but some model that can guide drive these things. Keeping these things important As you walk along this journey of entrepreneurship.	Some model Guide drive Keeping things important Journey	Strategy Strategy Monitoring Monitoring	

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	yeah I believe it would *(Tebogo interjection: Ok)*.	If I plan these things and try a combination of things. As I go along seeing what works would help me succeed. I believe it would.	Plan these things Try a combination. Monitoring and evaluation. Would bring success.	Planning Creativity Monitoring and evaluation Success	

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Urrmm … So far when you assess your business, how would you describe the contribution they have made in your business?	Look! … the … the one that I have not tried very well is this networking one, urrmm … and I feel … and I only realize now that it would have helped me to, you know, with the advices, that perhaps I would not have spent so much time *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* trying to find out *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* … urrmm. For … as an example I spent a lot of money buying these things and what I have learned this year, which is a takeaway, is that I could have started small *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmhh)* and seen if people liked these	I haven't tried the networking. I realise it would have helped me with the advise. I wouldn't have spent much time trying to find out. I spent a lot of money buying things. What I learnt	Tried networking. Help with the advise. Spent time trying to find out Money buying things.	No networking Advisory Finding new knowledge. Costly	

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	things and maybe I had spoken to someone. Those are things that I could have done *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. The one that I have tried very well is the branding one well at list how I understand *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* it in my area, the digital marketing, exploring that … I think I have done that very well and I could see. Obviously peop … people being …peop … people being interested in you doesn't mean they wanna buy *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. Just at the mall as well, people walking in and outside the	Which is a take away Is that I could have started small See if people like the things Or have spoken to someone. The one I tried very well is the branding. Digital marketing exploring that, I	What I learnt Take away Started small Tested the market. Spoken to someone. Tried branding.	New knowledge Evaluation Strategy Monitoring Advisory Branding	

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	mall doesn't necessarily mean they are buying. But getting people coming in *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*, one or two might buy *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* and I think with … with … with that on I think I did it very well and I think with a lot of patience *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* maybe it would work out *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. Also last the innovation one, urrmm …I think this one, I tried to link it as I mentioned, I realized, my product is actually developing ecommerce solutions, online shops	have done that very well. People being interested doesn't mean they wanna buy. Walking in and outside the mall doesn't mean they are buying. Getting people coming , one or two might buy.	Digital marketing Exploration Interest does not equate to sales. Walk in and out does not equate to sales. People coming in might buy.	Digital marketing Sales Sales Traffic	

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	(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm). So … (Silence).	With that I did well.	Did well	Achievement	
(Silence) … I have lost you! …. (Silence continues) …	About networks was that … urr …	With a lot of patience maybe it would work out.	Patience	Patience	
No, networks are fine and branding. We can go to innovation	Oh yes! With innovation, what I had said was that urrmm … Kana the question was what? I think these things will help me.	Innovation, I tried to link it, my product is developing ecommerce solutions, online shops.	Innovation linked to ecommerce solutions.	Linkage	
Urrmm … the question was: Urrmm … How had they urr … contributed to your business?	The innovation part that I had explored was trying to tie digital marketing services to my ecommerce solutions *(Tebogo interjection: Ok)*, those that I have done to myself and I				

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	did for my customers. What I've seen by doing that, urr … it I would help tie traffic to the site *(Tebogo interjection: Mhhh)* and then it would create, … they sort of complement each other with branding because then it would create awareness about a brand and people start knowing about yourself in that manner *(Tebogo interjection: Mhhh)*. And I think that's the type of innovation I want to continue investing in because you still have those things that you google??? Analytics *(Tebogo interjection:*	Trying to tie digital services to ecommerce solutions.	Innovation tying digital services to ecommerce solutions.	Linkage	

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	Mmmm), urr … that can help you understand customer behavior *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*, and you can interact with customers at different point. They call it that purchase funnel *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. At different … in digital marketing they call it … chasen pan … purchase channel … funnel *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* … where you can interact with … with the customer at different points of the host levels of the family *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. Someone maybe put a product in a cart and … I	Those I did for self I did for my customers. By doing that, it help tie traffic to the site. It create Sort of complement each other with branding. Create awareness about a brand.	Same quality Tie traffic to site Create Complement with branding. Create awareness	Quality control Linkage Create Complement	

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	think it takes a lot if they do that … they something in the cart and then they leave it there *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. They don't complete the purchase and then you can come back and just start prompting them to buy by discounting them on those products *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. Or … or you are giving them coupons or you know, something that can motivate them to just pick that thing up or advertise … urr … urr … you know … cross selling like associated product or upselling. So, there is a lot	People start knowing about you. Type of innovation want to invest in. Things you google, analytics Can help you understand customer behaviour. Can interact with customers at different point. Called the purchase funnel.	Know about product. Type of innovation. Google analytics Understand customer behaviour.	Create awareness Product awareness Innovation Online tools Customer behaviour	

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	to innovate around, using digital marketing *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* which I think will compliment the service of ecommerce *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)*. Those are the things that I want to carry forward *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm)* and explore from an innovation point of view *(Tebogo interjection: Mmmm … Ok)*.	You interact with the customer at different points of the host level of family. Put a product in a cart. It takes a lot. They put something in the cart and leave it there. They don't complete the purchase	Interact with customers. Purchase funnel Interact with customers. Product in a cart	Customer interaction Purchase funnel Customer interaction Pre purchase	

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		And you prompt them to buy, by discounting the products. or giving them coupons. Know something that can motivate them to pick that thing up or advertise, Cross selling like associated products or upselling. There is a lot to innovate around using	Product in a cart. Don't buy Discounting and coupons. Motivation	Pre purchase No sales Promotion Motivation	

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		digital marketing. Complement the ecommerce. Things I want to carry forward. Explore from an innovation point of view.	Advertise Cross selling Upselling Innovate through digital marketing Complement Future plans	Advertise Cross selling Upselling Digital marketing Complement	

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			Exploration	Future plans Exploration	
Thank you so much Dave! Urrmm … you've answered all the questions … urrmm … and then urrmm *(Interviewee interjection: I'm glad … I'm glad. Urr … I hope I helped)*. Yes you did! *(Interviewee interjection: because I'm not necessarily an entrepreneur*	Yes, definitely, I would like to … I would like to see. You know I … I … I think it excites me, the … the things you spoke about, or rather I would say, you introduced me to. It excites me to see. I would like to see those dynamics ??? people are working or understand these things or experience them as you have presented them. Urr … eee … yeah. I would like … I would be happy to see it, I think if … yeah when				

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[Tebogo laughs … yeah]. *Urr … Stuud??? is not my career of learning as well. Andurr … you can see I'm at home more with IT things more than entrepreneur things but, look urr … yeah!). (Tebogo interjection: Eee Rra!)*. But like you say, innovation really goes well with digital marketing. They go hand in hand *(Interviewee interjection: It does … It does)*. So, I	you finish it, urr … which I wish you all the best! (laughs) *(Tebogo interjection: Thank you so much!)*. Yeah! … so, I would be happy to see the outcomes *(Tebogo interjection: Yeah!)*.				

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expect you to do good in marketing most probably urr … than maybe in … in …in networking but networking is also part of marketing *(Interviewee interjection: Mmm ... Mmm definitely, definitely)* … eee … yeah! But what I'm going to do is, I'm going to transcribe this interview *(Interviewee interjection: Mmm)*					

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and then send urrmm … you the transcription *(Interviewee interjection: Yeah!)* so that you confirm that what I have written is what we have talked about in this interview *(Interviewee interjection: Ok)*. And I'm hoping that urrmmm … at … at … at the end of my urr … project, you would be able to urr … look at my findings and probably … *(Interviewee*					

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interjection: No, I'll be happy to! … I'll be happy to!) and see what other entreprenuers feel about the three strategies. Thank you so much Dave! I really appreciated.	No, thank you very much. I thank you all. I thank Dr Dawie as well as yourself. I have learned a lot in this session alone *(Tebogo interjection: I'm glad)* I				

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Thank you so much! Bye Bye.	think when networking becomes important, these are the things that would probably have taken me forever to figure out *(Tebogo interjection: Yeah!)*. I can see how these things would add value in the things that I would like to do. Thank very much! Bye		Important	Important	

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		Networking becomes important. Things that could have take me forever to figure out. Things would add value in the things I would do.	Forever to figure out Add value	Knowledge Value addition	
Okay I'm just going to ask this last one because I think the other ones we have already covered. Uhm.. okay, how would you describe the impact, the impact of the	Mhh… all businesses it will impact a lot if the people don't know, if the customers don't know what your store is about, umh… _____If the service if not what the customers are looking for, they will come once a month or twice bust	Will impact a lot if people don't know what your business is about If the service if not what the	Knowledge about business	Brand awareness	Growth

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contribution made by branding, networking and innovation in your business?	generally wont comeback if its not the service they require. So… Without knowing what you customers want by talking to them, uhm… you can't really grow your business uhm… -------products, ----------products will stick to only maybe 50 customers a day, but the minute we talk to customers, all of sudden they have asked for certain things-------- you might get an additional 30-40 customers each day, by doing that how you grow the business. _____ Pleasure	customers are looking for, they will come once a month or twice generally wont comeback if its not the service they require without communicating with customers you cant grow your business The minute we talk to customers all of a sudden,	Poor service reduce the number of customers Without communication there's no growth	Poor service No growth	

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		they asked for certain things Might get additional 30-40 customers That's how you grow the business	Talking to customers increase sales Increase in customers	Growth	
Okay Thank you so much for your time.			Growth		

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Transcription Case 5 Convy Store

Interviewer	Interviewee	Open codes	Axiel coding	Selective coding	Theme
What can you say about the industry you are in?	Its not a business for people who have come from the corporate world. I have seen many people try to get in these businesses and	Not for corporate People try to get in business but fall on day 1	Not for corporate No continuity	Non corporate No Continuity	Start-up commitment

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	unfortunately I think they fell off on day 1 because they have no idea what it takes to run these businesses,. First one in last one out aahh… yaa.. before I am the boss, I am an employee, I am a cashier, I am a cleaner, I am…. I work in the kitchen, manager, merchandiser, everything before I am the boss. And yaah.. that's some key things to take away in these businesses, it is a lot of hard work like I said before you're the boss you everything else	No idea of running business Before I am the boss I am an employee, cashier, cleaner, work in the kitchen, manager, merchandiser Key things to take away in business Lot of hard work You the boss you everything	Lack of knowledge All rounded worker is key Hard work	Lack of Knowledge Quality of the employee Hard work	

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			All rounded All rounded		
Would you say your business is successful or not?	Aahh… I would say the hard work has paid off. Success is a difficult thing to say, obviously with customers feedback, its always good to hear the feedback, there's honestly not many complaints but more positive things we try and improve on what a customer feels and their feelings towards the business.	Hard work pay off Success is hard to say Good to hear customer feedback Less complaints more positive things Improve customer satisfaction	Hard work pays Success not easy Customer feedback Customer feedback Customer satisfaction	Hard work Customer feedback	Success

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				Customer satisfaction	
Do you use any business networks to grow your business? In terms of, it might be, may be your suppliers, in terms of your other business associates,	Aahh, when you say business networks in terms of? Yaah. With that, uhm…there is a path in that aspects yes there is a bit of a network, he runs a lot of stores around the store Uhm…with regards to suppliers, we always talk to suppliers trying to find better deals, uhm…we always looking for new suppliers who could work with us better than current supply us with.	Suppliers	Suppliers	Suppliers	Improved business

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	Umh… we always looking at the product we sell, if we can get it them directly from manufacturers, uhm…often when you do that you find that there may be a small …. stock you can always things that …use networking to improve the business	Find better deals Looking for new suppliers Work better than current Get products from manufacturers Sourcing products from manufacturers	Better deals new suppliers Better work relations buying from manufacturers	Better deals new suppliers Better relations Reducing costs	

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		Improve the business			
Can you say you do use entrepreneurial branding to grow your business? Branding Entrepreneurial branding mostly speaks to your customers knowing your product, and the	Entrepreneurial? Aah…… that…. explain what you are asking? So.. best way to answer that for you, just in terms of general branding for the business, because				Customer satisfaction

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customers knowing you as the owner.	we based on the university campus, we don't do much advertising and branding to that degree because we only deal with people on campus, we don't deal with people off campus like a normal supermarket would. Uhm…but you know why we often communicate with our customers, we get to know our customers, we know their lovely names, we know what they order, and then a lot of word of mouth on campus, we have a group of friends and each one _____	General branding Based on the University Don't do much advertising. Only deal with people on campus	General branding University Less advertising Specific customers	General branding Location Advertising Specific customers	

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	store they kind of would-------- talk about this store because the price is better, quality is better, the service is better, uhm… yaa in terms of marketing we market our friendly service , good products, good pricing, where we can get better pricing we do, so yaa.	Communicate with our customers Get to know our customers Their lovely names What they order Word of mouth on campus The price is better Quality is better Service is better	Communication Customer relations Customer relations Customer needs Word of mouth	Communication Customer relations Customer relations Customer needs Word of mouth	

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		Market our friendly service Good products Good pricing Better pricing	Customer satisfaction Marketing Good products Good/better pricing	Customer satisfaction Marketing Good products Good/better pricing	
How about innovation, do you think you are using some kind of innovation to grow your business?	Ahh… no.. so the only way I learnt to grow the business is the hard work, Its hard work	Grow business through hard work Hard work	Focus	Focus	Strategy?

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Okay And innovation we are referring to any kind of change, whether its small or great that you have brought in terms of your marketing, in terms of how you run	It's just purely hard work. If you are going to be the person that comes in late as a boss, and I have seen that in many businesses, you not gonna grow your business. Mmhh…	Hard work Observed that late coming does not grow business.	Time management	Time management	

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your business, in terms of your products. You haven't added anything, you haven't improved anyhow?	What I can tell you what I have added to my business is just my way of being taught how to work, that I don't just keep to myself, I often talk to my staff, I often tell them how obviously I want things done, purely because of the way I have been taught and I have seen the way things have been done. If they got ideas of how	Taught how to work Tell them how I want things done	How to work Expectations	Knowledge and skills Expectations	

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Okay.	they see something must work better, we look at it and see if it can improve the business, if it can make the business efficient uhm… I would often just run through my head what they said and what I said, to see can I see this working, or it not gonna work., Yaa.	Emanates from being taught how to work and my experience Sharing of ideas for improving the business and making it efficient Consider their side and mine and see if it will work.	Knowledge and skills Team work improves business and make it efficient Consider their side and mine	Knowledge and skills Teamwork Teamwork	

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This would seem like repetitive, but I would like to know your perception about using business networks as a strategy for success. Not only yourself, but probably with your other business networks.	Hamh…The success of the business often lies with what you offer. Do you offer the service that people are looking for? Ahh… yaa with regards to say your suppliers like you mentioned that is key to a business I mean if I buy the product from you for 10 rands, I put a markup to make it maybe 14, 15 rands but	Success lies with what you offer. Service people are looking for Suppliers key to business	Success Market relevant service Suppliers are key	Success Market relevant service Supplier	Market relevance

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	if there's another supplier that can come along and give to me for 7 rands all of sudden the price can drop for the customer and yaa, so that's.. that's where.. yaa.. Kinda what you asked.	The less the price of suppliers the less the price of customer	Supplier price determines customer price	Supplier price	
What about branding, what is your perception about using it as strategy to grow your business?	Absolutely, branding is very crucial in any business. Umh…Like I said with us here, only marketing towards your students, staff, cleaning services on campus and then it is crucial but not as important as branding outside the campus where your target is	Branding very crucial Marketing towards students, staff and cleaning services	Branding crucial Internal marketing	Branding Internal marketing	Marketing

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	everyone. Umh…but, I mean you have to brand your business, for people to know what your business is about. Umh… and that is not just obviously what you see, the branding of the business, I feel the service that a customer would get, if you give them the service and, they learn about the business and all of sudden your marketing and your branding is not just….yes it's a business but the customer like I previously said, telling a friend , rather go to that store for whatever given	Not as important as marketing outside Target is everyone Brand your business for people to know Not just what you see the branding of business Feel the service a customer gets	External marketing more important Everyone Branding See and feel the service	External marketing Everyone Branding Emotional marketing

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	reason, yaah… It is very important for every business aspect no matter what. Our business model is designed for students, not for your working person. So there is a lot that happens behind the scenes that people there's a lot of things that people got to understand today is busy but I know in a week's time its gonna be quite I would be able to work certain ways to compensate the busy for the quite and to support that quite	Learn about the business All of a sudden marketing and branding is important Telling a friend rather go to particular store Whatever given reason Important	Learn Marketing and banding Word of mouth is important	Experience Marketing Word of mouth	

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If I may ask, why is that your branding is only done on campus not outside?	demand uhm… for us to market outside, public can't get onto the campus without basically being something for the specific reason we are a convenience store for a closed market not for public yaah…	Business model designed for students Not for working people A lot happening behind the scenes A lot to understand Today is busy quite in a week's time Work certain ways to	Business model	Business model	

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		compensate busy for quite. Support quite demand Public don't get into campus Convenience store for a close market	Unstable customer visits Strategy for stability Close market	Strategy for stability	

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Okay				Type of market	
What about innovation, do you think it's a good strategy for success for start-ups?	Yes, uhm… the good strategy for start-ups is knowing what your audience wants, what your potential market wants, we can recreate the wheel a thousand times and brand it something else, but eventually people realise it's the same thing at the end of the day, so when coming up with businesses plans and what you trying to do, you got to, you have to be able to think outside	Good strategy is knowing what your audience or market want Recreate the wheel a thousand times and brand somewhere else People realise it's the same thing Think outside the box	Good strategy customer needs Replication of brand does not fool customers	Customer needs Uniqueness	Uniqueness

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	the box, you cant try to copy someone's idea and make it yours. It can work but most of the time it wouldn't work. Uhm.. same as these businesses on campus if you try to copy the store that's next to you, chances of____being success, yaa.. you would grab customers but it's not gonna be what that person's store is. You gonna come up with some difference and unique uhm… and there is thousands of opportunities out there. And its whether not you got the right concept,	Can't copy someone else's idea and make it yours Last for a short time Copying someone can grab customers but won't	Unique Plagiarism is short lived	Uniqueness Uniqueness	

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	whether not you can think out of the box on how you gonna market, how you gonna grab the customers walking past	replicate the store Some difference and unique Thousand opportunities out there You got the right concept Think outside the box	Plagiarism is short lived Outstanding and unique countless opportunities Right concept	Uniqueness Uniqueness Creativity	

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		Market and grab customers walking past	Outside the box	Creativity Creativity	
So umh…among the three strategies, which one do you think does the most impact in your business? Between networks, branding and innovation?	Mhhh… I would say for this type of business the best				Marketing of startups

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	would be networking but not with the people I deal with, they aren't what we call back of us. Front of us is where I deal with customers where I do my work in the office, networking with customers, speaking to customers, uhm… seeing if theres something that customer wants, if theres something they need, yaa… a lot of the products that are in store now is smaller things customers have, a couple of customers said can we please have x,y and z and we looked at it	For this type of business Networking Not with the people I deal with Front of us deals with customers, office work, networking with customers Speaking to customers seeing if there's something they need	networking Front office deals with networking with customers, office work. Communication and identifying customer needs	Networking customer service	

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	and found yaa… if it's something we can have a small investment that won't impact the business straight away but the service is there, so you working for a cool drink and got away for the test------- a pen here's a pen for you to buy, ---------- but from day 1 they have grown and grown and customers specially come here to get a certain product. So for this business I would therefore say networking with customers.	Smaller things Customers said can we have xy If it is something that wont impact the business	Customer request Impact	Customer service	

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		They have grown and grown For this business I would say networking with customers	Growth Networking with customers	Growth	

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Okay, uhm… What do you expect to gain from using business networks, branding and innovation?	The only thing we can really gain from networking and branding is getting more customers in. Our business is strictly, it's a feed number so these businesses do not succeed without the support of the customer uhm… so by us continuing to give the best service we can give, that mostly ensuring that the customer comes back and buys the same product or buys something different that maybe produced in the	Only thing is getting more customers in Our business is a feed number Do not succeed without support of customers Giving the best service ensures the customer comes back	More customers Feed number Customer support	Growth	Growth

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	kitchen, uhm…yaa… so it's just a what I would say its just a… our business is service, making sure you continuously give that service that the customer wants, if there is a complaint would tackle it straight away, you need to see what went wrong in the kitchen what went wrong with the product from the shelve, whose fault it is, at the end of the day just make sure the customer is happy, satisfied and comes back for what they needing.	Buys same product or something different Our business is service Making sure you continuously give service the customer wants	Best service brings repeat business Same or different product Service Continuous service to the customer	Customer satisfaction	

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		If there is a complaint would tackle it straight away Identify what went wrong Make sure the customer happy, satisfied and comes back	Deal with complaints head on Identify the risk Customers satisfaction and repeat business	Efficient response	

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Okay I'm just going to ask this last one because I think the other ones we have already covered. Uhm.. okay, how would you describe the impact, the impact of the contribution made by branding, networking and innovation in your business?	Mhh… all businesses it will impact a lot if the people don't know, if the customers don't know what your store is about, umh… _____If the service if not what the customers are looking for, they will come once a month or twice bust generally wont comeback if its not the service they require. So… Without knowing what you customers want by talking to them, uhm… you can't really grow your business uhm… -------products, ---	Will impact a lot if people don't know what your business is about If the service if not what the customers are looking for, they will come once a month or twice generally wont comeback if its not the service they require	Knowledge about business Poor service reduce the number of customers	Brand awareness Poor service	Growth

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Okay	-----products will stick to only maybe 50 customers a day, but the minute we talk to customers, all of sudden they have asked for certain things-------- you might get an additional 30-40 customers each day, by doing that how you grow the business. _____ Pleasure	without communicating with customers you cant grow your business The minute we talk to customers all of a sudden, they asked for certain things. Might get additional 30-40 customers. That's how you grow the business.	Without communication there's no growth Talking to customers increase sales Increase in customers. Growth	No growth Growth	

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Thank you so much for your time.					

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Transcription Case 6 Fascinations

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Interviewer	Interviewee	Open coding	Axial code	Selective code	Theme
Yes, the first question is the title of your… of, the title you have in your business? Okay	Okay, so, the name of my business is Stugee.				
And what is your position? Everything	Umh.. ha ha ha I could say all of them because umh… it's just me. Im the only one like in the business, so I'm the founder, marketing Yes				
Okay how long have you been operating your business? 2019,	Okay I launched it January of 2019, so since 2019. And then we had a small pausenyana				

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Okay Okay	ka 2020 covid, up and down phela its not an essential business if I should say So we had a small pause of about 4-5 months				
What kind of business are you engaged in? Okay	It's a gift service business so what we do is we offer different gifts for different occasions, personalised gifts, so like a birthday of someone, your sister, your friend your partner, or whoever,				

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Okay	mother's day gifts, anniversary gifts, valentines staff like that so that's what we do, we offer, gifts like … florist so and staff like that.				
Can you tell me a little bit about the industry that you are in? Okay, you are in, may be its the service industry, in terms of gifting and yes	The industry, in terms of? Yaah, okay so I could say a little bit of information based on my own perception and experience running the business. So in a nut shell I could say this industry is its still very, fairly new in South Africa if I should say. Its been				

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	there for a while but its gaining momentum as we go and develop as a country. I have noticed that a lot of people, or a lot of Africans, like we don't really gift that much, you know because "re nagana gore" its expensive or something like that, so I saw that as an opportunity to open the market and show people that, it's actually not very expensive to buy someone a gift, so umh… the industry is still fairly, umh… how do I say, its not a… heish… I don't know the word to put it… but its not… the words are failing.				

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Okay Yaa it's good to hear that. It's promising	Yaah… "ke tla reng", there still a lot of potential, its very new, ground breaking industry "mo" SA, but…. Yee... It's a promising industry Like it… sorry No I was trying to say go re like I said aah.. most of us don't really gift, we don't gift, if you date someone, go out to have fun and comeback and then that's it because we think its cheaper if I go out with that person, "ro ja dijo" and then that is that Forgetting that gifting is also done love language that people appreciate				

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No, you can go ahead.	so when you gifting someone its shows " wa monagana" this person and you know about them and you care about them, it's boost of happy hormones "ke tla reng" form of a love language that many of us haven't learnt to tap into because we think that gifting is expensive, or think that "ke dilo tsa makgoa" or staff like that so, it's a promising business in that sense and also when customers see that I'm a black woman and offering this service, it gives them that				

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	assurance “ya gore a ka se ture” or , whatever, so.. Like I’m opening, the space “gannyane gannyane” to show that there is this side of life you know that people don’t take notice of.. yaah.				
Would you say your business is successful or not?	I would say it is, relative to when I started, obviously, I’m not where I want to be but from where I started I know it is very difficult for a start-up business to grow past a year so I am very proud that I	Yes, relative to when I started. I’m not where I want to be. Very difficult for a start-up business to grow past a year	Measurement Measurement Challenge	Measurement of growth Challenges to Commitment	Start-up Commitment

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	managed to push past the first year. Pushing past the first into covid and still pushing past covid and then having our customers comeback afterwards even though during that time ya covid the economy was not really favourable but afterwards when things started opening up, my clients came back and they continued supporting me , so	proud to push past the first year. customers comeback economy was not really favourable my clients came back and they continued supporting me very successful	Survival Loyalty Challenge Loyalty	Brand loyalty Referrals	

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	I think it is very successful and it is a business that continues to market itself and brand itself, market itself in terms of when I offer a service to someone then they can you know in turn “ke tla reng” recommend my services to other people as well and then it grows. I would say its very successful because I find myself not even	business that continues to market itself and brand itself recommend my services to other people as well and then it grows. I find myself not even having to actively try to find clients they always find a way to me	Branding Referrals Growth		

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	having to actively try to find clients but they always find a way to me so in that sense I could say it is successful, yes.		Measurement Measurement		
Do you use business networks to grow your business? Networks could be people who recommend business you like other businesses that would recommend you or	Yes, networks in terms of like social media or? Yes, I think that now that you mentioned it, I haven't really tapped that much into the network part but what thing I do with my suppliers is that the, ok, side note			Creativity Partnerships and Collaborations Referrals Packages Sales agent	Marketing of start-ups

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it could be your suppliers or it could be any other network that you are in connection with, that is helping your business.	a different thing about my business Stugee as compared to other businesses is that I partner with other small businesses like myself so if I need to personalise a mug I would rather outsource from someone who also starting up as I am. So like building as we go. So those suppliers then in turn refer their clients when someone wants a gift they say Oh, may be you can pair this mug that Im offering you with something that Stugee can give you so that we so mar make a package like that. Ive also had three	Tapped that much into the network part different thing about my business I partner with other small businesses	Not much networking Uniqueness Partnerships	Customer twinning Brand awareness Skills and competence Brand identity Growth	

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	suppliers who actually want to work with me in terms of me doing with selling on their behalf If should say. So they want to supply to me then I act like “ke tla reng?” the forefront, the person whose context, I think that also as working my benefit because if a supplier is working with me and I have his clients as well who are also knowing about my business. So, I need to do more on that but I think I’ve done a lot of networking for that.	personalise a mug I would rather outsource So like building as we go. suppliers then in turn refer their clients	Outsourcing Referrals		

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		make a package selling on their behalf If should say they want to supply to me I act like “ke tla reng?” the	Packages Sales agent		

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		forefront, the person working my benefit because if a supplier is working with me and I have his clients as well knowing about my business So, I need to do more on that but I think I've done a lot of networking for that.	Sales agent Customer twinning Brand awareness		

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Okay			Skills and competence		
How about entrepreneurial branding? Do you use it to grow your business? Entrepreneurial branding we mean branding that speaks to you as a CEO of thecompany or that speaks to the company itself. Like people when they refer to your business, do they refer to you as Stugee? Or they	"Ee mara em one thing e ke leng" fortunate "ka yone" is that people when they see me they see my company. Most of them don't even know my name so where I operate they know me as Stugee so that's I'm the face of the brand, the brand like just me and I'm actually very happy for that because other	one thing e ke leng" fortunate "ka yone people when they see me they see my company. Most of them don't even know my name where I operate they know me as Stugee	Brand awareness Brand reminder Skills and competence business branding business branding	Brand awareness Brand reminder Business branding Skills and competence Quality Partnerships or Collaborations	Start-up identity

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refer to you as Mokgadi? You know there businesses that use individuals names, even though they have their own names but “motho o tla go ra a a re ke tswa go reka ko ga” Mokgadi?	people know the business more than they know me, so another thing that I’ve tried to do in order to get my brand out there or cement my brand is to partner up with, there is student organisation at Wits University that supports entrepreneurs, and then also I have been in the competition ya student which is sponsored by Department of	that’s I’m the face of the brand, people know the business more than they know me, to get my brand out there or cement my brand is to partner up with, there is student organisation supports entrepreneur	Brand reminder Business branding Brand awareness Enhance branding through partnerships		

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	Higher Education and Training, actually in 2019, we came in second place so that is amazing that after that we got some mentorship as well another thing that I did on my side improve myself so that I could put some quality work into my business was to enrol into a program in 2020 called L- Leader as well as enrol for the program the whole year	competition ya student we came in second place we got some mentorship as well another thing that I did on my side improve myself	Skills and competence Skills and competence		

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	and basically helping young women horne their entrepreneurial and leadership skills and then I also enrolled for another project that was sponsored by the university called Masori so Masori was a short program that helped entrepreneurs so we had like for I think it was four or five month unfortunately I could complete it	so that I could put some quality work into my business enrol into a program in 2020 called L-Leader helping young women horne their entrepreneurial and leadership skills I also enrolled for another project that was sponsored by	Quality Skills and competence Skills and competence		

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	because towards the end things got hectic academically since I was in my final year so I had to focus on that but I learnt a lot from it as well. So I was able to put those skills into practice for the business.	the university called Masori that helped entrepreneurs unfortunately I could complete it because towards the end things got hectic academically since I was in my final year so I had to focus on that	Skills and competence		

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		but I learnt a lot from it as well. So I was able to put those skills into practice for the business.	Skills and competence[1] Skills and competence		

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What about innovation? Do you use innovation in your business?	I tried to. The thing that drives me and my business is	thing that drives me and my business is reducing or	Costing and pricing	Costing and pricing Creativity	Competitive advantage

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	reducing or providing gifts at an affordable price. So one of that means reducing my overheads If I should say and costs for making a gift so what I started to do is that I go to shops “bo” Pick and Pay and Shoprite and stuff like and I ask them for boxes before they recycle them so I take those boxes and then I essentially make	providing gifts at an affordable price reducing my overheads If I should say and costs ask them for boxes before they recycle them	Pricing and costing Greentrepreneurship	Greentrepreneurship Collaborations Growth	

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	my own packaging in order to reduce my overhead cost. So in a sense then, I'm promoting the green friendly, you know, eco-friendly, message, so that is something that we try to do being eco friendly and I would put that as part of my innovation plan	take those boxes and then I essentially make my own packaging. to reduce my overhead cost promoting the green friendly, you know, eco-friendly, message,	Greentrepreneurship Pricing and costing Greentrepreneurship		
Yaa, it does and its very appropriate during this time. And its one of the gthings	I don't know if it fits.. coz there is a lot of…	we try to do being eco friendly	Greentrepreneurship		

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that when you advertise yourself on social media you should put it on the fore front	Mmh.. eco friendly yes that one thing that we try to do and also collaborating with young entrepreneurs, like myself, there's always room for fresh new different ideas helping each other grow as well, giving each other connections and stuff like that so yaa, definitely in my own space, im trying to be innovative bit by bit and also branch into other	innovation plan collaborating with young entrepreneurs	Collaboration		

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	of gifting, not just the physical present like a bottle of wine and stuff like that but also being able to gift someone with a picnic or a bedroom setup or a movie date or something like that, just pushing the boundaries on what gifting should be, so bit by bit we are trying to expand from just your normal “ke o file” present “ya le” box “ e na le mablom e nale”…	always room for fresh new different ideas helping each other grow as well, giving each other connections my own space, I’m trying to be innovative bit by bit. branch into other of gifting, not just the physical present	Creativity Growth Collaborations Creativity Creativity		

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	into I have this whole day planned from Stugee and they are gonna take us here and then after that we are gonna go there so we are creating that experience as well so, yes, that as well. Ha ha ha, it's doable	being able to gift someone with a picnic or a bedroom setup just pushing the boundaries on what gifting should be bit by bit we are trying to expand into I have this whole day	Creativity Creativity		

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Okay, wow! Sounds like a fairy tale. Yaah		planned from Stugee creating that experience	Growth Creativity		

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			Creativity		
Orite, what about your perceptions about using business networks as a strategy for the success of start-ups?	I honestly think that's the one thing that I, as we speaking now, I realise I haven't been focusing much on but that is the one thing that I think, helps elevate a business because getting your brand out there is just crucial because how would people buy or get your service if they don't know who you are, if you don't have a reputation in the	now, I realise I haven't been focusing much on one thing that I think, helps elevate a business getting your brand out there is just crucial how would people buy or get your service if they don't know who you are	Growth Brand identity		

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	industry or stuff like that, so I think literally deliberately going down and networking with other businesses, collaborating as well would help in putting the brand out there and the business out there and that is something I think I should do and commit myself to doing because that's the only way I can get my brand to be a big name and compete with	you don't have a reputation in the industry networking with other businesses, collaborating help in putting the brand out there and the	Lack of identity No reputation Collaboration		

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	big names like Net Florist because I see it as my leading leading competition it's the leading gift service in South Africa, but It doesn't collaborate with students or young entrepreneurs or stuff like that, its already established so if I need, if I want to get to that point and help all the other small businesses as well, young entrepreneurs as	business out there something I think I should do and commit myself to only way I can get my brand to be a big name and compete with big names	Brand identity Commitment Bran identity		

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	well I need to be serious about the networking, the business spending and stuff like that, so I think it is very crucial very important for business to have a brand and image, when someone “a re” Fascinations, I already can tell that oh no Fascinations is gifts so to have it as a household name I think it’s very important.	It doesn’t collaborate with students or young entrepreneurs , its already established so if I need, if I want to get to that point	Weakness		

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		I need to be serious about the networking	Growth		
		very crucial very important for business to have a brand and image,			
		when someone “a re” Fascinations, I already can tell	Intensify networking		

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		have it as a household name	Brand awareness		
			Brand awareness		
			Brand identity		

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How about the.. using branding as a strategy for the success of the businesses	I think, branding is, honestly it's very important because branding is a thing that gonna stay with the customer, long after you've left so even if they, if if you buy something "wa e ja wa e " the branding is still there its this thing that keeps	branding is, honestly, it's very important branding is a thing that gonna stay with the customer, long after you've left	Importance Lasting impression	Lasting impression Brand image Brand identity Brand reminder Brand advertising Growth	Brand identity

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	reminding you if you see “ke tla reng? Lebotlolo la”juice, with M written on it, already you know that’s Macdonald if you see something in container e red with a “mokgalabye “on it you know “go re ke” KFC so branding is the first thing that comes, like it sells the product before you even tell people that brand and becomes that	branding is still there there its this thing that keeps reminding you Lebotlolo la”juice, with M written on it, already you know that’s Macdonald container e red with a “mokgalabye “on it you know “go re ke” KFC	Lasting impression Brand reminder Brand reminder Brand reminder		

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	brand that face I think it is very very important , branding is crucial because sets the tone and the image for the business and that is the thing that stays with the customer and it will be able to advertise itself coz yes you have an image now, I think it is very crucial, very important part of business and making sure that a small business grows.	branding is the first thing that comes, it sells the product before you even tell people that brand and becomes that brand that face I think it is very very important , branding is crucial because sets the tone and the image for the business	Brand identity Sales Brand identity		

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		stays with the customer it will be able to advertise itself you have an image now, I think it is very crucial, very important part of business and making sure that a small business grows.	Crucial Brand image Brand advertisement Brand image		

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			Growth		
How about innovation as part of the strategy for the success of start-ups	I think it's very crucial especially in day and age. I remember someone saying someone said something along the lines "tsa go re" I don't think there can be any inventors, there is nothing left to invent but what	very crucial especially in day and age	Importance	Creativity New ways New strategy Customer satisfaction Growth Risk	Competitive advantage

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	you can do is make something that is already there, make it better because things are changing, things are evolving, what you need to do over the time so obviously you can be stagnant, we are in the 21st century things are moving fast, we are entering the fourth industrial revolution in our country so we have to adapt to that, now things	what you can do is make something that is already there, better things are changing, things are evolving can be stagnant,	Enhancement Rapid change		

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	are, advertising has changed, type of relationship you have with the client has changed, now clients want a personal relationship, they want to feel like you understand them you are talking with them directly, they are the only people that matter so you need to change up your strategy and be innovative in order to match times that we are	21st century things are moving fast entering the fourth industrial revolution in our country have to adapt to that, advertising has changed relationship you have with the client has changed.	Challenge Speed Adaptation New ways New ways		

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	in, the things that are changing, you need to evolve and always be be fresh, be authentic and always, just keep people guessing, keep them wanting more and something different because “ntho ya go tshwana ya bora”, at some point annoying and you start getting used to it and they is no excitement anymore, so if you keep switching it	personal relationship want to feel like you understand them you are talking with them directly they are the only people that matter change up your strategy be innovative in order to match times	New ways New ways New ways New strategy		

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	up, here and there bit by bit, you show your clients that you can move with them you can grow with them and they can just be with you until until. You show them that you are moving with the time, so I think innovation, its very crucial and something that a lot business owners overlook myself included I only started realising this year “go re” just been	need to evolve and always be be fresh, be authentic and always, just keep people guessing, keep them wanting more something different ntho ya go tshwana ya bora”, at some point annoying and you start getting used to it	Current and relevant New ways New ways		

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	on gifts, physical gifts alone is not going to push me to where I need to be. So I need to start exploring, I need to start, "ke tla reng", stepping out of my comfort zone and going into areas that I know I might be inexperienced in but then it's worth looking for and then expanding and broadening your territory as well. So I think its very crucial to think innovatively	is no excitement anymore so if you keep switching it up, here and there bit show your clients that you can move with them you can grow with them be with you until until.	Uniqueness Lack of variety Lack of variety New ways		

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	and outside of the box and always try to solve the problem with your business so its very crucial.	show them that you are moving with the time innovation, its very crucial something that a lot business owners overlook myself included started realising this year “go re” just been on gifts, physical gifts alone is not going to push me to where I need to be	Customers satisfaction Growth Loyalty Current		

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		So I need to start exploring, stepping out of my comfort zone into areas that I know I might be inexperienced in it's worth looking for and then expanding and broadening your territory crucial to think innovatively and	Importance Lack of vision Lack of variety		

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		outside of the box always try to solve the problem	Creativity Risk Risk Growth		

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			Creativity Problem solving		
So which among the three strategies do you think has the most impact in your business?	Which being the branding, innovation and networks			Diversity Business advice Vision	Marketing

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	Hugh… I think networking because networking gives you opportunity to enter into different people, you can find a mentor, you can find someone who's gonna help you set yourself straight, so You can have the branding and all the innovative ideas but if "ha o na" direction you and don't know the industry that you are in, how	Networking networking gives you opportunity to enter into different people, can find a mentor, you can find someone who's gonna help you set yourself straight can have the branding and	Networking Diversity Business advisor	Skills and knowledge Brand awareness Partnership and collaboration	

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	you can go about, then you just a lost ship, you have all the resources but you don't have the direction or the plan, so I think networking really helps because as a person you should always be open to learning new things and you have to accept "go re ke tla re" you not at the height of knowledge even if you've been in the industry for twenty years, there's	all the innovative ideas but if "ha o na" direction you and don't know the industry how you can go about, then you just a lost ship, you have all the resources but you don't have the direction or the plan	No vision No industry knowledge No knowledge No vision		

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	always someone who knows something better than you, so networking and putting your business out and putting yourself out there, give yourself opportunity to learn different things, collaborate with different people, open up different spaces and opportunities for yourself and other people as well. So I think	networking really helps always be open to learning new things you not at the height of knowledge even if you've been in the industry for twenty years there's always someone who knows something better than	Importance Skills and Knowledge Skills and knowledge Skills and knowledge		

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	networking is is yes, yes	networking and putting your business out putting yourself out there give yourself opportunity to learn different things, collaborate with different people open up different spaces and opportunities for	Skills and knowledge Brand awareness Brand awareness Skills and knowledge		

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		yourself and others	Partnerships and collaboration		
Now when you engage these three strategies, business networks, branding, innovation and let's say that you engage all of them together, what	branding, innovation and networks I would just, I feel like honestly, it will just rocket, it will just mean success for my business because if I can	will just rocket, it will just mean			Growth

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would you expect to gain as a start-up?	successfully employ all of those strategies it means that my, I will be able to broaden my spectrum, I will be able to broaden my territory, meaning I will be getting more clients, I will be getting more knowledge about the industry, better resources as well, it just helps the business grow in exponential rate because all of them are	success for my business broaden my spectrum broaden my territory getting more clients,	Grow Grow More clients		

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	interlinked, all of them work together to achieve a common goal of growing the business and putting it up there and making it a household name. I think if I was to successfully employ all of those strategies and be consistent and commit myself I would reach that level or that goal of of becoming a household name or even	getting more knowledge about the industry better resources just helps the business grow in exponential all of them are interlinked, all of them work together to achieve a common goal	More knowledge Better resources Growth Connected Related		

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	surpassing Net Florist as the leading gift service and honestly yes I think it will really help just for the growth of the business eeh.. probably go beyond the boarders maybe to the other countries mo Africa as well and it would honestly since my whole mode of operation is to help other businesses, small businesses as well, I honestly	growing the business putting it up there and making it a household name. successfully employ all of those strategies and be consistent and commit myself I would reach that level or that goal of	Growth Brand awareness Brand identity		

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	believe it would help the youth unemployment problem that we have because as youth we don't have opportunities as much as the other generation shave before "mara", the one thing that we have is skills. We have skills, we are artistic and we not ashamed to express ourselves If I could open that space and that platform for more artistic people to	of becoming a household name or even surpassing Net Florist as the leading gift service and it will really help just for the growth of the business probably go beyond the boarders maybe to the other countries	Consistency Commitment Achieve goals Beat competition Growth		

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	join and be part of the movement I think it will help a lot, in terms of the youth unemployment because we have an artist that I am collaborating with, he is a sketch artist. If I had a sketch artist from every university then , I know “go re”at least “ngwana wa ja” “ngwana o mongwe wa ja” somewhere. So I think it will honestly help, not	help other businesses, small businesses as we	Beyond borders Help others		

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	just me and my business but it will help a lot of youngsters as well, a lot of small businesses as well. So, yaah it will be amazing,				
So, so far how would you describe the impact these three strategies have made in your business?	I think networking, I will always come back to it because that is the one thing that comes to my business strong, it's the one thing that brings clients back when when I'm not actively trying to find clients I would just find someone	the one thing that comes to my business strong one thing that brings clients back when I'm not	Comes to my business strong Bring clients back	Influence Customer loyalty	Growth

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	that I don't even know, I don't even know "go re o tsaya kae numba" but then they are there and they want to buy a gift and they trust the business. It is very unfortunate that these days we have a lot of scam online. People are scared to pay because you not sure who's so through the networking and cementing myself or my business as a brand it has	actively trying to find clients someone that I don't even know, I don't even know "go re o tsaya kae numba they are there and they want to buy a gift they trust the business	I don't know Buy a gift Trust	Referrals Sales Trust	

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	helped with the clients to be more comfortable and trusting of the brand and the business and the service as well. So in turn I get more referrals because if you trust me and I deliver my good job, you gonna tell your friend and they gonna come back as well. And then also getting mentorship from people who have been in the industry , in the gift, or service	through the networking and cementing myself or my business as a brand it has helped with the client more comfortable and trusting of the brand and the business and	Cementing myself or business as a brand	Brand identity	

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	industry, servicing people Knowing how to, getting mentorship on knowing how to work with, work with clients, how to close the sale and things like that, has helped my business and myself, that is the networking part. And then the branding Ive seen that it has helped a lot since, not a lot of people know my real name, they know me as Stugee. It means	the service as we So in turn I get more referrals if you trust me and I deliver my good job, you gonna tell your friend and they gonna come back as well. getting mentorship from people who have been in the industry	Trusting Referrals Trust Customer satisfaction Referrals	Trust Referrals Trust Customer satisfaction Referrals	

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	my brand, it speaks enough for its self even be an entity on own without me being involved. So I realised that branding and people knowing my signature they know go re once you buy a Stugee gift the box has been recycled you know that some of the personalised gifts has been sourced from small business, you know that someone is	getting mentorship on knowing how to work with, work with clients how to close the sale not a lot of people know my real name,	Mentorship Mentorship	Mentorship Mentorship	

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	actually doing things from scratch, It is made from scratch with love. So I think branding has helped as well. And then the innovation I've seen it this year in terms of more sales. I started ke tla reng? entering the market of making ba re ke di eng? Picnics so for birthdays and anniversaries you can just call me ratla roomung	It means my brand, it speaks enough for its self I realised that branding and people knowing my signature once you buy a Stugee gift the box has been recycled some of the personalised gifts has been sourced from small business,	Business brand Brand speaks enough Knowing my signature	Business brand Brand identity	

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	have a set up and just eat. At first I thought I needed a car or something so that nka kgono travela ka equipment and everything, but then I made it work because we have busses that transports us to and from campus so most of my friends are on campus, ba o nyaka di picnics and stuff like that so, I had to make it work. I travel with my equipment	someone is actually doing things from scratch made from scratch with love. innovation I've seen it this year in terms of more sales.	Recycled Sourced	Brand identity Recycled Sourced	

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	ka bus to go there and comeback. So I have seen that opening this new market or this new side of Stugee has helped with my sales as well. and if I continue to commit to that I can even maybe even purchase a car to help me trave to other places not just for campus as so techniques even though tse dingwe I use less than others. I have seen an impact in		From the scratch From scratch More sales	Original Original Growth	

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	my business and which shows that I need to go back to the drawing board and do more research and continue being consistent in these strategies which will ultimately make sure that my business grows and it's one of the booming gift services in South Africa and maybe in Africa one day.				

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		opening this new market or this new side of Stugee has helped with my sales as well. if I continue to commit to that I can even maybe even purchase a car to help me trave to other places	New market, new side	Growth	

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			Sales To commit Reach out	Growth Commitment Growth	

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		I need to go back to the drawing board and do more research continue being consistent in these strategies which will ultimately make sure that my business grows it's one of the booming gift services in			

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		South Africa and maybe in Africa one day.	More research Consistent in strategies Business grows	Needs asstessmen Consistency Growth	

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In your view can you say they have accounted to the success of your business? Because earlier on you have said that relative to where you have started you feel your business is successful.	Mhm.. when I started, it was, I was just acting on a… given my situation, my situation was not favourable and I couldn't continue asking for more money from home. So I had to find a way, make a way to do things for myself so when I started, it was honestly just go re ke khumane chelete , I just want to have money and then its fine. But then	my situation was not favourable			

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I've lost you Mokgadi, I don't know if its you or myself	as I started growing into the business, I started understanding that it could be more than just for Network cliché I could base on where I started Where I am now. I was trying to point out that at first it was just I need money to live, now it has grown to this ke tla reng potential empire that connects a lot of				

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	entrepreneurs and common goal of just poverty from our lives its unfortunate that most of us still feeling those effects tsa poverty, mme most of us “re na le” family that are relying on us still young so if we could help each other and just grow to that point where our work and our intellectual property and I think yes looking				

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	back from where I started and where I am now, it has had a huge impact my business and my way of thinking in terms of being an entrepreneur is not just about opportunities for other people as well those three strategies have made my business and myself a success because I had this huge different outlook on life since so seeing how my business can				Growth

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	stand on its own, be its own recognised brand even contributing anything in terms of branding it be a success, so networking as well. Being exposed to different kinds of ke tla reng, sections of the industry as well as being innovative, so it has really contributed in a short span of just three years, I feel like I have done a lot and Im very	yes looking back from where I started and where I am now, it has had a huge impact my business those three strategies have made my business and myself a success	Comparison Huge impact Business and self success	Growth Impact Success	

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	proud of myself and my business so yes	huge different outlook on life seeing how my business can stand on its own be its own recognised brand	Outlook Stand on its own Brand identity	Change Sustainability Brand identity	

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		Being exposed to different kinds of ke tla reng, sections of the industry being innovative, so it has really contributed in a short span	Exposure Creative	Brand awareness Creative	

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Thank you so much Mokgadi, its like this interview cannot come to an end but you have other things to do,	Ha ha ha Thank you very much Tebogo.				

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yah, it was really interesting Your businesses one of the businesses that Im really looking forward to see in the next decade you know being an empire, yah Yes I'm the model trying to build because I'm doing this for my PhD so I'm trying to come up with a business model that can really help startups either to	Yaah, definitely Do you have any advise as a young entrepreneur?				

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stay in business or move from the phase of starting up to the next level, yes to expand. So I think Im always going to be keeping in touch with you going forward. But like you said you really need to build on these three strategies, networking branding and innovation, especially in this era ya fourth industrial revolution.	To expand				

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But I think we can keep in touch, every time you come across a challenge, you can let me know as an academic, I can probably look into what research has been done, regarding the issue and where the industry is regarding the issue. That my job, that's my duty as an academic					

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Transcription Case 7 Le'Consult

Interviewer	Interviewee	Open codes	Axiel Coding	Selective Coding	Theme
Our very first question is I would like to know your position in the business Okay	My name is Lerato, I am 27 years of age. I started my company about three years back. I am the Founder/CEO/Director. My company focuses on consultancy and investing.				
Okay…uhm.. would you like to talk a little bit about….umh.. the industry that you are in? umh.. the consultancy	So… I am a BSC Mathematics graduate… I majored in Statistics and Computer Science. Most of us we think that I am an Analyst. So ..when I left, when I graduated, I started my company,				

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and the investing industry?	my consulting company, our aim was to invest in local economic development. My main area of focus is in the Limpopo province, where we sort an opportunity to expand in we see an opportunity in expanding in ___ the private sector but in ____the private sector we want to see local communities, where we see an opportunity where people coming from the rural areas, the townships, having access to private sector businesses. But beyond that we want to				

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Okay	actually get into the space of developing local economic development in that particular province. And so it's been a three year phase that we've been in. I have been raising personal capital and raising my own personal capital so I have 9-5 and then I also then do consultancy on the side, and the quickest way to make money from my consultancy and building my profile is to actually consult on basic start-ups in				

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	communities, young people who want to enter into the space of business umh… and in any business that I have knowledge of and I am able to assist in terms of analysis and you know assisting them in building their profile that's where____in the past three years___ in building my profile.. my business profile of the start-up consultancy.				
Would you say your business is successful or not ? Mmm	Im I think it is in an early stage because consultancy if you look at the industry space of consultancy I m most of the people that engaged	It is in an early stage. people that engaged in it are people with a number of years of experience	Early stage Years of experience	Growth Skills and competence	Start-up commitment

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Mmmmm Ok ok	in it are people with a number of years of experience with public or private sector and has gone as far as getting a Postgraduate qualification with a B or Masters or PhD before they move to the consultancy game,so being a young start-up with my you know activities I have engaged in the entrepreneurship space in high education and having network that I associate with that assist me and my research in my own personal space I don't	Has gone as far as getting a Postgraduate qualification with a B or Masters or PhD before they move to the consultancy I have engaged in the entrepreneur ship space in high education having network that I associate with that assist me and my research in my own personal space I don't think I would say if I m speaking in	Qualifications		

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	think I would say if I m speaking in that terms on how the consultancy game is and how its mostly structured but as a young successful but in my own space of a start-up as young bachelor to with ……a bachelor degree and just decided to start something and I think in the past two ,three years I'm it has made impact in consulting in those areas of helping people and also managed to raise sufficient amount of capital where now we expanding into investing	that terms on how the consultancy game is as a young successful but in my own space of a start-up as young I'm it has made impact in consulting in those areas of helping people and also managed to raise sufficient amount of capital expanding into investing into certain products and services	Entrepreneurship space in higher education Networks assist with research In terms of the consultancy game		

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	into certain products and services that we believe ultimately in the long run will create value to be an adequate start up that could create……	we believe ultimately in the long run will create value an adequate start up that could create	Young successful in my own space of star-up Made impact in consulting Helping people Raise sufficient capital		

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			Expanding into certain products and services In the long run create value Adequate start-up	Strategy	
I heard you talk about networks ,do	Yes, what I have learned is that your network is your network	Yes	Experience	Skills and competence	Marketing of start-ups

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you use business networks to grow your business? Ok Mmm Mmmm Ok ok	,so having diverse number of people that are in different industries that share that knowledge ,their experience ,I could pick up the phone and say hey what are some of these things that are happening in the industry and that knowledge sharing ,that's how I benefited from my network and also that it can also does assist in terms of ……I know someone that can assist you and so forth. That the value add that a network has added in terms of a	what I have learned is that your network is your network having diverse number of people in different industries share that knowledge ,their experience , pick up the phone and say hey what are some of these things that are happening in the industry that knowledge sharing ,that's how I benefited from my network	Diversity Knowledge and experience Knowledge	Growth	

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	space I m in and the journey I m in.	…….I know someone that can assist you and so forth That the value add that a network has added in terms of a space I m in and the journey I m in	Knowledge Value add		
What about entrepreneur and branding?	I m my company is called ……..its derived from part of my	I believe I have build my personal brand	Build personal brand	Owner branding	Start-up identity

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Do you use it to your business? entrepreneur and branding we are referring to branding that speaks to you as a business owner and also speaks to your services ,that's how your customers identify you ,whether they identify you as a business owner ,a kere	name but I believe I have build my personal brand which my personal brand as I m growing I utilise it and terms to speak for me then ultimately that personal brand then fits into my business more that anything because my company I m just alone, I have not employed anyone, so it worked like that, but if ultimately as people know my personal brand and what I do in my company the company will ultimately speak for itself as we engage in bigger projects as we grow	my personal brand as I m growing I utilise it and terms to speak for me ultimately that personal brand then fits into my business more people know my personal brand and what I do in my company the company will ultimately speak for itself as we engage in bigger projects as we grow	Growing utilise to speak for me Personal Brand grows into product brand Brand awareness Growth to product brand Bigger projects as we grow	Growth Brand awareness	

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waitse in other places businesses are named after their owners ,they have their own names but batho ba di bits aka maina a beng ba tsone. Mmm Mmmm Mmmmm Ok	projects as we grow and so on and so forth.				

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Ok ok					
What about innovation, do you use any kind of innovation to grow your business?, innovation we are looking at maybe a small change that makes you competitive or may be a huge change Mmmm	Uhm… what would be my competitive advantage? my competitive advantage is actual the impact and the influence that I have made in the people I have assisted and that carries my brand ,I have no social media branding ,I believe as my interpersonal relation and interpersonal understanding of my brand will ultimately grow out into the social knowledge of people	what would be my competitive advantage? my competitive advantage is actual the impact and the influence that I have made in the people I have assisted that carries my brand I have no social media branding ,I believe as my interpersonal relation	Competitive advantage Impact and influence I made in the people Brand awareness No social media branding	Indicators of Competitive advantage Brand awareness Strategy	Competitive advantage

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	……so for me I think even in terms of innovation I m we will try to find out because consultancy we have a problem to solve, that what we do and after that we want to be ,I feel like I want to focus on not just having people bridging problems to me but to ,I need to identify problems that we can create solutions to an use triple P model which is talking about……. What we develop could be a very innovative solution driving …….and economic participation in those	and interpersonal understanding of my brand will ultimately grow out into the social knowledge of people in terms of innovation uhm…we will try to find out because consultancy we have a problem to solve I feel like I want to focus on not just having people bridging problems to me but to ,I need to identify problems that we can create solutions to	Brand awareness Problem solving Solution driven		
Mmmm Mmmm Mmmmm Ok Ok ok					

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	areas ,especially when we look at Limpopo most of it is driven by the public sector government, we need to try and bring in the private sector design for them to see the value of being in a township and instead of being in Sandton where costs are high like all those things. Yaah…that what we are trying to do but in our early stages we are still trying to build from the ground on our network try and find those loop holes and continue to build from that until we find and a	use triple P model which is talking about What we develop could be a very innovative solution driving …….and economic participation in those areas when we look at Limpopo most of it is driven by the public sector government and instead of being in Sandton where costs are high like all those things.	Strategy Strategy Driven by public sector	Environmental landscape	

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	very good key solutions that we can present to the multi stakeholders and we can get project going up on the ground, so even my 9 to 5 I have worked for the government uhm… that is allowing me to understand government systems and ultimately private sector system you develop it yourself but government systems how they operate, what are the different levels, how do you get to connect, how do for to come forward and say this is a good initiative we can get a	we need to try and bring in the private sector design for them to see the value of being in a township in our early stages that what we are trying to build from the ground on our network try and find those loop holes and continue to build in that until we and a very good key solutions a present it to the multi stakeholders	Sandton where costs are high Value of being in a township Build networks	Business networks	

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	backing on, I mean getting there they have a 5 year strategic plan ,they develop annual performance plans, how do you fit into such elements and not disrupts the whole system of operation but somehow be the disrupted contributor to better service delivery in South Africa and so forth.	we can get project going up on the ground the government uhm… that is allowing me to understand government systems ultimately private sector system you develop it yourself government systems how they operate, what are the different levels, how do you get to connect, how do for to come forward and say this is a good	Identify loopholes and keep building Multi stakeholders Project going up Understand the government systems. Private sector systems		

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		initiative we can get a backing on they have a 5 year strategic plan ,they develop annual performance plans, how do you fit into such elements and not disrupts the whole system of operation but somehow be the disrupted contributor to better service delivery in South Africa	Government operations Strategic plan How you fit in		

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			Better service		
I would like to know what's your perceptions are about using the business networks as a strategy for success in your business Mmm	Network is important as I have said.your network is your network ,I m we get business through someone recommending us.i m outside of your social branding, there are companies where they thrive on social branding but there companies that thrive on networks, people refer,it given	Network is important your network is your network we get business through someone recommending us outside of your social branding , there are companies where they thrive on	Importance Experience Recommendations	Skills and competence Referrals	Marketing of start-ups

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Mmmm Mmmm Ok	both much better confidence about someone saying ,I think I should try that company because someone told me ,so it comes a bit more personal and yah…I think it assist us in the long run whether someone remembers it today after they have spoken to someone or someone may say oh…I remember this person talking about this person, they can always call to that person and say give me that number of that person ,you know it depends on	social branding but there companies that thrive on networks people refer given both much better confidence someone saying ,I think I should try that company because someone told me ,so it comes a bit more personal I think it assist us in the long run whether someone remembers it today after they have spoken to someone or someone may say	Importance Referrals Referrals		

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	your business structure and how far you are and how far you have grown and so forth. yah..	oh…I remember this person talking about this person , they can always call to that person and say give me that number of that person it depends on your business structure how far you are and how far you have grown and so forth	Referrals Referrals Growth	Growth	

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What about using of branding as a strategy for your business? Mmm Mmmm Mmmm Mmm Ok	Uhm for us because we are still on our early days we are still building you know a network where people we are depending on network my network where people can confidently show what I have done and what service and because I do not have employee I could not see social branding as something that I could use as advantage strategy. Uhm … to grow because as I have expressed we would be in a position where we are a company that finds problems and	we are still on our early days we are still building you know a network where people we are depending on network my network where people can confidently show what I have done and what service because I do not have employees I could not see social branding as something that I could use as advantage strategy	Phase Building a network Depend on network Confidently show what I have done Social branding not an advantage strategy	Business networks Strategy	Start-up identity

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	develop solutions instead of people coming to us with problems ,we need to be solution driven company that you know we provide solutions and not someone thinking of the problem before we are suppose to develop that solution ,so that's the phase I'm in and I'm just a one man company so yah……also looking at how whe you get at the game of consultancy you come to the game of consultancy with a profile of experience	to grow because as I have expressed we would be in a position where we are a company that finds problems and develop solutions instead of people coming to us with problems ,we need to be solution driven company we provide solutions and not someone thinking of the problem before we are suppose to develop that solution	Grow, we find problems and develop solutions Solution driven Solution driven	Growth	

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	,years of experience ,you come into the space having Masters, PhD, and all those people getting actual into consultancy not because they see an opportunity to use branding as strategy ,but because of the years of working in a particular space in terms of creating network and having……themselves for they are able to provide that where they find a niche to jump off and in into an entrepreneurial space, where else we are trying	so that's the phase I'm in and I'm just a one man company you come to the game of consultancy with a profile of experience, years of experience you come into the space having Masters, PhD all those people getting actual into consultancy not because they see an opportunity to use branding as strategy	Phase Experience Qualifications Branding strategy does not attract entrepreneurs.	Skills and competence	

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	to take a different steps you know and try to grow as the years go by …yah..	but because of the years of working in a particular space in terms of creating network and having……themselves for they are able to provide that where they find a niche to jump off and in into an entrepreneurial space we are trying to take a different steps you know and try to grow as the years go by.	Experience Create Networks Niche Different steps to growth		
What about innovation ?what is your	I m a huge fan of innovation because particularly I was one of	I m a huge fan of innovation	Fan of innovation		Competitive advantage

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perception of using it as a strategy for the success of the business? Mmmm Mmmm Mmmm Mmm Ok yah	he highest in varsity as we were promoting establishment in the strengthening student entrepreneurship ,one of the very fundamental competitive advantage if I may say in the entrepreneur based uhm… utilising the university that there is an opportunity for innovation ,there is an opportunity for intellectual property development and without innovation you wont have intellectual property and intellectual property right now ,companies are using it	I was one of the highest in varsity as we were promoting establishment in the strengthening student entrepreneurship utilising the university that there is an opportunity for innovation there is an opportunity for intellectual property development there is an opportunity for intellectual property development right now ,companies are using it as one of	Promotion of entrepreneurship Utilising the university for opportunities Intellectual property Intellectual property Development	Promotion Opportunities Strategy	

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	as one of the largest generatory business stream and if you look at the market of today their intangible assets which is innovation is the highest revenue is no longer about sale its about innovation ,so innovation is that one key element that stand out ,you know it gives you that competitive advantage and for us we find that our innovation as a company is that we need to take ,we need to find solution and create solutions ,is the same way as we look at	the largest generator of business stream the market of today their intangible assets which is innovation is the highest revenue is no longer about sale its about innovation so innovation is that one key element that stand out it gives you that competitive advantage our innovation as a company is that we need to take ,we need	Generator of business stream Intangible assets Highest revenue Key element that stand out	Competitive advantage	

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	Microsoft they don't wait for someone to raise a problem ,they find the problem ,they pump a lot of money in research development so that they can then generate an income through innovation ,so we also have the same kind of philosophy I m saying we don't want people to come with problems we want to get to the clients with the solution so ..and baby steps you get to be exposed to the industry and get to find problems and your networks as you engage people they bring you to	to find solution and create solutions same way as we look at Microsoft they don't wait for someone to raise a problem ,they find the problem they pump a lot of money in research development generate an income through innovation we also have the same kind of philosophy I m saying we don't want people to come with problems we want to	Competitive advantage Find and create solutions Identify problems Spend money on research and development	Strategy Research	

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	a certain areas ,you also start research and start to think of innovative ways and what we believe is that, in the next coming years would make us stand out as a company.	get to the clients with the solution baby steps you get to be exposed to the industry and get to find problems your networks as you engage people they bring you to a certain areas you also start research start to think of innovative ways what we believe is that, in the next coming years would	Income generation Solution driven Exposure Networks	Business networks	

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		make us stand out as a company.	Research Stand out in future		
Of the three strategies which one do you think has the most impact in your business so far? Mmmm	I think for me now because I use ,I have a 9 to 5 ,I then offer my services to just help someone who says ,I want to be an entrepreneur ,I have this idea but I don't know how to go about it, uhm I offer strategic advice	I have a 9 to 5 , I then offer my services to just help someone who says ,I want to be an entrepreneur , I have this idea but I don't know how to go	Offer services Offer strategic advice.	Strategy	Marketing of services

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Mmmmm Mmmmm Mmmmm Mmmm ok	and say look at some of these elements I can help you with certain researches and see where the market gap could be and how you can actually you know implement such things ,so for me that have been a strategy I have been using which is working for me in terms of growing my networks and insuring that I get expanded uhm..recommendations you know greater network and besides that it also helps me with exposure in some of the things we would	about it, uhm I offer strategic advice I can help you with certain research and see where the market gap could be how you can actually you know implement such things for me that have been a strategy I have been using which is working for me in terms of growing my networks and ensuring that I get expanded,	Help with research. How to implement Strategy I have been using Grow networks and expand	Research Business networks	

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	want to develop solutions in so, it does help that's one of the fundamentals strategies we have and that helps us grow beyond that just talking to ordinary South African ,whether talking to someone on the street, whether talking to someone on a taxi, that's where I want to be that the space I want to find myself engaging with people because that is where we need to develop solutions i cannot be sitting in Sandton most of the time ,you will never find me in Sandton most of	recommendations you know greater network it also helps me with exposure in some of the things we would want to develop solutions, it does help that's one of the fundamentals strategies we have and that helps us grow talking to ordinary South African ,whether talking to someone on the street, whether talking to someone on a taxi, that's where I want to	Exposure to what we want to develop Fundamental strategies Engaging with people to develop solutions		

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	the time. Why because I feel that my solutions are in the very people we need to service which is the majority of South African .yah …that's me that is one of the strategies that I have adopted as a person and as a company .this is how we feel we can grow.	be that the space I want to find myself engaging with people that is where we need to develop solutions my solutions are in the very people we need to service which is the majority of South African that's me that is one of the strategies that I have adopted as a person and as a company this is how we feel we can grow.	Solutions in the people Adopted strategies We feel can bring grow		

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I'm if you use all the strategies ,business networks, branding and innovation ,what would you expect to gain as a start-ups Mmmm Mmmmm Mmmmm Ok	Look I'm not much on the branding as of yet, I think the tactics that we would then be delivering will speak for themselves as a branding strategy. Uhm… but in terms of innovation ,innovation comes through our networks and engaging people and so it has a dominant thought ,our primary one is networking and engaging and there on it builds up into how do we come up with innovative solutions that can then facilitate triple Ps, you know all those	Not much on the branding the tactics that we would then be delivering will speak for themselves as a branding strategy ,innovation comes through our networks and engaging people a our primary one is networks and engaging there on it builds up into how do we come up with innovative solutions	Less branding Branding strategy Innovation and networks Networking and engaging Innovative solutions	Less branding Strategy Innovative networks Innovative networks Innovative solutions	Growth

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	things and ultimately as we get to that stage of innovation and deployment of our innovation the solutions that we would implement would ultimately be a branding for us.	as we get to that stage of innovation and deployment of our innovation the solutions that we would implement would ultimately be a branding for us	Innovation solutions		
I m if you engage these strategies do you expect your business to succeed?	Definitely. I mean if you are an entrepreneur you will have to have a positive mind set if you don't have you will collapse on the way or at the beginning.	Definitely if you are an entrepreneur you will have to have a positive mind if you don't have you will collapse on the way or at the beginning.	Positive mind You will collapse	Entrepreneurial mindset Collapse	

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Ok, I'm how do you describe the contribution uhm.. of using the strategies that we have discussed in your business? The impact that the strategies have made in your business so far? Mmmm Mmmm	What do you mean contribution? I mean we have got great networks, recommendations, people wanting to work with us , we gain knowledge, experience and that would ultimately result in the desired impact that people want to see almost three years un the game, but we still trying ,slowly but surely we'll get it right. I think if I may.	we have got great networks, recommendations, people wanting to work with us we gain knowledge ,experience ultimately the results in the desired impact people want to see … while we still trying, slowly but surely. they always say funding is very important but you need	Networks and recommendations Knowledge and experience Trying slowly Funding is important	Innovative networks Skills and competence Funding	

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Mmmmm Ok I think I m you have covered.	This whole entrepreneur game, they always say funding is very important but you need to look at the kind of business you are into, there are certain business that once you kick off you need funding to accelerate at a very much faster pace but there are the ones who need to grow through struggle, that what makes them great, the same thing if you want to look at when you want to be a venture cap you don't just wake up and say I want to be a venture	to look at the kind of business you are into, there are certain business that once you kick off you need funding to accelerate at a very much faster pace there are the ones who need to grow through struggle, that what makes them great you don't just wake up and say I want to be a venture cap and you going to get funding and boom, success,	Need for funding Grow through struggle Funding requirements Experience Growth	Funding Growth Funding Experience Growth	

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	cap, and you going to get funding and then boom, you are successful, it takes a lot of experience, looking at the people like…..they started very small you know growing, growing even now they are not venture caps and even now you won't see them getting that quick funding but they slowly need to grow. Even if you need to grow, there is a culture we need to preach about what get quick funding what looking at a state now funding business but they are collapsing , we	it takes a lot of experience, looking at the people like…..they started very small you know growing growing even now they are not they are not you won't see them getting that quick funding funding they slowly need to grow. Even if you want to grow there is a culture we need to preach	No access to funds Growth Growth culture Fundamental principles of funding	No funds Growth Funding	

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	are just giving money, giving money but there are certain fundamentals things we need to get right before we waste money. There is someone I can give you to interview, he got a start ups Started his company in his house he is using his capital He is now at the level he is ready to get funding to accelarate	There are certain fundamentals things we need to get right before we waste money Started business in his house with capital. ready to get funding to accelarate	Own capital Ready to access funds Fundamental needs	Funding Needs	

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	Those are fundamentals that make start up forms.	Fundamental that make start-up forms			
How long has he is he or she ?How old is his company? I would really appreciate that but do find out if the company started 2017 because I m looking at companies 5 years or younger.	He started his company in 2017 or earlier or somewhere around there He utilises his networks to try and raise company and eventual he gained momentum and network and now he is at that stage at he can speak for himself He also graduated and went to work at ABSA and left with his capital.				

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	I would give him a call tomorrow and give him a chat				
Thank you Lerato I really appreciate it.	Yah It's a pleasure Any time.				

Transcription Case 8 Autosave

Interviewer	Interviewee	Open codes	Axiel Coding	Selective Coding	Theme
Our very first question is I would like to know your	Ok ..I am a core director in the business .did you hear me.				

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position that you hold in your business okay Yes I did. Okay Let me see him. Mr Nyasha how are you? I m good .okay Nice to meet you too okay	and I m also general managing everyday running activities of the business. With me I have got Mr Nyasha Shavanga ,that's him this side. Good day ,how are you? Nice to meet you so Mr Nyasha he is basically running daily of the workshop. yah…				

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Okay…how long have you been working at the business Okay Okay 2018 Okay Okay Operation started in 2019	Since 2018 that's when we opened the business we registered it in a…around July 2018 so the full function, full operation started in must say 2019 when we. .yah… yes				

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And then what kind of business are you engaged in Okay Okay Okay okay	We do panel beating and spray painting we do also aa…minor mechanic or repairs, we do also major mechanic or repairs but we do outsource so is a motor industry business Yah…				
Alright …I m…can you tell me more about the motor industry	Okay ..so.. the motor industry basically it deals with the vehicles, transporting the vehicles that transport people from 1 point to the				

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sector or business mmmm… mmmmm.. mmmm… mmmm… okay okay	other from point a to b for example for yourselves if you are to travel going to work or travel going for holidays you need a vehicle that you can drive in so aa,,, ourselves where we fall in is when the vehicle is involved in an accident so we come in to help you with estimating the damages incurred to the vehicle and as well as raising with if you are insured with insurances and then after we get the authorisation either from the insurance or from the customer himself or herself then we embark with the processes of ordering the spares and doing the actual repairs to restore the vehicle back into the manufactures state so basically that where we fall in we do the restoring of the damaged vehicles and sometimes we do also				

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	outsource the parts for some customers not understand what the parts of the vehicle so we come in to advise them that this is the part and this is where you can get it or we outsource it when they are unable to source it themselves. yah… so basically that where we fall in but the motor industry itself is huge there is the mechanical part which is the engine which also we do like I said in the beginning that should the vehicle have problems with mechanical repairs we do the minor services and when it comes to major services we do involve the expertise or the people that are qualified so we do outsource for example someone who is working at				

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	VW if its a VW or Toyota if its Toyota vehicle , Ford if its Ford vehicle so we consult with Ford a this vehicle has got such such problem what could be the problem so they do diagnosis and they inform us these are the parts that need to be replaced and then we get the qualified mechanic who can be able to do such services so then once it is restored then we call the customer we give them the vehicle and they are back on the road. Yah..i hope I answered .otherwise if you have more questions or something you didn't understand you are most welcomed to ask.				

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mmm… ok Thank you.. Yes u did. yes					

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Erra ..thank you					
Would you say your business is successful or not okay Why do you say that Why do you say that I lost you for ..for 20 seconds The last statement was that you do the same standard of	Let me say we are heading towards success. We are progressing towards success. Because there are still some short falls of some of the equipment that we need to get which we do not have the finance at…….our in order for us to fully function like the other bigger eh…bigger…eh….establishment in the same industry that we are in but at the moment we have got expertise ,we have got the skills we can do we do the job according to the standard of the quality of the other bigger establishment. But the only thing some of the equipments	Heading towards Progressing towards Short falls of equipment Not have the finance Fully function like bigger establishments We have expertise and skills.	Heading Progressing Shortfalls Lack of finances Fully functional	Growth Challenges Comopetitive	

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quality..amm that is offered by by other players in the industry mmmmm…. mmmmm.. mmmmmm… okay..	which are bigger equipments which we need still to obtain as soon as we get the funds available so that's why I said we are heading Hellow.. Oh…ok.. What was the last statement that you read for me …… Yes…. But.. Yes…why I said we are heading towards the success is because we do not yet have other facilities or equipments which the other bigger establishment have so that Is a	Do job according to standard. Bigger equipment we need to obtain. Soon as we get the funds. Heading towards success. Not have other facilities and equipment. Little bit limiting Quality up to standard.	Expertise and skills Standard Equipment Finance Heading	Skills and competence Quality Resources Growth	

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	little bit limiting us in terms of volume and quantity of work that we can be available to produce but in terms of quality we are doing the quality up to the standards. Yes..		Lack of resources Limitations Standard	Challenges Quality	

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Am…Do you use any business networks to grow your business? Okay okay	At the moment aaa..we are using just google aaa. google. to advertise but is not fully function because we need the expertise like people that can be able to assist in terms of that and also ……in order for us to pay those people, so at the moment I must say that we are having ,we are working towards hands to mouth, we are able to pay the rent, we are able to pay our workers aaa…that we are having that are assisting us to run the business but we have not yet come to the point where the business is having the funds aside which can be able to afford such a ……that can help us to do the advertisement.	Use google to advertise Not fully functional Need expertise to assist Working hand to mouth Able to pay rent, employees Not come to the point of having funds	Advertise with google Lack of capacity Need expertise Hand to mouth Pay operational cost No funds for other activities Do advertsiement	Advertisement Challenges Break even Advertisement	

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		Help us do advertisement.			
Am.. When I talk about networks ,earlier on I heard you talk about insurance ,you talked about spares, you..yes..you talked about those to say am.. networks would be businesses that you work with whether in terms of am…pulling resources together or in terms of them	Yes …oh yes u are talking about like you are giving an example for insurances? We do have the networks that we are working with for example we do work some work for dealership which is a the car dealership which are selling vehicles new vehicles and used vehicles for example we do some work for Honda Ballade and we do also work for some clients individual clients that and companies that are insured whom have they have seen the quality of our work so we do as well that we do work with that and some of the insurances that we do work with as well as individual customers.	We have networks We do some work for dealership We do some work for Honda Ballade We do work for individual clients	Have networks Network with dealerships Network with individuals Quality of work	Networks	

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referring customers to you or you referring customers to them those are the kind of businesses networks that I m referring to to say in your businesses do you use those kind of networks. Did I loose you moruti? I was just saying I m the businesses that you network	so I don't know if that answers the question. Other panel beating companies that we work with for example like I mentioned earlier that I do supplier spares sometimes for other panel shops so we do work hand in hand there are other companies that we work hand in hand yes.	Seen the quality of our work I do supplier spares for other shops Work hand in hand with companies	Supply spares Network with companies	Quality supply	

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with I don't know if because I was the last person speaking I don't if you heard me when I was explaining the networks that you working with Yes.. Okay Okay Yes it answers the question and I don't know if you do you work with panel beating					

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companies around Okay okay					
Now about branding do you use any branding to do your business I heard you earlier talking about google are you only using google to may be okay	Yah.. we are only using google ,google and then at the moment like I said because of we are not fully functioning we are not using it fully but at the moment what we are doing most of the time we are its like a word of mouth when we done the job for a customer the customer tell the other people then they refer after they have seen the quality of the work we that we are doing so that the most efficient way of marketing we are using at the moment.	Using google Not fully functional Not using it fully Word of mouth Customer tell the other	Google Lack of capacity Lack of capacity Word of mouth Word of mouth	Advertisement Challenges	

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	Yah..	Then they refer Seen the quality of work Most efficient way of marketing	Referral Quality Efficient marketing	Referral Quality marketing	
So how do your customers identify you am do they identify you as your name or they identify you as your business Did I loose you pastor I lost you?	The name of the business is Were you saying how do they identify us? You were cutting.. Yes They know me as Douglas I introduced myself as Douglas a panel beater at ……NRT				

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Yah I m back No…I mean your customers do they identify you, You know there are times when customers can identify, you know there when especially for the starter ups at times customers identify you as a what you are selling and sometimes they identify you as a , I was cutting?	So most of them they identify us by the company name for those may be those who have been referred to by other entities or by other individuals who have done work before with us so they will identify us by the name at the same time by the company that what they identify us. I don't know if I have answered the question	Know me as Douglas A panel beater Identify us by company name. Those who have been referred. Entities or individual customers	Identify as Douglas Panel Beater Identify as Autosave Referrals Networks	Branding Referrals Networks	

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okay as start ups sometimes customers identify you as your name like ke business ya ga ntate Phiri kwa ga Phiri that is what they would normally say or do they identify you as business or as in products that you are selling? Okay					

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okay Yes you did You did					
And then the other thing I would like to know is that do you use any innovation to am.. to grow your business Innovation may be a small change that you bring in your business in terms of may be your services delivery	Am.. when you say any innovation for example? Yes. Yes.. Okay.. So what we normally do is that always when we give you …..this is what we are going to do on the vehicle, for example your vehicle is bumped on the left front door ,I want to give you an example one customer that we did on Saturday so				

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or in terms of the products you Products for the convenience of your customers. It may be small change or major change Mmmm Mmmmm Mmmmm Mmmmmm Okay Okay	the customer vehicle was bumped on the left front door and she went she is driving Suzuki ,Suzuki in ……dealership so when she went there the door was tone and she wanted to buy or had an intention of buying the door and the guy who does parts there who supplies parts the parts sales man he knows us from ….where he used to work previously so he said before you buy the door can you contact this person he can help you to fix that door ,so the lady contacted me on a Friday afternoon when we were about to knock off around 4 or 5. So she introduced herself and I then I said send me the details of the car and we did a quote there and there and then I sent the quotation to her and we sealed the deal and then	The guy who supply parts He knows us Before you buy can you contact this person	Supply parts Knows us Contact Reached out	Supplier Brand awareness Referral	

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Okay That is a good customer service.	One thing I mentioned to the customer I asked when soon do you want or need the vehicle and she said I want to do it like as soon as possible so I said if you are available we can even come now to fetch the vehicle or tomorrow morning if you are available and she opted for us tomorrow morning. Then immediately we went fetch the vehicle in the morning on Saturday and when brought the vehicle we saw some scratches on the vehicle and we told her that we are going to do it at no extra costs for you so we did those extra repairs so that one way of we need the customers and that customer was happy .	The lady contacted me About to knock off when she introduced herself Send the details of the car We did a quote and sealed the deal When soon she needs the car	Assist at the time to knock off Send details. Sealed the deal Time to perform the service As soon as possible	communications Customer Service Communications Customer satisfaction Efficiency	

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	Sunday afternoon after church we came and did the polishing of the vehicle we painted it on Saturday the very same day Saturday and polished it Sunday afternoon after church and then we delivered it to her. So the customer was not able to drive all the way from her house to us we drove from our workshop to go pick up the vehicle and fixed it and took it back to her and she was a happy customer and she even confirmed that now I have to put you on the list of my panel beaters So such services those are things that we do we go an extra mile and we even prepared to work overtime even during the weekends just to	As soon as possible We can come now or tomorrow Do it at no extra costs Did extra repairs The customer was happy Polished it and delivered it	Now or tomorrow No extra cost Extra repairs Happy customer Polished and delivered Drove to pick up Fixed and delivered	Customer service	

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	accommodate the customers that needs their vehicles as soon as possible so we work towards quick turnaround time, high quality standards of work as well as reasonable pricing that the customer can be able to afford. One more thing that I must mention sometimes we do offer the services where by the customer might not have all the money to fix the vehicle.so on the agreed quote we tell them that if they give us half 50 % of what we have agreed before we start doing the repairs and then when we are done the customer if they are able to pay the full balance let them do so but if should they have not all full amount of the balance we give them an option	We drove to go pick up the car Fixed it and took it back She was a happy customer Confirmed that I have put you in the list We go an extra mile Prepared to work on weekends	Happy customer Put in the lsit Extra mile Work on weekends Customer needs Turn around time	Customers needs	

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	paying what they can afford at that moment and the we can make arrangements to 2 to maximum 3 months for them to finish up the balance. So that the other thing we offer to our customers.	Accommodate customers needs Work towards quick turnaround time High quality standards of work Reasonable pricing for customers to afford Offer services where customers	Quality standards Reasonable pricing Customers might lack finances 50% deposit Provide options Instalments	Efficiency Quality Customer satisfaction Customer needs	

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		might not have money Allow 50% before we start Give them options to pay 2-3 months to pay			
Now looking at the services that you provide or the products that you provide ,have you had a situation where by a customer comes	Yes.. For example depending on the affordability of the customer, so there are would just say there are three different parts on the vehicle,	Depending on affordability	Affordability	Affordability	

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looking for a part and probably the part doesn't fit and you had to may be alter or may be do something make some changes to that particular part okay	The first one is new part from the agent, The second one the original part, which is used, second hand which might have some dents or damages so in such part we need to repair it before we can fit it on the customer vehicle, or some of them we use alternative part, there are called alternative part which are not from the agent that is an alternative supplier ,so most of the time on the alternative part some of them they fit properly some we have to do some adjustments, yes, to answer your question in order for them to fit but we do the adjustment properly so that the customer would not see the different	Do some adjustments Do adjustments properly	Ajustment Adjustments properly	Quality Assurance	

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	between the original part and alternative part. Yes, according to the standard quality which we have learned through when we learned the training. So, we are doing the repairs according to the specs almost to the original to the state that vehicle was when it came from the dealer. Yah..	Customer would not see the difference. According to the standard quality. We are doing the repairs according to specs.	Not see the difference Standard quality Repairs according to specs		
Now what is your perception about, we have talked earlier about business networks and say,	Which strategies? Okay How I look at it myself ,it is very important to work with network and		Work with networks	Networks	

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what is your perception of using them as a strategy for the success of your business? The business networking, networking with other businesses Okay Yes you did	also it helps when we are networking with other service providers or the work providers it helps for us to grow the business as well in the growth of our business, for example in terms of we are doing insurance work if we got the insurances that are supporting us we might save them or some of them we might save them the money when we give the discount and at the same time when they give us volume of work to support us that can help grow our revenue which in return can also grow our profitability of the business. I don't know if I answered well?	Important to work with networks Networking with others help us to grow We get insurance that are supporting us Save money when we give discounts Give us volume to support us	Networking help us grow Insurance support us Save money Volume to support us Revenue growth Profitability growth	Growth Support Save money Support Growth	

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		Grow our revenue Grow our profitability			
And then what about branding What is your perception about you using branding in your business to grow your business? Okay Okay okay	Yak. Branding is very, very important also because when is well branded is easier for people to recognise us and also for easy access, customer access. So yah, what we did on the premises because the premises we are in now we moved in June this year , we were previously in the premises next door ,so we have not yet moved our branding because like I said due to the finances ,the place that we are now is a little bigger there is more rent that we are paying but in terms	Branding is important. Well branded is easier to recognise. Easy customer access	Branding is important. Easier to recognise Access Lack of finances	Branding Brand awareness Access Challenges	

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	of work environment it even much better and easier access for the customers . Most of the times the customers go to the place next door where our branding is instead of coming to next door where we are, so like I'm saying is very important and easy access to the customer and also it can help for the business to be well known, so really we are working towards that we should be able to brand it as in when as when, not only that even on the social networks as well.	Not moved branding due to finances More rent Work environment is much better. Easier customer access Important and easy access	More rent Environment much better access Access Business to be well known Brand it	 Better environment Brand awareness	

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		Help the business to be well known We should be able to brand it Even the social networks	Social networks	Branding Networks	
Now about innovation ,smaller changes or bigger changes that you normally do to satisfy your customers ,what is your perception about those as a strategy to grow your business	It is working very efficiently I must say a number of customers that we have helped in that way we have kept them by us they are not going anywhere else because of those extra miles that we take to assist them even those that might not have the money to do the repairs for example I would give you other customers that are insured they have insurance and they have to pay	Working very efficiently Customers we have helped we kept them They are not going anywhere	Working efficiently We kept them. Not going anywhere	Efficiency Customer retention	

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Yah.. Yah…. Yah…	access should they have the incident, some of those customers you would find that they do not have the money at their disposal to pay the access they might pay it in instalments ,it helps them actually ,for them to easy the burden of if I don't have the access amount full I can not fix my car, but with us we say look we will be able to fix your car as long as insurance has approved you can pay the access in instalments so it makes their lives easier that we have seen that it helps to retain the customers.	Those extra miles we take to assist them Even those without money Have to pay excess but do not have money. Pay in instalment ease the burden. Pay access in instalments.	Extra mile Without money Pay excess but no money. Instalment Instalment Life easier Retain customers	Customer service Challenges Better terms	

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		Makes life easier. Helps to retain customers		Customer retention	
I m…. which ok Looking at the strategies that we have talked about, branding, innovation and	Between which one and which one I think innovation has the most impact in our business, seconded by the networking as well as the branding, I can put it at last. I m talking about in terms of experience because if I can tell you	Innovation has most impact	Most impact	High impact	

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business networks which one do you think has the most impact in your business. Between branding ,business networks and innovation Why do you say that Pastor You answered very well. yes	when we started the business we started from scratch we did not have the lump sum of money that we started the business with, but through the innovation we were able to attract customers that were able to go tell other customers and we were also able to talk to other work providers to help us in terms of the systems how do they approach the situation and also remember the branding requires money that why I put the branding at last. I don't know if I m answering well	Didn't have lumpsum for starting the business. Through innovation we attracted customers Were able to talk tell others. Talk to other work providers.	Lack of finance Attract customer Talk and tell Work providers	Challenge Attract customers Referral Networks	

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		Help in terms how to approach situations.	How to approach situations	Approach	
Ok Now our expectations what do you expect to gain from applying all the strategies that we have talked about ,innovation, branding and	Come again the question Ok Number 1 we would gain reputation, customer retention, we would retain the customer ,as well as also at the end of the day our business when we have got like consistency more customers are coming back we are getting more customers we would be able to make profit at the end of the	We would gain reputation. Customer retention We have got consistency.	Gain reputation Customer retention Consistency	Reputation Customer retention Consistency	

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business networks As a business if you apply all the 3 strategies in your business what would you gain? Ok ok	day. Our business would be profitable , Yah… Like for example in this nature of the business that we are in it takes time to build the network and need time as well to have the volume capacity of work after we have build the network we have to have the reputation the customer retention and then it takes time in order for us to be profitable because the business itself and the nature of the business it involves a lot of operational costs .we started the business in 2018 I must say ,we have not gotten the salaries ourselves but all we are doing is just to be able to cover the operational costs and the rentals and be able to	More customers are coming We are getting more customers We would make profit Business would be profitable Takes time to build networks Need time to have volume of work	More customer coming More customers Make profit Would be profitable Built networks Time to have volume Build the network	Attract customers Profit Networks Productivity	

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	pay for people that ae working for us.so that is what we are doing at the moment. The profits is not yet there. But we are busy building the business so that it can be profitable.	After we have build the network We have reputation Customer retention Takes time to be profitable Business involve a lot of operational costs	Have reputation Customer retention Profitable Lot of operational costs Operational costs No profits	Networks Reputation Customer retention Profit Break even	

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		Cover operational costs No profits Building the business for profit	Building for profit	No profits Profit	
Now I m how would you describe the impact or the contribution of the strategies in your business when you look at the business because of the network, because	What I can say I think our business we are seeing the light in the tunnel because of using those three strategies we are seeing the light in the tunnel. It is starting to open up despite the fact that we are like any other businesses that were heat by covid and all that we could have been closed ,but by the Grace of God above all I must say by the Grace of God ,God has sustained us	Seeing light at the end of tunnel Starting to open up By the grace of God we have been sustained	Light at the end of tunnel Open up Have been sustained More customer	Breakthrough Work Sustainance More customers	

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of the branding ,because of the innovation ,I m this is where my business is.so I don't know if my question is clear, how do you describe the contributions that these three strategies have made in your business, what can you say about them. 0k ok	to keep us upload until this time we are seeing that it is starting to open up. There are more customers some of them we did not approach them as a business they have heard from others you are doing such good services I would like to bring my vehicle in for repairs ,so with that kind of opening the volume of work we are starting to have hope that we would break through. We are in the verge of breakthrough.	There are more customers Some we did not approach, they heard from others Doing good services Would like to bring my vehicle for repairs Starting to have hope of breakthrough	Heard from others Good service Bring vehicle for repairs Hope of breakthrough Verge of breakthorugh	Referrals Quality Purchase Breakthrough	

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		We are in the verge of breakthrough			
Thank you Pastor I m I think we have come to the end of our interview so what I'm going to do is I'm going to transcribe this interview and then I would share the transcription with you so that you can confirm that it is what I have					

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written is what you said. Thank you very much .i know you are busy and thank you for sharing the scriptures.					

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Appendix D

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To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that I, Peter Southey, edited the language of the dissertation Business networks, entrepreneurial branding and innovation: Strategies for promoting start-up success in Botswana and South Africa

by

Tebogo Mokwene Moagi

The onus is on the author to attend to the suggested changes. Furthermore, I do not take responsibility for any changes in the document after the fact.

P G Southey

31 August 2023

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