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**Exploring the Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the Informal  
Economy in Durban, South Africa**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT  
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## **Abstract**

The informal economy in South Africa is predominantly characterised by the presence of women and the working poor. The flexibility in entry and exit in the informal sector enables the marginalised and those with low skills to gain entry in this particular sector. Informality is quite prevalent in developing countries as the economies have less economic diversification. The high levels of unemployment in South Africa influence the growth of the informal sector as a method of livelihood. The informal economy has minimal protection, exposing those operating in the informal sector to social and economic shocks. The eThekweni region is noted as one of the busiest hubs in South Africa and has a strong presence of informal traders. It is impossible to ignore the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic, which has caused a huge instability in the daily lives of South Africans.

Against this background, the aim of this study was to explore the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on informal workers in the eThekweni Region. This study has also identified and explored the various livelihood and socio-economic challenges encountered by the informal workers in the region. Methodologically, the study utilised secondary data analysis as a data collection tool, informed by the mixed methods approach. The study's data is based on a survey conducted with 150 informal workers in eThekweni on the impact of COVID-19 on their livelihoods.

The key finding reveal that the Covid-19 brought upon great hardship and challenges in the informal businesses and the livelihoods dependent on the sector due to the closure of economic activities during the height of the pandemic. There was insufficient distribution of Covid-19 relief funds by the government and the local municipality towards informal workers in the midst of being barred from earning a living. Additionally, there is a huge gap for social security in the informal sector in the eThekweni region. While the resilient informal workers in eThekweni region have returned to trading (despite being unable to recover post-Covid income), most aspire for better protection in the midst of social and economic shocks.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, informal economy, eThekweni, Durban, social security.

## **Declaration**

**I Thulile Sinethemba Mhlangu** (215049672) declares that:

1. The research presented in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
2. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any university.
3. All the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.
4. This dissertation does not contain any graphics, texts or tables copied from the internet, unless specifically acknowledged and the source being detailed in the dissertation and in the reference section.
5. I understand that the University of KwaZulu-Natal may take disciplinary action against me if there is a belief and proof that this is not my own unaided work or that I have failed to acknowledge the source of the ideas or words in my writing.

**Signature:** .....

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## **Abbreviations**

CDC	- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
COVID-19	- Coronavirus disease-2019
GDP	- Gross Domestic Product
ILO	- International Labour Organization
IMED	- Informal Micro Enterprise Development programme
IMF	- International Monetary Fund
NPI	- Non-Pharmaceutical Intervention
PPE	- Personal Protective Equipment
RNSF	- Research, Network and Support Facility
SALGA	- South African Local Government Association
SMME's	- Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises
STATS SA	- Statistics South Africa
SLF	- Sustainable Livelihood Framework
TREP	- Township and Rural Entrepreneurship Programme
UIF	- Unemployment Insurance Fund
UN	- United Nations
UN WOMEN	- United Nations Women
UNCTAD	- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDG	- United Nations Development Group
UNDP	- United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WHO	- World Health Organization
WIEGO	- Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Introduction and Background

The rapid spread of the coronavirus disease-2019 across the globe attributed to a number of changes in ordinary daily lives. Previous daily lives enabled physical human interaction, no social distancing and less hygiene protocols were enforced on people. The coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) fast became a global pandemic that has spread to entire the world. The coronavirus disease is an infectious disease that causes respiratory illness ranging from a common cold to severe respiratory illnesses (Department of Health, 2020). The virus is transmitted by infected persons to other persons as well as between animals and humans (Department of Health, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has been noted by many countries globally to have adverse effects physically, psychologically, socially and economically. South Africa is one of the country's that have been adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The World Health Organization (2022) reports that in September of 2022, 606 459 140 cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed and reported globally. Additionally, 6 495 110 deaths have been reported globally due to the COVID-19 pandemic (World Health Organization, 2022). These statistics are alarming as it reflects the spread of the outbreak. Early positive cases of the COVID-19 pandemic were present in South Africa in the beginning of March 2020 (COVID-19 Online Resources and News Portal, 2020a). These cases continued to rise in South Africa, by the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 there were 116 confirmed positive cases in South Africa (COVID-19 Online Resources and News Portal, 2020b). Based on the rapid spread, various regulations and restrictions were imposed as attempts to reduce the spread.

In attempts to reduce the spread, the South African Presidency declared a National State of disaster on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2020, which led to a National Lockdown for 21 days, to curb the spread of the coronavirus (InSession, 2020). The National Lockdown was imposed due to the increase in COVID-19 cases. The lockdown was an emergency procedure, commanding South Africans to stay in their homes throughout the course of the lockdown (Dlwati, 2020). However, South Africans were only allowed to leave their homes to access essential services and resources (Dlwati, 2020). South Africans were only allowed to access essential services such as medical services, purchasing food and collecting social grant under strict conditions (The Presidency, 2020). Service

providers of health care services, emergency personnel, security services, police officers, military personnel and soldiers were exempt from the lockdown (The Presidency, 2020).

With these regulations and policies in place, it is important to then to explore the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the informal sector. This exploration will also assist in bringing to light the impact and challenges faced by those in the informal sector during the National lockdown. Vulnerabilities and economic shocks amplify the need for those in the informal sector to be protected and cushioned.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

The COVID-19 pandemic has had adverse socio-economic effects at a global scale. The outbreak of COVID-19 began in December of the year 2019 in Wuhan City, Hubei province of China (McKibbin & Fernando, 2020). The unprecedented spread of the virus resulted in countries such as Iran, Italy and Japan to become the epicenters of the outbreak after China (McKibbin & Fernando, 2020). The interdependence and accessibility of nations fostered the outbreak to spread globally. The COVID-19 outbreak was spread through the movement of people as the world is quite interconnected and integrated (McKibbin & Fernando, 2020). Since the outbreak of COVID-19 emerged in China, it is expected that any effects of the COVID-19 pandemic would arise in China. The Chinese economy was disrupted in production, instigating an interruption in the global supply chain (McKibbin & Fernando, 2020). Production was disrupted by the order of the Chinese government enforcing the closure of major factories in the country (Ozili & Arun, 2020). China operates as the largest manufacturer and exporter globally (Ozili & Arun, 2020). The disruption of the global supply chains validates that the world is interconnected. The outcomes of the COVID-19 pandemic can be associated with the 2007-2008 financial crisis, as the crisis was initially a concern of the United States yet became an entire global financial system crisis (Ozili & Arun, 2020).

The effects of the coronavirus outbreak are expected to present various context specific effects in either developing, emerging and developed countries. Developing countries face a number of difficulties. The COVID-19 outbreak in Africa impacted a number of African countries through their linkages in the global economy by trade (Gondwe, 2020). Unfortunately, there has been a fall in the global demand for exports and a collapse in the prices of major commodities, these challenges are present in Africa (Gondwe, 2020). The decline in the demand affects the livelihoods

of those in Africa. In Sub-Saharan Africa approximately 45% of the population make a living in sectors that are highly likely to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (Teachout & Zipfel, 2020). Estimates of the repercussion of the outbreak estimate an additional 9.2% of the population in Sub-Saharan countries will fall into extreme poverty (Teachout & Zipfel, 2020).

The informal economy in South Africa and the world has been disrupted by the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The informal economy in South Africa plays a role of providing goods, services and creating employment (Etim & Daramola, 2020). Predominantly, the sector caters for women and the youth, whom are unemployed (Etim & Daramola, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in huge uncertainty amongst informal workers (Heneck, 2020). The imposed lockdown regulations which came into effect on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 heightened the fears of livelihoods dependent on the informal sector (Heneck, 2020). Khambule (2020) adds that the informal economy is at a higher risk as it is unregulated. The limited income and exclusion of the informal economy in essential services poses a threat to livelihoods dependent on the informal economy (Khambule, 2020).

The lockdown regulations imposed restricted movement and those operating in the informal sector were not identified as providers of essential services. As a result, trading in the informal economy was prohibited for the first few days of the national lockdown (Heneck, 2020). However, it was later announced that food traders would be allowed to operate. Unfortunately, some traders were subjected to harassment by the police. Amongst other challenges, informal traders in Durban's Warwick Junction lacked protective equipment against the coronavirus, increasing the risks of contracting the virus (Heneck, 2020). This posed a risk to both the informal traders and customers. This study seeks to explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the informal sector in eThekweni. It is crucial to explore the social and economic impacts of the crisis in the informal sector. Furthermore, the study explores the effectiveness of interventions implemented by the state to assist during the crisis.

### **1.3 Research Objectives and Questions**

Aim of the Study: To explore the impact of COVID-19 on eThekweni's informal sector.

*Research Objectives:*

1. To explore the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the informal economy in the eThekweni region.
2. To explore the challenges faced by the informal economy during the COVID-19 lockdown.
3. To explore the effectiveness of the state interventionist policies on the informal sector.

#### *Research Questions:*

Research Question: What is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the informal economy in South Africa?

1. What has been the socio-economic impact has the COVID-19 had on the informal economy?
2. What challenges faced the informal economy during the COVID-19 lockdown?
3. What type of state interventionist policies were adopted?
4. How effective were the state interventionist policies in the informal economy?

### **1.4 Research Methodology**

This study is guided by the Mixed Methods research approach. The mixed methods approach utilises both the qualitative and quantitative methods. Baškarada and Koronios (2018) define the mixed methods approach as a third research approach, whereby the researcher/s combine elements of both the qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Qualitative and quantitative methods are either mixed or combined in this particular approach (Baškarada & Koronios, 2018). The combination is expected to produce a rich data set. In this study, it is important for the study to achieve a certain level of subjectivity, as each person has been affected differently by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there are experiences that are common amongst the people in the informal sector.

The study also utilised Secondary Data Analysis. Secondary data refers to a dataset primarily collected by someone else for other research purposes, moreover this dataset is reused for new research questions (Martins et al., 2018). The advantages of utilising secondary data consist of saving time as there is a great reliance on digital and printed data (Pérez-Sindín, 2017). Furthermore, this data collection reduces costs, it is less expensive in comparison to other data collection methods (Pérez-Sindín, 2017). These advantages ensure that time and costs were saved during the data collection process. The data reviewed in secondary data analysis consists of data

from various credible sources including journals, books and statistical information (Goundar, 2012). Statistical information in this particular study is essential to support information provided by journal articles, reports and books.

The data has been analysed through Descriptive Statistics and Content analysis. Mishra et al. (2019) briefly describes descriptive statistics as a method of presenting the dataset in a summarised form. This mode of analysis assists the reader in establishing the basic information on the dataset presented. Nowell et al. (2017) asserts that content analysis provides rich and detailed data. Utilizing categories assists in summarising the key features of the dataset into themes. The categories reveal the findings of the study. These rigorous analyses produce trustworthy and findings that are insightful (Nowell et al., 2017). It is essential for research to be credible, valid and trustworthy.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The global coronavirus pandemic has brought upon great loss and hardship. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how the informal economy has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The informal economy is unregulated and quite vulnerable to economic shocks. The study aims to explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the informal economy in South Africa. In particular exploring the socio-economic impact and challenges brought by the pandemic. These are quite important to be understood as intervention is expected to be informed by the impact and the challenges faced. Interventions aimed at addressing the challenges are quite effective and practical. The COVID-19 pandemic required the government to step up in terms of providing leadership, setting regulations, supporting and protecting the vulnerable.

The dissertation will explore the various types of interventions that were adopted by the South African government. It is of paramount importance to assess their effectiveness in the South African informal economy. This study will inform the government in terms of the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic in the informal economy. Furthermore, influence future intervention in terms of COVID-19 and the informal economy. Informal economy workers have little or no social and legal security. The dissertation is expected to inform informal economy policies and legislation which will protect those operating in the informal economy against economic shocks. Further, informal economy policies are expected to develop means to cater for informal workers during pandemics and crisis.

## **1.6 Chapter Breakdown**

The dissertation consists of five (5) chapters.

The first chapter is the introduction, which has introduced and provided a background of the study. The second chapter reviews literature on the informal economy. The chapter further reviews literature on pandemics, COVID-19 and the impact it has had from a global perspective to a South African level.

The third chapter discusses the methodology of the study.

The fourth chapter produces the findings of the study, analysis and discusses the findings of the study.

The last chapter, chapter five concludes the dissertation as well as provide recommendations.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

The chapter has introduced and provided a background of the study. Secondly the chapter has discussed the problem statement at a global, continental and South African level. The chapter has stated the research objectives and research questions. The chapter has explained the significance of the study as well as provided a breakdown of all the chapters in the dissertation.

The next chapter will focus on reviewing literature on the informal economy globally, in Africa, amongst developing countries and in South Africa. The chapter will secondly review the history of pandemics as well as the socio-economic impact of the pandemics. Lastly the chapter will discuss the COVID-19 pandemic as well as its impact from a global level narrowing down to the South African context.

# **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

## **2.1. Introduction**

The informal economy exists across the globe. With differences in size of the informal economy in different regions across the world, the informal economy contributes to the global employment. This chapter will review literature on the informal economy at a global level. Secondly the dissertation will theoretically explain the informal economy and discuss the types of activities that occur in the informal sector. Furthermore, the chapter will review the informal economy in Africa, developing countries and in South Africa. The chapter will review previous pandemics and their impacts on the informal economy. Lastly the chapter will discuss the impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

## **2.2. The Informal Economy - Globally**

The informal economy is defined as all units, activities, workers and the output from them; from an unregulated and an unreported economy (Pillay & Govender, 2020). The characteristics of the informal economy are production and employment occurring in unregistered enterprises (Meagher, 2013). The informal economy plays a role in production, employment creation and income generation (International Labour Organization, 2020a). The employment created tackles the social issue of unemployment. Informal sector employment includes self-employed persons and employees in informal unregistered enterprises (Chen, 2012). Furthermore, informal employment has no social or legal protection (Chen et al., 2012). Employment in the informal sector includes street trading, home based work and domestic work (Chen et al., 2012).

In much more developed countries, the informal sector is characterised as illegal due to forbidden activities by the law operate in the sector (Chen, 2012). Globally, two billion of the world's population from the age of 15 and over, are employed informally constituting 61.2% of the global employment (ILO, 2018). In the 5 main regions, Africa is noted to have more of informal employment at 85.8%, Asia and Pacific at 68.2%, the Arab States at 68.6%, both America's at 40% and Europe and Central Asia at 25.1% (ILO, 2018). These statistics reveal that the more developed countries rely less on informal employment, whereas the developing regions like Africa have high rates of informal employment. As well as a low share of informal employment in high income countries. A healthy economic growth is a result of an economic production structure that

consist of commodities with increasing returns (Constanine, 2017). These increasing returns provide longer career ladders, innovation and economic diversification (Constanine, 2017). Unfortunately, developing countries have low skills, low technological infrastructure and a lack of financial capital (Basu & Das, 2011). It is then difficult for developing countries economic structures to be able to create jobs. Therefore, this explains the huge presence of informal employment in developing countries.

The International Labour Organization (2018) notes that the informal employment comprises of work in the informal sector, formal sector and in households. In the 61.2% share of global informal employment, 51.9% belongs to the informal sector, 6.7% represents informal employment in the formal sector and 2.5% represents informal employment in households (ILO, 2018). Informal employment is greater in the informal sector. Informal employment includes “casual day labourers, domestic workers, industrial outworkers, undeclared workers, part-time workers and temporary workers” unfortunately without social protection, worker benefits and secure contracts (Benjamin et al., 2014, p.6).

The informal sector is a primary source of employment for women in developing states and larger source of employment for women compared to men (Chen, 2001). Charmes (2012) assesses the trends of employment in the informal economy by 5-year periods over the past four decades in different countries and regions. The findings of the study reveal that women are more likely to be self-employed in the informal sector (Charmes, 2012). In the Middle East North Africa region 64.2% of women are self-employed in the region, as well as 88.6% in Sub-Saharan African region and 28.9% in the transition countries (Charmes, 2012). The presence of self-employed women in the informal sector is higher in Sub-Saharan Africa. Benjamin et al. (2014) state that self-employment is a predominant characteristic of the informal sector. Within the informal sector, women are much more likely to engage in multiple activities (Chen, 2001).

It essential that we understand the basis of the dominance of women in the informal sector than men. According to Ramani et al. (2013) women possess lower levels of education and skills in comparison to men. This is the outcome of cultural and social norms which constrain the mobility and time of women (Chen, 2001). These societal and cultural norms decrease the chances of women entering the formal sector as employees. Ramani et al. (2013, p.2) states that women



workers in the informal sectors are “easily hired, cheapened and exploited”. These factors noted attribute to the over-representation of women in the informal economy.

### **2.3. Theorising the Informal Economy**

This dissertation utilises the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (SLF) as a theory to explain the informal economy. The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework explains the livelihoods of the poor by exploring the factors that constrain and increase livelihood opportunities, as well as illustrate how these relate (Serrat, 2017). The theory considers factors that have an influence on the livelihoods of the poor. The poor in this particular framework are persons with low income, illiteracy, poor health, lack of social services, the state of feeling vulnerable and social exclusion (Krantz, 2001). Nawrotzki et al. (2014) explains that the SLF reviews the diverse livelihood strategies in developing countries. This diversity demonstrates that there are various strategies adopted for survival. These livelihood strategies are adopted “to maintain livelihood security” (Nawrotzki et al., 2014, p.284). Nawrotzki et al. (2014) explains livelihood security as the condition whereby there is sufficient food security. Food security refers to people having access to safe, sufficient and nutritious food for active minds and healthy lives (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2021).

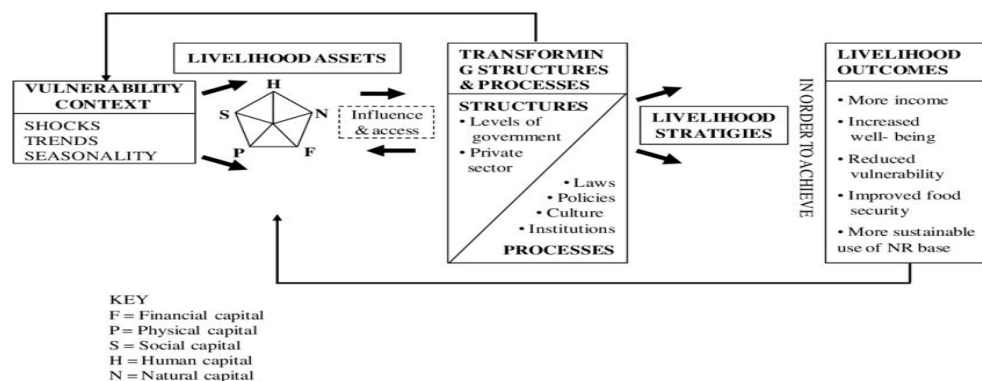
A livelihood contains assets, capabilities and activities necessary for a means of living (Krantz, 2001). A livelihood is deemed sustainable when it can survive and recover from shocks, stresses; maintain and enhance its capabilities and assets, while not compromising the natural resource base (Krantz, 2001). The SLF asserts that households and individuals have different resources and capabilities and endure different scales of exposure to policies and institutions that condition the environment they operate in, the interaction of these factors influence the livelihood choices and outcomes (Mensah, 2011). The SLF analyses from a household and an individual’s point. The livelihood resources are material, social, tangible and intangible resources that individuals use to construct their livelihoods; they are termed as different types of capitals (Krantz, 2001). There are 5 categories of the capitals.

The capitals are namely: human, social, natural, physical and financial capital (Serrat, 2017). The capitals in this framework are seen as resources which may constrain and/or enhance livelihood opportunities. “Individuals construct and identify possible livelihood strategies that would yield optimal returns in welfare outcomes such as increased income and well-being, reduced

vulnerability to economic shocks and natural disaster, improved food security and sustained use of available natural resources” (Mensah, 2011, p.13). As mentioned above that there are factors that influence by either constraining or enhancing livelihood opportunities, these factors include policies and institutions. These policies and institutions consist of processes and structures that dictate the order of economic interaction (Mensah, 2011). The structures are public and private organisations that regulate and implement policies and legislation that affect livelihoods (Serrat, 2017). The processes support the laws, regulations, policies and societal norms influence the way in which structures operate (Serrat, 2017). The policies and institutions have an impact which may enable, inhibit, constrain and create livelihood options and outcomes (Lowe & Schilderman, 2001).

A sustainable livelihood according to this framework is able to cope and survive stressors and shocks. The vulnerability context includes trends, seasonalities and shocks which are from the external environment, which is the further from the individual/ household’s control (Kollmair & Gamper, 2002). These vulnerabilities occur, a sustainable livelihood is expected to cope with the vulnerability and recover from this shock. The ability of the livelihood surviving the vulnerabilities arising allows the livelihood to be termed a sustainable livelihood.

Figure 2.3.1: Sustainable Livelihoods Framework



**Source: Sheheli (2012)**

In this particular study, those operating in the informal economy utilise this economy as a livelihood strategy. The informal economy commonly caters for those whom are unable to enter the formal economy. Arunatilake and Jayawardena (2010) state that the informal sector is hugely comprised of disadvantaged persons that are pushed out of the formal sector. Based on this

statement, it can be said that engaging in the informal economy is a livelihood strategy. Chambers and Conway (1992) cited in Mkhize (2018) state that the informal economy is one of the survival strategies utilised by households in South Africa to generate an income. The various capitals available at their disposal enable individuals and households to explore livelihood opportunities as well as venture into them. As some informal traders largely rely primarily on natural resources from the natural environment, considering the benefits the natural resources, they would have an intention to sustain and maintain the natural resources (Tshabalala et al., 2017). The availability of the capitals empowers persons to enter and operate in the informal economy. Low levels of skills, education, discrimination, poverty and lack of access to economic are noted as the root causes of informality (International Labour Organization, 2021a). With these existing socio-economic issues, there are other issues that arise, vulnerabilities that affect the adopted livelihood strategy. The ability to survive and cope with these vulnerabilities in the external environment result in a continuous livelihood. The current vulnerability affecting the livelihoods and food security in the informal economy is the Coronavirus pandemic.

A study conducted in Zimbabwe on smallholders extrapolated the socio-economic implications of the coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) (Mhlanga & Ndhlovu, 2020). Smallholders in the study refers to farmers that produce a variety of food crops on land for sale and personal consumption (Mhlanga & Ndhlovu, 2020). The SLF is applicable to this particular study of smallholders. The important natural capital for smallholders is land, as it sustains food reserves and livelihoods (Mhlanga & Ndhlovu, 2020). Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) (2021a) notes that these farmers are a part of the informal economy as they lack social protection, not included in some aspects of labour legislation. Furthermore, they are quite vulnerable in supply chains (WIEGO, 2021a). With the restrictions and changes brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is expected that the farmers will experience shocks. The implications of COVID-19 led to production and income disruptions as well as food security challenges (Mhlanga & Ndhlovu, 2020). Food security and logistics challenges were also attributable to the restrictions on movement and transportation (Beltrami, 2020). COVID-19 is an extreme vulnerability faced by those operating informal economy. The ability of informal workers to be resilient towards this adversity lies on the capitals and assets accessible to them.

## **2.4. Types of Informal Economy Activities**

Labour in the informal economy is divided into various categories. Street trading according to Vanek et al. (2012) is divided into street vendors and market traders. Street vendors are described as individuals that produce and sell goods and services in public spaces (Recchi, 2020). Market traders sell goods or provide services in built markets on publicly and privately-owned land (Vanek et al., 2012). The distinction between street vendors and market trading is that street vendors trade in public spaces; however, market traders are not limited to public spaces only but also privately-owned property. Home-based workers perform remunerative work within homes (Vanek et al., 2012). Home-based workers are different from domestic workers as home-based workers consist of the self-employed and sub-contracted workers (Vanek et al., 2012).

Domestic workers are employed by households. The International Labour Organization (2020a) recognises the domestic work categories consisting of housekeepers and related workers, childcare workers, home-based workers personal care workers, domestic helpers and cleaners according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (Vanek et al., 2012). Domestic workers work in households and do household duties, whereas home-based workers operate within the household but not performing household duties. Work activity in the informal sector is often characterized by small or undefined workplaces, unsafe working spaces, unhealthy working conditions, long working hours, irregular incomes, low levels of skills and lack of access to finance and technology (ILO, 2020c). Although the working environment of those in the informal sector is not pleasant, the sector contributes to poverty alleviation, food security, generates income and is a mode of survival (Pillay & Govender, 2020).

## **2.5. Informal Economy in Africa/ Developing Countries**

Rural and urban informal employment is leading in developing countries amongst the emerging and developed countries (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing, 2020). A large share of the population in developing countries depends on the informal sector to sustain their livelihoods (Blades et al., 2011). The livelihoods are sustained through operations in small unincorporated enterprises by trading goods and services in the streets and markets (Blades et al., 2011). Trading in the streets and markets in Africa includes selling fruits, vegetables, traditional medicine, clothes and even furniture (Skinner, 2008). A variety of goods are offered in the African streets and markets. The 2008 global financial crisis caused a significant shift amongst

government's and donor agencies towards "rethinking employment as a central component of economic recovery and long-term development", the shift led to informal livelihoods recognised as a form of employment (Roever, 2016, p.27).

The effects of the 2008 global financial crisis include the economic collapse and a rise in unemployment (Islam & Verick, 2011). The shift makes it crucial for the urban development agenda to consider informal self-employment (Roever, 2016). This significant shift acknowledges the ability of the informal sector to support livelihoods. Governments, donor agencies and NGO's believe the informal economy could assist in addressing the global challenges and help uplift the wellbeing of the poor (Chambwera et al., 2011). There is an already existing relationship between the informal economy and the local government, as those trading in the informal economy utilise the public space which is governed by the local government (Roever, 2016). The informal economy is deemed suitable to assist in achieving sustainable development ideals such as the Green Economy and Poverty Reduction Strategies (Chambwera et al., 2011).

With the low barriers to entry there are challenges in the operations of the informal sector. A 10-year study was conducted on the working conditions in home-based working, street vending and waste picking sectors; aimed at investigating the negative and positive driving forces that affect the working conditions in the informal sector over time (Roever, 2016). The study was focused on five cities namely: Accra, Durban, Lima, Ahmedabad and Nakuru (Roever, 2016). The findings of the study revealed that the main negative driving forces were workplace insecurity, harassment and evictions (Roever, 2016). Street vendors in the five cities encountered the following challenges harassment, evictions, confiscation and insecurity of vending site (Roever, 2016). These challenges are less prevalent in Accra due to more market trading taking place and these market traders have secure trading sites (Roever, 2016). The permitting system in Durban is available for street vendors and market traders, however the presence of these permits lacks effective protective rights (Roever, 2016). These challenges reveal that those trading in the markets and streets are not protected enough by the local government.

The informal sector is noted to play a role in tackling unemployment in developing nations. However, Cassim et al. (2016) shares that inferiority is associated with this source of employment and this inferiority should be discontinued. Discontinuing this inferiority requires intervention from policies and legislation. Policymakers are expected to consider the informal sector to promote

inclusive growth (Cassim, et al., 2016). Policy incorporating the informal sector will provide protection, rights and acknowledgement of the sector. The growth of this sector in Africa has been strained by “stringent legislation and historical considerations” (Cassim et. al., 2016, p.2). A number of developing countries have experienced the historical injustice of colonisation. This historical injustice resulted in the exploitation, colonial dominance and imperialism of African states (Ocheni & Nwankwo, 2012). These injustices till this day have impacted the economies of African countries.

Inclusive growth is understood as “growth accompanied by poverty reduction and equal opportunities for all segments of the population” (Cassim et. al., 2016, p.3). The African Development cited in Cassim et.al., (2016, p.3) views inclusive growth as economic growth that has a result of increasing access to “sustainable socio-economic opportunities” for a broader number of people whilst protecting the vulnerable through “fairness and equal justice”. In attempts to achieve inclusive growth in Africa, policymakers should consider how beneficial this effort will be towards the vulnerable and the broader population. With the presence of poverty and inequality in Africa, inclusive growth may assist with reducing the presence of these ills in the Sub-Saharan African region. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) notes the contribution of the informal sector and informal employment is 20% to the National Gross Domestic Product in Namibia, Lesotho and South Africa (Etim & Daramola, 2020).

In Tanzania, Nigeria and Benin, the informal sector and informal employment contributes to 60% of the National Gross Domestic Product (Etim & Daramola, 2020). This great contribution of the informal economy includes the creation of employment opportunities resulting in the reduction of poverty in developing countries (Tshabalala et al., 2017). Furthermore, the informal sector has a dominant share in several sectors including the manufacturing, finance, commerce and mining sectors (Tshabalala et al., 2017). Moreno-Monroy (2012) adds that in Sub-Saharan Africa the informal sector absorbs greater employment than the formal sector. It can be said that the informal economy contributes to the greater economy, employment and is associated with sectors in the formal economy.

## **2.6. Informal Economy in South Africa**

South Africa is a developing country and has an existing informal economy. The International Monetary Fund state that the informal sector and informal employment contributes approximately

20% of South Africa's national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Etim & Daramola, 2020). Legodi and Kanjere (2015) note that the informal sector in South Africa is growing as the public and private sector are unable to provide employment opportunities. In the first quarter of 2021, the official unemployment rate was 32,6% (Statistics South Africa, 2021a). The burden of unemployment is high amongst the youth as they contribute to 59,5% of the total number of unemployed persons in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2021a). This huge burden amongst the youth is still high irrespective of education levels amongst the youth (Statistics South Africa, 2021a). The lack of employment opportunities in South Africa forces individuals to provide employment for themselves. However, the conditions in the informal sector are not as great as there is a lack of social protection and benefits (Etim & Daramola, 2020). Unfortunately, the majority of individuals that are present in the informal sector lack skills that are necessary in the formal employment sector, and the others in this sector are semi-literate and a small percentage have some level of qualification (Legodi & Kanjere, 2015).

The informal economy is noted to increase participation of the poor and marginalised through their engagement in economic activity (Fourie, 2019). The economic activity that occurs in the informal sector and in townships is noted as an important part of promoting inclusive growth (Fourie, 2019). The informal economy in township's is deemed to be vibrant as a result of transport links and street infrastructure (Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation, 2016). Micro-enterprises emerge on transport links due to the increased pedestrian traffic and commuters flow (Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation, 2016). The presence of micro-enterprises on transport links makes them quite accessible for commuters and pedestrians.

With the increased participation in the informal economy, Fourie (2019) expresses that this sector is largely missing from economic analysis, economic policies and policy discourses. This sector has historically been viewed with a negative perception. Ligthelm and Van Wyk (2004) mentions that this sector was seen negatively due to its operations that obstructed pavements, large amounts of litter, dirt and unhygienic conditions surrounding their trade. Activity of the informal sector was deemed to generate a poor impression on the city for tourists and visitors (Ligthelm & Van Wyk, 2004). The negative elements associated to the informal economy shift the focus from the positive contribution of this sector. The positive contribution of the informal economy includes the creation of employment, alleviating the hardships of unemployment, growth of entrepreneurial skills,

economic viability, circulation of money in the informal sector, convenience, supports a large population and expands the municipality's economic base (Ligthelm & Van Wyk, 2004).

The positive contribution of the informal economy outweighs the negative elements related to the sector. Majority of the negative elements identified above can be handled and managed accordingly through intervention from the government and municipalities. The lack of barriers of entry in the informal sector enables individuals to join regardless of age and gender. The Sustainable Livelihoods Foundation (2016) shares that retired persons, whom are pension beneficiaries engage in recycling services through collecting glass and bottles to supplement their state pension. Acquiring employment in this sector is easy because of the lack of regulations around this sector acquiring employment in this sector has no major hurdles.

Rogan (2019) conducted a statistical snapshot of informal employment across the 8 major metros in South Africa. The results of the study revealed that women have a greater opportunity of acquiring work in the fields of street vending, domestic work and working in private households (Rogan, 2019). Informality is frequently associated with unemployment as being the driver. Etim and Daramola (2020) identify that issues of income inequality amongst the population, a fall in the national GDP is also a driver of informality. The presence of income inequality is not a surprise, as the rate of inequality in South Africa in 2015 was noted to be 0.65, which represents a highly unequal society (Statistics South Africa, 2020). The labour market is noted as the largest contributor of income inequality as it is highly racialised and gender-biased (Statistics South Africa, 2020). The social ill of inequality deprives many of opportunities and social justice.

## **2.7. Pandemics and the Economy**

### **2.7.1. Pandemics**

This aspect of the dissertation reviews literature on previous pandemics and their effects on the economy and wellbeing. Pandemics are outbreaks of diseases that become widespread due to being spread through human-to-human infection (Qui et al., 2017). The distribution of the disease plays a vital role in characterizing it as a pandemic. Qui et al. (2017, p.3) state that the key features of a pandemic include “wide geographic extension, movement of the disease, novelty, severity, high attack rates, minimal population immunity, infectiousness and contagiousness”. Pandemics are noted to cause major disruptions in health, society and the economy (Qui et al., 2017). Scholars add that infectious outbreaks can cross borders with ease threatening economic and regional



stability. Vulnerable and poor populations are often noted to suffer greater when outbreaks take place (Delivorias & Scholz, 2020). Sharma et al. (2021) explains that the lack of preparedness for pandemics in developing countries places them at a disadvantage in terms of managing the impact of pandemics.

In the history of pandemics, LePan (2020) identifies that pandemics date back to the time period of 165 to 180 AD with the Antonine Plague. Pandemics with the highest death toll include the Black Death Plague being the highest with a death toll of 200 million, followed by the Smallpox with a death toll of 56 million, the Spanish flu claiming 40-50 million deaths, the Plague of Justinian with 30-50 million deaths and HIV/Aids claiming 25-35 million deaths (LePan, 2020). In the long history of pandemics, entire populations have been wiped out paradoxically, this has cleared the way for innovation and advances in science, economy and political systems (Huremović, 2019). As much as pandemics have advanced sciences such as a medicine, they are still a threat to livelihoods. Activities such as rapid urbanisation, climate change and increasing international travel stimulate epidemic outbreaks on a global level (Delivorias & Scholz, 2020). Part of these activities promote human to human interaction.

The Antonine Plague is noted to be one of the first pandemics in the history of pandemics (LePan, 2020). The Antonine Plague was able to spread across the entire Roman Empire, as the empire was integrated on both economic and political aspects (Huremović, 2019). Integration in the political and economic aspects had an influence in the transmission of the Antonian Plague. The adverse effects of the pandemic crippled the military and economic supremacy as well as destroyed one third of the population (Huremović, 2019). It can be said that economic activity in the Roman Empire was disrupted by the pandemic. LePan (2020) estimates the death toll of the Antonine Plague to claim approximately 5 million deaths. The presence of an infectious outbreaks and an increase in mortality disrupts ordinary ways of living.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Influenza pandemics have been noted to have harmed human life and economic development (Qiu et al., 2017). The Spanish flu was recorded as the “most devastating” pandemic in the world history and claimed more than 20 million lives (World Health Organization, 2011). Although it has previously been stated that the Black Death Plague claimed more lives than the Spanish flu, however the effects of the Spanish flu were greater than those of the Black Death Plague. The severe global epidemic caused reductions in labour force sizes as well as productivity

and increased absenteeism (Delivorias & Scholz, 2020). Reductions in labour force and productivity resulted in the disruption of economic activity. Delivorias and Scholz (2020) justify the reductions and absenteeism as measures that were aimed at reducing the spread of the influenza.

Sharma et al. (2021) highlights that the negative impact the pandemic has had as it has widened the gap between the poor and the rich. The circumstances of the pandemic contributed to the divide of the poor and rich. Lower-middle-income countries were impacted more severely than high-income countries (Delivorias & Scholz, 2020). Sharma et al. (2021) identifies challenges faced by less developed countries that may have an impact on their interventions during pandemics. The lack of access to health care services, underdeveloped public infrastructure, unhealthy socio-economic circumstances, dense populated and a presence of various already existing infectious diseases are existing issues in less developed countries (Sharma et al., 2021). These pre-existing conditions serve as an obstacle to interventions directed at pandemic outbreaks, as these issues have to be considered and catered for during any intervention.

### **2.7.2. Ebola**

The Ebola epidemic is one of the recent disease outbreaks that took place in Africa. The Ebola Virus disease was an unprecedented outbreak in West Africa (Huremović, 2019). The United Nations Development Group (UNDG) (2015) notes that this public health crisis was an international concern, as it threatened peace and security on an international scale. This public health crisis started in West Africa in Guinea in December 2013, due to the spread of the outbreak countries such as Liberia and Sierra Leone developed into epicentres of the outbreak (UNDG, 2015). The movement of people amongst these countries attributes to the countries evolving as epicentres. The presence of the outbreak in West Africa created “international stigmatisation” which triggered risk aversion behaviours towards Western Africa, disrupting the region’s economy (UNDG, 2015, p.2).

Issues such as rapid urbanisation, increased travel amongst countries force epidemics to move from being local phenomenon to global pandemics (Delivorias & Scholz, 2020). The interconnectedness of regions facilitates the movement of outbreaks. Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia are geographically neighbouring countries, their geographic location is noted to have an effect on the spread of the Ebola outbreak. The United Nations Development Group (2015, p.1) identifies the

effects of the Ebola Virus Disease consists of the loss of many lives, “reversed recent socio-economic gains, stifled growth rates, aggravated poverty, food insecurity and destroyed livelihoods”. These were the negative socio-economic consequences of the Ebola virus disease. The reversal of the recent socio-economic gains has wasted funds targeted at socio-economic development. The World Bank reports that Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia were amongst the fastest-growing economies in the world (Delivorias & Scholz, 2020). Unfortunately, the outbreak was a setback for these economies.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2016) reports that the effect of the Ebola Virus Disease amounted to approximately \$2.2 billion dollars which was lost in 2015 in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia. Unfortunately, the Ebola Virus did not only threaten macroeconomic stability however food security, human capital development and private sector growth were also threatened (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016). Restrictions in movement and a public health crisis are the result of this instability. Amongst other negative impacts, the Ebola outbreak reduced access to health care services. This negative impact may be associated with the fact that less developed countries are commonly unprepared to manage disease outbreaks. Unfortunately, each outbreak requires a different response.

### ***2.7.3. Influenza***

Influenza seem to still be a threat in our modern societies regardless of the developments and innovation in the field of medicine (Delivorias & Scholz, 2020). The swine flu is one recent epidemic that affected human ordinary lives. According to the KwaZulu Natal Department of Health, swine flu is formerly known as the swine influenza is a respiratory disease of pigs. The KwaZulu Natal Department of Health adds that this influenza causes outbreaks of influenza in pigs. However, the swine flu is able to spread from pigs to human, furthermore human to human transmission also occurs (Department of Health). In a study conducted by Monterrubio (2010) travel, tourism and epidemics are linked. The movement of humans contributes to spread of epidemics. Previous pandemics have had a negative impact on the tourism industry (Monterrubio, 2010). Monterrubio (2010) reviewed the effects of the influenza on the Mexican tourism industry. The results of the study identify that the aviation, hotel and restaurant industries were largely affected during the first few weeks of the outbreak of the influenza (Monterrubio, 2010). The unexpected presence of an outbreak strikes adversely on those that are unprepared for the outbreak.

The swine influenza hit India in 2014 (Sekhani, 2015). India was ranked as the third country globally that was most affected in terms of cases and deaths caused by the swine flu (Reddy et al., 2018). India was harshly affected by the Swine Flu. The economically active group which composes of ages of 30-60 years were the most stricken by the flu (Sekhani, 2015). This impacts the performance of the country's economy. The Government of India lacked timely responses to the crisis (Sekhani, 2015). With an existing inefficient healthcare system and lack of medical facilities in India, intervention is quite challenging (Sekhani, 2015). The existing challenges in their healthcare system have to be catered for when planning interventions and responses to the outbreak. The poor public health care system forced citizens to seek privatized health care services (Sekhani, 2015).

This unexpected expenditure on health care is strenuous. Inequality thrives in such circumstances, as the poor receive poor health care services due to not having the funds to access quality health care services that is privatized. The tourism industry is a key industry in the Indian economy, it contributes 6.8% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Sekhani, 2015). Similar to Mexico, this predominant industry was interrupted by the presence of the swine flu outbreak, the areas with the high tourism concentration were largely affected by the outbreak (Sekhani, 2015). Operations in the tourism sector in India were disrupted. The presence of an outbreak puts pressure on the health care system and interrupts various industries. An unwell economically active group is very unproductive.

## **2.8. COVID-19 and the Informal Economy**

### **2.8.1. COVID-19**

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) disease is an infectious disease, characterised by experiences of mild to moderate respiratory illness (World Health Organization, 2021a). The coronavirus disease is primarily spread through droplets of saliva and liquids that are released when infected persons cough or sneeze (World Health Organization, 2021a). This global pandemic has affected the world terribly in the year 2020. The coronavirus spread across more than 200 countries (Jackson et al., 2021). The rate of the spread of the virus, the wide geographic spread amongst other criteria enabled the coronavirus to be termed a pandemic. In the 200 countries that the coronavirus pandemic had access to, both developed and developing countries were hit by the pandemic. The coronavirus epidemic emerged in Wuhan city in China which is an emerging business hub

(Shereen et al., 2020). In the first fifty days of the coronavirus epidemic, the virus killed more than 1800 people and infected more than 70 000 people in Wuhan (Shereen et al., 2020). These infection rates prove that the virus was spreading at a very high rate.

As a result of the interconnection and integration of the world, this epidemic escalated to being a global pandemic. The World Health Organization (2020) states that the COVID-19 pandemic poses as a public health risk and a public health emergency. In March 2020, the hotspot of infections had shifted from the Wuhan city to Italy in Europe, a year later Brazil and India are noted as the new hotspots of infections (Jackson et al., 2021). Hotspots of infections have high rates of infections and high cases of fatality. Lessler et al. (2017, p.1270) describe hotspots as “areas of elevated incidence or prevalence, higher transmission or risk”. Unfortunately, COVID-19 is still an existing global issue. Shereen et al. (2020) adds that there has been no clinically proven antiviral drug that is available to be used against COVID-19. This is a setback in terms of fighting and eradicating this pandemic.

### ***2.8.2. Global Impact***

The wide geographic extension and the movement of the coronavirus disease declared the virus as a pandemic. The World Health Organization (2021b) has recorded 167 011 807 confirmed cases of COVID-19 globally in May 2021 and 3 472 068 confirmed deaths as a result of the coronavirus disease. These cases and deaths were recorded from December 2019 until May 2021. This period is more than a year however the coronavirus is still a threat. Tens of millions of people have a risk of falling into extreme poverty (WHO, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic challenges public health systems, food systems and the world of work (WHO, 2020). Unfortunately, this public health crisis did not only affect global healthcare. The global spill over of the pandemic disrupted the aviation industry. There was an increase in the flight cancellation of bookings (Ozili & Arun, 2020). The International Air Transportation Association estimated that the aviation industry would lose US\$113 billion if the virus is not contained (Ozili & Arun, 2020). The restrictions on international travel and the fear of the coronavirus can attribute to the cancellation of the bookings and the estimated loss.

Traveling opportunities for Chinese tourists was affected by the pandemic (Ozili & Arun, 2020). The Chinese economy is noted to be one of the largest economies globally (Maital & Barzani, 2020). It is therefore expected that any disruptions occurring in China will have an impact on

global economics. This is a result of the existing international linkages, comprising of financial and trade linkages (Greenwood-Nimmo et al., 2021). These linkages allow countries to access cheaper intermediate goods and a wider variety (Zhang, 2021). China's Gross Domestic Product is made up of providing secondary and tertiary services including manufacturing services (Maital & Barzani, 2020). Furthermore, The World Bank (2021) recognises that the growth of China is attributed on their engagement in resource-intensive manufacturing and exports. It can be said that the Chinese economy is open to the rest of the world to access.

The World Health Organization (2021b) has above mentioned the high rates of infections and fatalities globally. However, these high rates of infections and deaths have psychological and social impacts. Saladino et al. (2020) share that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused prolonged exposure to stress. Those whom are most exposed to the virus have a risk of developing illnesses such as post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression and other symptoms of distress (Saladino et al., 2020). Furthermore, there are a number of families, communities and national states universally who have experienced anxiety, fear, shock, trauma and grief (Pawar, 2020). These experiences indicate that the health and psyche of individuals was disturbed by the coronavirus outbreak (Pawar, 2020). The circumstances brought by the health crisis are quite uncomfortable, bringing unease amongst the population and to societies. In addition, the pandemic affects more the population, through experiences of separation from loved ones, loss of loved ones, loss of freedom, uncertainty about the disease, and the feeling of helplessness (Saladino et al., 2020). It is impossible to isolate these experiences from the presence of COVID-19 pandemic including the actions taken to reduce the spread.

A study was conducted focusing on the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the intention to estimate the global maritime trade losses during the first eight months of 2020 of the pandemic (Verschuur et al., 2021). The maritime industry was also disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In attempts to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, Verschuur et al. (2021) notes that many governments implemented Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions (NPI). Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions include international travel restrictions, closures of business, no large-scale public and private gatherings and quarantines (Verschuur et al., 2021). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2020) add that the NPI's are mitigation strategies for pandemics and are one of the best ways of controlling the spread of the virus while there is no

available vaccine. However, these policies have large consequences on domestic industry output and international trade as a result majority of ports experienced a decline in total trade (Verschuur et al., 2021). The losses encountered by each country are different, as each country has implemented Non-Pharmaceutical Interventions specific to their country.

Given the wide spread of the disease geographically, this public health crisis required responses from governments. The governments in various states responded to this health crisis by attempting to contain the virus by imposing lockdowns, closing borders and social distancing (Ogando et al., 2021). This unprecedented crisis requires the public to highly co-operate with the measures put in place. Pawar (2020) notes that many governments responded quite swiftly to “suppress and mitigate” the spread of the coronavirus through financing treatment facilities and services, quarantine measures and social security benefits. The role the government performed is quite different than it’s expected role according to the markets. Pawar (2020) adds that the formula of small government and big markets failed to respond to the pandemic. However, the governments carried out the role of being big. Eggers et al. (2020) highlight that citizens require guidance, leadership and information from the government.

The governments invested in strengthening healthcare infrastructure and increasing health expenditure (McKibbin & Fernando, 2020). This is quite an expected response as the crisis is health related. The response of most governments includes commanding business closures, travel bans, reallocating industrial capacity to meet urgent medical needs and supply immediate financial assistance (Eggers et al., 2020). These measures were attempts to curb the spread of the virus as well as slow down the COVID-19 outbreak. However, these attempts to reduce the spread of the coronavirus disease have an effect on the whole world. The global epidemic brought upon a great economic disaster (Atalan, 2020). Jackson et al. (2021) states that the coronavirus pandemic costed the global economy \$90 trillion. The safety measures including the closure of workplaces and the temporary suspension of flights contributed to this catastrophe.

A number of industries were affected by the coronavirus outbreak. The sports industry was severely affected by the outbreak. Several sporting activities including football, rugby, hockey, baseball and swimming were cancelled and postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak (Ozili & Arun, 2020). The cancelled games amounted to a loss of billions of revenues to the sponsors of organizers (Ozili & Arun, 2020). The limitations on transport and travel have slowed down global

economic activities (McKibbin & Fernando, 2020). These limitations are caused by the movement restrictions imposed. The hospitality industry is noted as one of the industries that experienced difficulties. A number of hotels in the United States, United Kingdom and some European countries declared the temporary suspension of normal operations estimating a loss of 24.3 million jobs globally as a result of the decline in hotel occupancy during the pandemic (Ozili & Arun, 2020). The job losses in the hospitality industry demonstrate that the outbreak interfered with individual livelihoods. The restrictions imposed focused on saving lives rather than the economy and businesses.

There is still uncertainty of when will the virus be brought to control, how long it will take to recover from the pandemic and the speed of recovery from the pandemic (Atalan, 2020). However, governments decided on taking steps which originally compromised the monetary policies targeted at stabilizing financial markets and ensure the flow of credit (Jackson et al., 2021). The second phase of intervention from the government moved towards fiscal policies directed at sustaining economic growth (Jackson et al., 2021). The International Monetary Fund (2021) notes that each country affected by COVID-19 has taken different policies and actions such as focusing on existing social safety nets and automatic insurance mechanisms. These responses are believed to be taken in attempts to limit the economic and human impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (International Monetary Fund, 2021). Given the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is of essence to note the various responses of governments globally. Moreover, considering that each country is bound to respond differently based on their resources, preparedness for the pandemic and how the global pandemic has affected them.

### ***2.8.3. Impact in Africa***

The global pandemic affected both developed and developing nations. Africa, which is the poorest continent was not immune to this predicament. Africa was the last continent to have a confirmed COVID-19 case out of all the continents (Lone & Ahmad, 2020). As the poorest continent, Africa has a wide range of existing social ills such as poverty, unemployment, underemployment, overcrowding housing conditions, illiteracy, crime, corruption, alcohol abuse, unequal access to services such as safe drinking water (Mwansa, 2010). Unfortunately, the population of Africa is most vulnerable to infectious diseases (Lone & Ahmad, 2020). With that said, it is essential to note that the existing social ills do have an influence on the quality of life of the population and human



development. By November 2020, there were 2 070 953 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 49 728 deaths reported (Maeda & Nkengasong, 2021). Predictions suggest that by June 70 million people will be infected by COVID-19 due to the Africa's overstrained and weak health care system, insufficient financing of the health care system and existing challenges of endemic diseases (Maeda & Nkengasong, 2021). These existing issues make it difficult to adequately manage and control the coronavirus disease. Therefore, the disease has a higher chance of spreading in the continent.

The health care system in Africa was not adequately prepared for this pandemic. Lone and Ahmad (2020) share that the obstacles encountered by the health care system included limited testing capacity, insufficient ventilators, inadequate Intensive Care Unit facilities, scarcity of personal protective equipment (PPE) and insufficient funds for the health care sector. These are unfavourable conditions to attempt to treat an infectious disease that is spreading at an alarming rate. These existing conditions leave medical workers vulnerable to contracting the coronavirus. Ozili (2020) notes that cases are rapidly increasing and in these particular countries Cameroon, Egypt, Algeria, South Africa and Morocco the situation is quite severe. It is essential to note that the same health care system which is not fully prepared nor sufficiently equipped, has to manage the pandemic. Many governments intervention has then focused on putting in place restrictive measures to reduce the spread of the virus. These restrictive measures contain the restriction of non-essential activities, closing schools, encouraging the population to stay at home, lockdown of cities and employees to work from home (Ozili, 2020). This intervention aims to reduce the number of new infections, which occur when there is human movement and physical interaction.

The restrictive measures imposed have affected social interaction and social cohesion (Ozili, 2020). The UNICEF (2020) notes that this public health crisis challenges the delivery of essential services to those in need. This is a consequence of the restrictive measures imposed in countries. Health services and programmes in health facilities have been disrupted by the presence of COVID-19 virus (UNICEF, 2020). Health awareness campaigns and programmes that have been planned have been postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic (UNICEF, 2020). Lockdown restrictions emphasize that any public gatherings and non-essential activities are prohibited (Lone & Ahmad, 2020). With the presence of a public health crisis, it is essential to prevent the risk of

the virus being spread. Those with pre-existing conditions or illnesses are at high risk of their health conditions aggravating when contracting the coronavirus (UNICEF, 2020).

Ozili (2020) states that wealthy persons have been able to receive treatment in private hospitals, whilst the poor are expected to rely on state hospitals which are already overburdened. The accessibility and affordability between the poor and the rich breeds inequality. Ataguba (2020) reports that the COVID-19 pandemic will increase the burden of out-of-pocket health expenditure in households in Africa. This out-of-pocket health expenditure in many African countries is already high (Ataguba, 2020). In attempts to have a better quality of life, the African population accumulates additional expenditure. Estimates suggest that 48% of the employed will be forced into unemployment as a result of the reduction in production (UNICEF, 2020). The unemployed will also be forced to depend on the state's weak health care system. As previously mentioned, schools have been closed as part of the restrictive measures. The closing of schools has affected daily learning, unfortunately vulnerable and poor children will not receive any home schooling (UNICEF, 2020). As a result, this widens the gap between learners. It is assumed that the school closures will cause a decline in food intake and nutrition in learners (UNICEF, 2020). This then deprives learners a basic human right of access to food. The social impact of the coronavirus in Africa increases poverty, inequality and puts human development on hold.

The coronavirus has changed day to day lives, businesses, the world of trade and movement (Haleem et al., 2020). The reduction of imported goods from China results in inflation in African markets (Lone & Ahmad, 2020). With a decrease in supply of goods, local traders will increase the price to reduce the demand. According to Ozili (2020), China is a prime exporter of commodities to Africa, any disruptions in China will have a spillover effect on Africa. This is a negative impact as many African countries largely rely on China to supply primary and intermediate raw materials (Ozili, 2020). Lone and Ahmad (2020) notes that there is a decrease in the demand for oil and a decrease in oil consumption, as a result of the lockdown regulations put in place. The decrease in oil consumption has a very harsh impact on oil dependent African countries, which will affect the country's GDP. Ozili (2020) adds that the disruption in global supply chains and the falling price of oil have resulted in an immediate shock in African countries.

There has been a reduction in tourism, the major economic sector of many African countries (Lone & Ahmad, 2020). and Joseph (2021) report that there is a looming danger of job losses for 24.3

million Africans involved in the tourism and travel industries. These job losses are the negative consequences of the border closures and travel restrictions imposed in the continent (Ania & Joseph, 2021). Ozili (2020) reports that Kenya experienced a 55% drop in tourists visit during the coronavirus outbreak. Similarly, to Kenya, South Africa's tourism fell at about 80% during the COVID-19 outbreak. The restrictive measures imposed restrict non-essential activities including events. Any human movement and human interaction are assumed to have a chance to spread the COVID-19 outbreak. As previously mentioned, that there was an estimated loss of US\$113 billion in global air travel. The loss includes travel in Africa, African airlines have lost US\$400 million since the outbreak of the coronavirus in February (Ozili, 2020). Due to the presence of the outbreak in China, other Airlines chose to suspend flights to and from China (Ozili, 2020). Suspension of flights from and to China was a precautionary measure, in attempts to keep the virus out of Africa.

The coronavirus resulted in the withdrawal of investors in the African economy (Lone & Ahmad, 2020). Ozili (2020) notes that financial markets were affected by the coronavirus pandemic. In South Africa there was a decline in stock prices in the SA Top 40 Index after the announcement of the confirmed coronavirus case in the country (Ozili, 2020). The share index in Morocco also dropped after the announcement of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country, resulting in the loss of value in investment (Ozili, 2020). The tragic health crisis has had some adverse socio-economic impacts in the African continent. However, the current focus is on attempting to control and manage this widespread virus.

#### ***2.8.4. Impact in the informal economy***

The informal economy contributes to the overall economy and the increasing support of the poor in the informal economy contributes to the eradication of poverty and inequality (Vanek et al., 2014). The presence of the informal economy is quite essential as it also addresses social and economic ills in poor societies. The flexible nature of the informal sector has allowed it to adapt in times of adversity (Chambwera et al., 2011). This resilience was evident during the 2008 global financial crisis, activity in the informal economy was able to sustain livelihoods of those in the sector. The formal labour market is noted by Chambwera et al. (2011) that it has not been able to create sufficient jobs to absorb the growing workforce and the unskilled. With the limited barriers to entry in the informal sector, it is noted to be an employment shock absorber during economic

crises (Khambule, 2020). Activities that occur in the informal economy are believed to not typically react to economic crisis (Khambule, 2020).

However, the coronavirus pandemic has interfered with the flexible nature of the informal sector. The coronavirus pandemic has disrupted normal operations in many sectors and industries, the informal economy was not exempt from this disruption. Numerous governments attempted to contain the virus through imposing lockdowns, border closures, school closures and encouraging the practice of social distancing (Ogando et al., 2021). These regulations imposed forced entire families to be at home, unfortunately informal workers had a hard time trying to accommodate their children that were at home (Ogando et al., 2021). It's important to note that informal workers commonly have lower levels of education (Kolm & Larsen, 2016). The low level of education is a challenge to these informal workers in attempts to execute home schooling to their children. These school closures have also slowed down the return of the informal workers to their place work and reduced their income (Ogando et al., 2021).

The return to work is not as simple, as the threat of contracting COVID-19 still exists. In addition, there are occupational health and safety risks at work, with inadequate basic infrastructure in the workplace, this increases the risk of contracting COVID-19 (Ogando et al., 2021). A study conducted by Roever and Rogan (2020) examined the impact of the coronavirus on informal workers. The findings of the study based on 12 cities in the world reported that the workers experienced disruptions in their income, which were less than what they earned in February of 2020 (Roever & Rogan, 2020). The imposed lockdown regulations did not enable for normal operations to go on. In the study 69.8% percent of the participants reported zero earnings during the strict lockdown period, further those that were allowed to work experienced a reduced demand for their goods (Roever & Rogan, 2020).

A study conducted in Bangkok, Thailand, investigated the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on informal workers (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), 2021b). 55.8% of the workforce in Thailand is informally employed (WIEGO, 2021b). The Thailand government imposed strict lockdown regulations for the months of March and April 2020 (WIEGO, 2021b). These lockdown regulations were a response to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The regulations limit movement and include curfews. These regulations have affected the informal workers ability to work and earn (WIEGO, 2021b). The informal workers involved in

this study are massage therapists, motorcycle taxi drivers, waste pickers, street vendors, home based workers and domestic workers (WIEGO, 2021b). Findings of the study reveal that 82% of the respondents share that they experienced a reduction in their household income compared to December 2019 (WIEGO, 2021b). The disruption in normal operations attribute to the reduction in income. However, majority of the respondents received government cash relief assistance (WIEGO, 2021b). Relief International (2021) notes that cash assistance is efficient and effective for individuals in vulnerable situations. With the coronavirus still wandering, informal workers have anxiety about contracting COVID-19 as some of their lines of work expose them to a risk of COVID-19 infection (WIEGO, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the informal workers economically and psychologically.

A study was conducted on 12 cities globally and the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the informal economy (Alfers et al., 2020). The majority of the cities are from developing nations. During times of crisis, government intervention is largely relied on. Relief assistance is one of government's interventions during pandemics. In some cities included in the study, relief assistance was more likely to be received by women and children (Alfers et al., 2020). It is essential to note that relief assistance consists of cash assistance and food assistance. The findings of the study conducted in 12 cities revealed that the level of relief provided was not sufficient to significantly impact on coping strategies and food security (Alfers et al., 2020). As a result of this insufficiency, informal workers adopted other coping strategies that increased their debt, eroded savings and assets (Alfers et al., 2020). The intervention received is unfortunately not enough to cover costs of living for the informal workers.

#### ***2.8.5. Impact in South Africa***

The National Lockdown imposed changes in the daily lives of South Africans. The changes experienced by South Africans include travel bans, closing of several ports, social distancing, gatherings of more than 100 people were discontinued and schools were also closed (Ebrahim, 2020). These restrictions and regulations were imposed to reduce human contact and interaction, which could potentially spread the coronavirus. There has been a significant amount of positive COVID-19 cases and deaths in the year 2020 (Khambule, 2021). Naidu (2020) shares that the social implications encountered by South Africans consist of exposure to trauma as well as food security challenges. These social implications have affected the wellbeing of South Africans. The

inequality in South Africa is expected to increase, as employment decreased by 2.2 million in the second quarter of 2020 (Khambule, 2021). This reduction in employment will have an impact on the South African poverty rate. Statistics South Africa (2020) revealed that there is already a great dependence on social grants in South Africa in the bottom deciles approximately 60%. These statistics reveal a great reliance on government support.

Ebrahim (2020) adds that health measures have been intensified during the lockdown period, to reduce the spread of COVID-19. In attempts to reduce congestion at grant payment points, the elderly and the disabled were provided with different dates to collect their social grants (The Presidency, 2020). The less congestion in these payment points reduces the chances of the coronavirus spreading amongst the elderly and the disabled. Amongst the many health measures imposed, social distancing is noted to have an effect on the shutdown of financial markets, corporate offices, businesses and events (Ozili & Arun, 2020). The imposed regulations and restrictions of the lockdown have resulted in a number of business closures in the retail, manufacturing, accommodation, hospitality, tourism, aviation and construction industries (ILO, 2020b). These business closures also affect those in the informal economy. Teachout and Zipfel (2020) note that trading at markets have been disrupted by the lockdown.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the National Lockdown brought great adversity on those in the informal sector. The informal sector in South Africa provides livelihoods, employment and income for approximately 2.5 million workers and business owners (Fourie, 2018). There has been socio-economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and challenges of social security for those in the informal economy. There is a need for those in the informal sector to be protected by government and policies against vulnerabilities and economic shocks. 5 million informal workers in South Africa were identified to have no legal or social protection (Skinner et al., 2021). In times of crisis, it places these informal workers at a disadvantage as trading is not allowed or limited. A study conducted on South African informal workers and the impact of COVID-19, shows that women informal worker were adversely affected by the mitigation strategies imposed to reduce the spread of COVID-19 (Skinner et al., 2021). From these informal workers, many have lost employment and those that are still employed have reduced working hours and or earning a less income (Skinner et al., 2021). It is unfortunate that informal workers have no protection of their jobs. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted normal working operations in the informal work sector. The pandemic

has had adverse social, psychological and economic impacts on informal workers and the informal economy.

## **2.9. Conclusion**

This chapter has thoroughly discussed the informal economy at a global, continental and at a South African perspective. The informal economy has also been theorised in this chapter. The chapter has secondly reviewed literature on the history of pandemics and the socio-economic implications of previous pandemics. The chapter has lastly discussed the current COVID-19 pandemic and the socio-economic implications of this pandemic. The chapter has further reviewed the impact of the COVID-19 ordeal on the informal sector.

The next chapter will focus on explaining methodology in research as well as the approach that will be utilised. The chapter will further discuss the various data collection techniques and methods. Thirdly the analysis of data will be reviewed. The chapter will then elaborate on ethical issues that are necessary in producing ethical research. Lastly the chapter will discuss the topic of rigour and validity in relation to the study.

# CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

## 3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed literature related to the research topic. This chapter will discuss the methodology of this particular research study. To begin with, the chapter will define the various research approaches. Additionally, it will indicate the research approach adopted for the study. The chapter will secondly describe the setting of the research study. Thirdly, the chapter will discuss the research design as well as the data collection process. It is necessary for data to be analysed once it has been collected. The chapter will discuss the data analysis process of the study. Furthermore, the chapter will define reliability, validity and rigour as well as indicate their relevance to the study. In conclusion, the chapter will discuss ethics to be considered in research and in this particular study as well as conclude the chapter.

## 3.2. Research Methodology

One of the main purposes of conducting research is to discover and develop answers to research questions through scientific procedures (Engwa & Ozofor, 2015). Research follows specific steps and processes in order to achieve the research objective and increase the understanding of the research topic. The research methodology refers to an orderly way to answer or solve the research problem (University of Pretoria, 2021). Through research methodology, “we study the various steps that are generally adopted by a researcher in studying his/her research problem and the underlying logic behind them” (University of Pretoria, 2021). The selection of a research method is crucial in guiding the researcher on strategies and techniques to adopt. It can be said that the research methodology provides the structure and guides how the research will be conducted. This section of the chapter intends to discuss the various research methods in social science research.

### 3.2.1. *Defining Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods*

There are various research methods that are utilised in conducting research. The approaches are namely qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. The qualitative method focuses on examining social processes and cases within social contexts, this approach studies meanings and interpretations in particular socio-cultural contexts (Neuman, 2014). Qualitative research provides the researcher a way to understanding a phenomenon through interactions with participants of the study or by observation (Boru, 2018). A qualitative inquiry is essentially focused on understanding



human beings richly textured experiences as well as reflections on those experiences (Jackson et al., 2007).

The researcher in this particular approach relies on the research participants to provide in-depth responses to questions regarding their experiences (Jackson et al., 2007). The responses based on their experiences assists the researcher in terms of understanding the phenomenon further. The experiences are based in various socio-cultural contexts. The qualitative inquiry supports that it is guided by the assumption that there is no single reality, however reality is in the eyes of the beholder (Kielmann et al., 2012). Participants in this approach share their individual experiences, regarding their particular reality. This approach is normally characterized as thick descriptive and is a humanistic approach. This humanistic approach seeks to understand beliefs, attitudes, interactions, behaviours and experiences of people (Pathak et al., 2013). The data in qualitative research is in the form of words and images (Neuman, 2014). The qualitative approach seeks to capture experiences and heavily relies on the researcher.

The quantitative approach is contrary to the qualitative method. Apuke (2017) explains the quantitative approach as a way of explaining phenomenon or seeks to establish causal relationships between two or more variables through collecting data in numerical form and analysing it with mathematical methods. Data collected through the quantitative method attempts to generalize data to a wider population (Zawawi, 2007). The quantitative approach views human behaviour as regular and predictable (Apuke, 2017). Quantitative research focuses on measuring variables and testing hypothesis (Neuman, 2014). In quantitative research, specific variables are studied in this approach. “A variable is a property or characteristic of things and people that vary in quality and quantity” (Fraser Health Authority, 2011, p.20). The quantitative research is designed to ensure generalizability, objectivity and reliability (Zawawi, 2007). The quantitative approach assumes a single reality resulting in the data applicable to generalizability. Conducting quantitative research requires the phenomenon studied to be reduced to variables.

The mixed methods approach to social science research incorporates elements of the quantitative and qualitative approaches. Researchers combine the qualitative and quantitative elements for the purposes of depth of understanding and corroboration (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). Campbell and Fiske cited in Roomaney and Coetzee (2018) state that this approach is best for answering complex research questions which possess both social and behavioural characteristics.

The mixed methods approach is utilised to compensate for the shortcomings of the methodologies, quantitative and qualitative methods (Roomaney & Coetzee, 2018). The mixed methods approach expands and strengthens conclusions of a study (Schoonenboom & Johnson, 2017). Greene et al. (1989) adds that the mixed methods approach is also used for triangulation, complementarily, development and initiation. The utilisation of various methods results in reliable knowledge (Mayer, 2015). Utilising various methods does yield better results, however it may be time consuming and expensive.

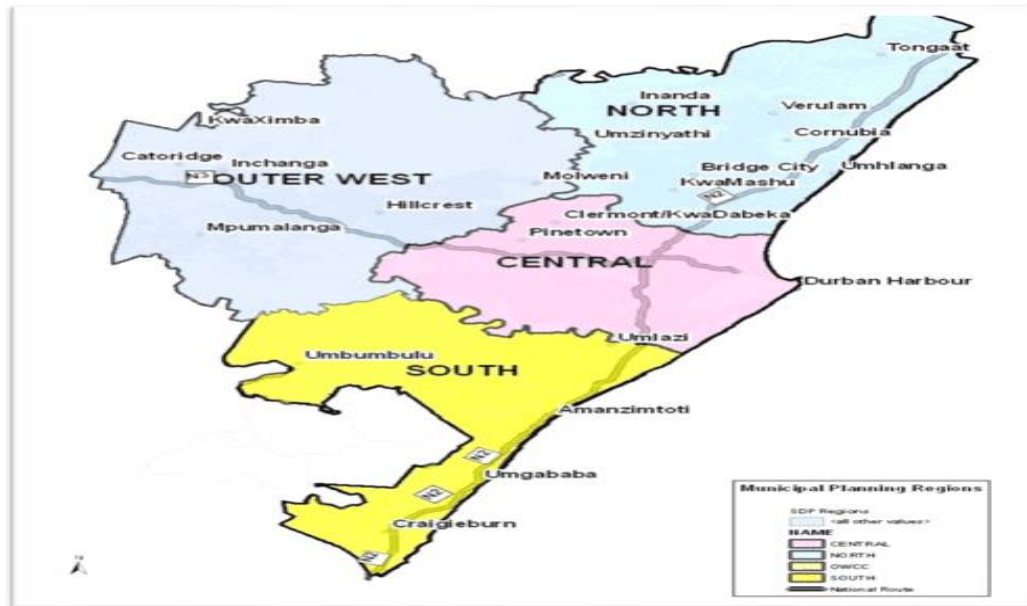
This particular study has employed the mixed methods approach for the study. This approach has captured the impact and the experiences of the informal traders while faced by the coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic through causal relationship between informal workers and the pandemic. The mixed methods approach utilised both the quantitative and qualitative approach to collect appropriate facts to gain an understanding of the matter researched and to acquire an in-depth understanding over generalised facts (Zawawi, 2007). The combination of the methods has tackled the shortcomings of the individual methodologies. The COVID-19 pandemic is a global pandemic, encountered by all individuals across the globe. However, the effects of this pandemic vary from person to person.

### **3.3. Study Setting**

The setting of the study is in Durban, South Africa. Durban is geographically located on the East coast of South Africa in the KwaZulu Natal province (Durban Tourism, 2020). Durban is the third largest city in the country and the largest city in the KwaZulu Natal province (eThekweni Municipality, 2011). The city has a population of approximately 3 720 953 people (Durban Tourism, 2020). The city contains areas that are rural and urban in character (Marx & Charlton, 2003). The racial makeup of the city consists of Black Africans, Indians, Coloured and Whites (Durban Tourism, 2020). Durban has the busiest port in Africa and is a key centre of tourism due to the warm subtropical climate and extensive beaches (eThekweni Municipality, 2011). The main economic sectors in the city include manufacturing, financial and business services, community services, wholesale and retail (eThekweni Municipality, 2011). The city has both the formal and informal sectors co-existing. The informal sector is rapidly growing in the South Durban Basin economy (Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2020). The social-economic ills present in the city include high levels of poverty and low economic diversification (Sutherland et

al., 2013). The city is noted to be rich in diversity, cultural amenities and recreational activities (eThekweni Municipality, 2011).

Figure 3.3.1: Map of eThekweni Region



Source: eThekweni Municipality (2016)

### 3.4. Research Design

The research design is described as the structure and blueprint containing the outline of the data collection methods, measurement and the analysis of the data obtained (Akhtar, 2016). The research design is a guideline on how to reach the set aim and objectives of the study. The elements that shape the research design include the goals of the study, theoretical framework, methodological procedures and the resources available (Flick, 2004). The chosen research method is the mixed methods. The blueprint of the research follows the triangulation design. The triangulation research design is a research framework for the mixed methods approach. This research framework design is based on the principles of triangulation (Turner et al., 2017). According to Burton and Obel (2011) triangulation in the social sciences refers to the use of multiple approaches and methods, to derive a better understanding of a phenomenon or theory. This particular study has utilised various approaches, resources and sources to generate a better insight on the phenomenon studied. The use of the various methods in the triangulation research

design enables the researcher to maximise generalizability with the respective populations (Turner et al., 2017). This particular research design has captured the experiences and impacts of the pandemic through the causal relationship of the COVID-19 pandemic and the informal workers.

### **3.5. Data Collection**

The data collection of this study is guided by the mixed methods research approach. It essential to note that the mixed methods approach combines qualitative and quantitative approaches in different phases of the research process (Terrell, 2012). The data collection in the qualitative approach generates non-numeric data and narrative information (Carter & Henderson, 2005). Quantitative data collection collects data that can be represented numerically (Goertzen, 2017). The mixed methods consist of both forms of data, numeric and non-numeric data. In this particular study, both the quantitative and qualitative data collection methods have been utilised. Zohrabi (2013) shares that in a mixed methods approach close-ended questionnaires, interviews and observations are commonly utilised to collect data.

#### ***3.5.1. Data Collection Tools***

There are different methods employed to collect data, which place data into two different categories. The different categories are namely: primary and secondary data. (Ajayi, 2017). Primary data is data collected for the first time by the researcher, however secondary data is data previously collected by others (Ajayi, 2017). Primary data is collected by the researcher to achieve their aims and objectives. The common methods adopted in primary data include observations, interviews and surveys (Driscoll, 2011).

Secondary data has been collected by a previous researcher for other research aims and goals. Primary data evolves into secondary data when it is re-used to answer other research questions (Hox & Boeije, 2005). Additionally, primary data is made accessible to the general research community for purposes of reusing the data (Hox & Boeije, 2005). Johnston (2017) shares that the practicality of using existing data for research purposes is becoming frequent. This study has utilised secondary data to answer the research questions. Secondary data is in various forms as it is generated from large scale surveys, systematic reviews, interviews, documents and ethnographic accounts (Smith, 2012). Other sources of secondary data include government publications, internal records, books and journal articles (Ajayi, 2017). It is essential to note that secondary data may

have gone through statistical treatment (Ajayi, 2017). The data also has been refined for the primary purpose.

Taking everything into account, it is essential to note that secondary data analysis is “an empirical exercise that applies the same basic research principles as studies utilizing primary data and has steps to be followed just as any research method” (Johnston, 2017, p.619). In other words, secondary data continues to follow scientific procedures in research. This method of data collection is less time consuming and cost effective (Ajayi, 2017). It can be said that this method is practical for researchers with time and resource limitations. The researcher is expected to locate the data sources and retrieve data that will be useful to their research problem (Hox & Boeijs, 2005). The researcher in this particular study has retrieved data relevant to the research questions. It is essential to note that the data has been retrieved from credible sources and data free of errors.

The dataset utilised in this study, consists of data obtained through both the qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative data collection tools include interviews, case study, ethnographic, focus groups, observation and document reviews (Baral, 2017). These tools generate non-numeric data. On the contrary, quantitative data collection collects numeric data and utilises large data sets and aims at generalising the findings to a population (Goertzen, 2017). The primary study aimed at interrogating the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihoods of the informally employed in South Africa. The data was collected through surveys administered in the eThekweni Region and in the KwaDukuza Local Municipality area from the informal workers. The survey questionnaires were administered to 150 informal workers in the eThekweni Region. In the KwaDukuza Local Municipality, the survey was carried out to 70 informal workers. The questionnaire survey consists of close-ended questions which the participants are expected to respond to (Kabir, 2016). The questionnaire in this particular study has enabled the researcher to generalise the findings.

Furthermore, the primary study includes a semi-structured interview with a municipal official from the eThekweni Municipality. Semi-structured interviews require the researcher to be knowledgeable on the relevant elements of the research topic. The semi-structured interviews require time and effort, consisting of both close-ended and open-ended questions (Adams, 2015). The open-ended questions enable the researcher to probe further in areas of concern. Semi-structured interviews are noted to be useful in mixed methods research providing depth in the data

(Adams, 2015). It is essential to note that the researcher has utilised data collected in the eThekweni Region for this particular study.

### **3.6. Data Analysis**

Data analysis assists with simplifying the data. It is essential for data collected for research purposes to be analysed. Neuman (2014) defines data analysis as the systematic organisation, integration and examination of data in search of patterns and relationships in the data. Additionally, data analysis “connects particular data to concepts, advancing generalisations and identifying broad themes or trends” (Neuman, 2014, p.477). This process is essential as it simplifies disconnected data and establishes patterns. It is essential to note that in quantitative research, numeric data is collected and analysed through statistical tools (Bhattacharjee, 2012). This study is utilizing secondary data, which has been analysed for the purposes of the primary study. For the purposes of this particular study, a quantitative data analysis approach has been employed in the analysis of the quantitative data.

Quantitative data analysis is the systematic process of evaluating measurable and verifiable data, consisting of statistical mechanisms to assess and analyse data (Ali, 2021). In quantitative analysis there are two main types of analysis namely: descriptive and inferential statistics (James & Simister, 2017). Descriptive statistics refers to the statistical description of the data set (Sutanapong & Louangrath, 2015). The descriptive statistics presents the data in as easily accessible form (James & Simister, 2017). These statistics organize the data and describes the features of the data. Inferential statistics focuses on creating conclusions that are beyond the data being observed (Kern, 2014). This particular study utilised the descriptive statistics as a mode of analysis. Descriptive statistics is a technique employed to summarize the data in an orderly manner (Kaur et al., 2018). This technique of describing data commonly presents the data through visual representations of numerical tables, bar graphs, line charts and pie charts (Mendenhall et al., 2012). This technique is well fitted for this study, as it presents the data in a simplified manner. Furthermore, the visual representations have been utilised to summarize and present the findings of the study.

It is essential to note there are three major types of descriptive statistics namely: measures of frequency, measures of central tendency and measures of dispersion or variation (Mishra et al., 2019). In this study, the measure of frequency has been employed. According to Mishra et al.

(2019) the measure of frequency focuses on frequency and analysis within a population or in a sample. This consist of the examination of occurrence and percentages. The percentages and frequencies are presented on the various visual representations. The visual representation of the findings has been constructed based on the primary study data set. Furthermore, the visual representations emphasize the percentage and the frequency.

It is vital to note that the primary data set does include a semi-structured interview. The researcher has analysed the data from that interview through a qualitative data analysis approach. Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) share that qualitative data analysis is often time-consuming. This is expected as qualitative data is in various non-numeric forms. The researcher analysed the qualitative data through the content analysis method. The purpose of content analysis is to systematically transform large amounts of textual data into highly organized summary of the key findings (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). Furthermore, the content analysis reduces the concepts that describe the research phenomenon by creating categories and concepts (Elo et al., 2014). The researcher utilised the content analysis, as it summarises the key findings of the interview. Vitouladiti (2014) shares that this technique assists in identifying the key features of a given concept. The semi-structured interview explored the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the informal workers.

The content analysis technique entails a number of steps. Elo et al. (2014) shares that there are three phases that ensure the correct implementation of the content analysis. The phases are namely: the preparation, organization and reporting phases. Manual (2013) identifies the 5 steps necessary in conducting content analysis. The 5 steps are namely: identify the data sources, develop categories, code data, assess reliability and analyse the results (Manual, 2013, p.16). The first step is to identify the data sources. According to Manual (2013) this step requires the researcher to identify appropriate data sources based on researchable questions. These appropriate data sources include reputable sources. The researcher is also expected to consider the validity and reliability of the data source (Manual, 2013). The researcher in this particular study has utilised a data source which is valid and reliable. The researcher identified the primary study, as it is a source which caters for the research questions of the study.

The second step entails the development of categories. According to Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017) share that the categories are developed through answering the researchable questions.

Furthermore, each category consists of data related to the same issue (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2017). The categories have enabled the researcher to group the same issue into one category. The third step is the coding of the data. Researchers are noted to employ coding to organize and be conscious of their data (Kleinheksel et al., 2020). Codes are short descriptive labels assigned to more than one unit of meaning in the text (Kleinheksel et al., 2020). The researcher has ensured that they immerse themselves in the data. According to Kleinheksel et al. (2020) share that the process of detecting emergent codes begins with the identification of units of meaning.

The fourth step is the assessment of reliability. Manual (2013) shares that the researcher at this stage is expected to assess inter-rater reliability, once coding has been completed. Inter-rater reliability is a method of ensuring trustworthiness of the study (McAlister et al., 2017). It is of paramount importance for the research study to be trustworthy. The fifth step is the analysis of the results. Manual (2013) explains that this step requires the researcher to review the code, categories and the items. This is done to ensure that data has been coded correctly and categorized in the rightful category. The researcher has employed all the steps of the content analysis technique.

### **3.7. Reliability, Validity and Rigour**

The data collection and data analysis play an important role in ensuring the reliability and validity of the data. The elements of reliability and validity are concerned with the credibility and quality of the research. This section will discuss the reliability, validity and rigour as well as how these were maintained in this particular study. Reliability in scientific research assumes that the repeated measures of a phenomenon utilising various methods produce the same results, establishing the truth of findings (Cypress, 2017). The term reliability in research has more to do with replicability, repeatability and the stability of the results (Cypress, 2017). The stability of results proves that the measure utilised is reliable through reproducing the same results.

The mixed method approach utilises various data collection tools in attempts to boost the validity and the dependability of the study (Zohrabi, 2013). It is essential to note that this particular study made use of secondary data to fulfill the research aim. Olabode et al. (2019) share that the quality of secondary data utilised determines the outcome of the research. This particular section will discuss the numerous ways in which the reliability and validity will be magnified through the data collection and analysis of the data. In qualitative research, reliability is noted to be rooted in the ideology of data adequacy, which then makes it possible to demonstrate the consistent support for



one's analysis across all participants (Spiers et al., 2018). The essence of reliability in qualitative research lies with consistency (Leung, 2015). The consistency in the research allows for the advancement of generalisations and generating understanding of the phenomenon studied.

In quantitative research, reliability evaluates the research (Bashir et al., 2008). Bashir et al. (2008) shares that the most important test in a qualitative study is the test of the quality. Moon et al. (2016) share that there are quality criteria elements established by Guba (1981) to assess the trustworthiness and transparency of the qualitative research. These quality criteria elements are known to correspond with the elements utilised to assess quantitative research.

The quality criteria elements that will be discussed in this particular study is dependability, credibility and transferability. These are noted to encompass both reliability and validity (Golafshani, 2003). Qualitative research utilises the terms dependability and trustworthiness to examine reliability (Golafshani, 2003). Internal validity is credibility in qualitative research (Moon et al., 2016). External validity and generalizability are assessed as transferability (Moon et al., 2016). These terms correspond with the notion of reliability in quantitative research. Dependability is the reliability and consistency of the findings of the research (Moon et al., 2016). Bashir et al. (2008) further explains that an inquiry audit is conducted whereby the research is verified through the assessment of the raw data, data reduction products and process notes. In particular study, the researcher obtained the primary data, interview transcriptions and the recording of the interview. The researcher checked the original data to ensure that the data is free from errors. Dependability in this study was established, the researcher has ensured that the findings of the study are consistent with similar studies. Olabode et al. (2019) highlight that data reliability is the consistency and the repeatability of the results. In attempts to achieve data reliability, the researcher has compared the findings of the study with similar studies.

Triangulation is also utilised to enhance the dependability of results (Treharne & Riggs, 2015). The application of various methods will prove if the findings of the study are consistent. This particular study utilised secondary data, which includes credible published work. It is essential to note that the data has pre-established degrees of validity and reliability (Olabode et al., 2019). However, a critical examination of the concepts and assessment tools is essential, in attempts to pick up any errors in the data which affect reliability and validity (Olabode et al., 2019). The

researcher has critically assessed the concepts and assessment tools of the primary study. The researcher is mindful that the primary study has utilised two data collection tools. The different data collection tools ensured the corroboration of the findings. It is essential to note that both these tools have produced consistent results and have provided more depth on the phenomenon studied.

Credibility is the second quality criteria which will be discussed. Credibility is the degree to which the research findings represent the actual meanings of the research participants (Moon et al., 2016). This aspect focuses on the ability of the research to capture experiences, feelings and reflections of the research participants accurately. Prolonged engagement with the research participants and a persistent observation of the socio-cultural context minimises distortions which may creep into the data (Cypress, 2017). The findings of the research are expected to represent the experiences of the participants (Treharne & Riggs, 2015). Patton (2015) shares that the researcher should not shape the findings of the research based on their biases and predispositions.

The researcher maintained credibility of the study by presenting findings that were a representation of the experiences and reflections of the participants. The researcher did not tamper or alter the findings of the study. The findings presented in this dissertation are the accurate representation of the experiences and the impact the COVID-19 pandemic on the informal sector in the eThekweni Region. The researcher has further conducted the data analysis focusing on the data provided by primary study, without imposing their predispositions and biases. Patton (2015) further shares that the repetitive reading of the data ensures that the researcher has not missed anything in the data.

Transferability is noted to equate to generalizability and external validity in the quantitative research (Moon et al., 2016). Transferability refers to the degree at which a phenomenon or the findings of one study are applicable to future research, theory and practice (Moon et al., 2016). It is the extent of transferability of the research findings of one study to other research contexts (Shenton, 2004). The findings of the research are hereby applicable to other situations. The researcher has provided a description of the findings which will enable for the evaluation of transferability. The description entails a rich description of participants responses and the researcher interpretations (Treharne & Riggs, 2015). Moreover, this then enables readers to make comparisons of the instances of the phenomenon discussed in the research report with other

situations (Shenton, 2004). These will equip the reader with sufficient information to make comparisons.

Forero et al. (2018) add that transferability also refers to the extent at which findings can be generalized. Transferability is achieved through the researcher providing a thick description of the phenomenon studied, giving readers a chance to acquire sufficient understanding of the phenomenon (Shenton, 2004). The researcher has noted that the primary study collected the data from 150 informal workers in the eThekweni region. With a high number of informal workers participating in the study, the results of the study can be generalized on the population. The various experiences of the informal workers have been captured, resulting in an accurate representation of the informal workers in this region.

Rigour is essential in ensuring the credibility and quality of the research. Cypress (2017) describes rigour as the quality of being accurate and in-depth. In the quantitative and qualitative methods, rigour is assessed through distinct techniques. According to Brown et al. (2015) the quantitative assessment of rigour includes validity, reliability, replicability and generalizability. It is essential to note that this chapter has discussed these elements above. Furthermore, the researcher has shared how they ensured that these are maintained. Rigour in qualitative research ensures that the research design, method and conclusions are transparent, replicable, open to critique and free of biases (Johnson et al., 2020). This aspect required the researcher to provide an outline of the research design applicable to study and the selection of a suitable method. The mixed methods approach was the most suitable method and the best fitting in attempts to study the phenomenon. The researcher has been transparent with the data collection process as well as the data analysis.

Rigour is exposed in the strength of the research design and the ability of the method to answer the research questions (Cypress, 2017). This particular study has utilised sources that have been peer-reviewed and credible. Peer reviewed items have been expertly reviewed to ensure that there are no unacceptable interpretations, unwarranted claims and personal views (Kelly et al., 2014). This process helps remove the biases of the researcher contributing to meaningful research. The findings of the study reflect authentic research through the use of suitable methods to achieve aims and answer the research questions.

### **3.8. Ethical Considerations**

Social science research requires the researcher to abide by research ethics. This section will discuss the ethics that have been considered and adhered to in this study. The World Health Organization (2021c) state that ethics in research govern the standard of conduct for scientific researchers, ensuring the protection of the dignity, rights and welfare of the research participants. This ensured that the research participants are not deprived of their dignity and human rights during the research process. Kara and Pickering (2017) share that ethics should be considered by researchers in the research planning and design phases. The researcher has planned and designed a research process that adheres to social science research ethics. The main focus of ethical regulations is the wellbeing of the research participants (Kara & Pickering, 2017). It is essential for research to adhere to ethical practice as social science research involves human subjects.

The acquiring of ethical approval to conduct research is fundamental. Approval is gained before data is collected from human participants by human research ethics committees (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). The National Health and Medical Research Council (2021) states that the human research ethics committee's review research proposals consisting of human participants to ensure that they are ethically acceptable. The researcher has submitted the research proposal to the relevant human research ethics committee, in order to acquire ethical approval. The first ethic which will be discussed is do no harm. In terms of the application of this ethic, the researcher is expected to consider possible adverse effects of the research on the participant (Dooly et al., 2017). The researcher is expected to minimise harm that may occur on the research participant. The researcher is expected halt and modify the study if there is potential harm for the participant (Dooly et al., 2017). The researcher has considered the various possible adverse effects. The researcher has ensured that throughout the research process, none of the participants have been harmed.

Participation by human subjects in research is voluntary. The element of informed consent is very important before data is collected from potential participants. Informed consent is achieved by firstly informing the participant. The researcher is required to make the participant fully informed on the research purpose, the level of commitment required for the research, what data will be collected and how the data will be used (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). The potential participant has a right to agree to participate in the study or not. The informed consent process includes a contract between the researcher and the participant, indicating that the participant is voluntary

participating, assuring the participant anonymity and an agreement of being fully informed on the research (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). This particular study has ensured that all the studies utilised have primarily acquired informed consent from the research participants. The regulation of data sharing enables researchers to re-use publicly available data (Morrow et al., 2014).

Confidentiality and anonymity are important ethics in which credible research is expected to uphold. These ethical practices are established to protect the dignity and privacy of the human participants in the data collection, analysis and report writing processes (Allen, 2017). Within all of these processes, confidentiality and anonymity are upheld. Allen (2017) defines confidentiality as the removal of any identifying, personal information of the participant in the data. The terms anonymity and confidentiality are quite synonymous. Anonymity refers to the participant's identity being unknown in the data collection process (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2017). In this particular study, the researcher has ensured confidentiality and anonymity of the research participants. At the point of initial transcription, the best practice is anonymization (Tripathy, 2013). The above ethics discussed in this particular section are essential to ensure ethical conduct in this particular research. The section has discussed ethics which have been maintained and upheld by the researcher in this study.

### **3.9. Limitations of the Study**

The study had aimed to explore the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on informal workers in the eThekweni Region. The presence of the COVID-19 pandemic was rife, in the early stages of the research. The regulations and rules of the COVID-19 pandemic limited the researcher's ability to acquire raw primary data in the data collection process. Furthermore, this resulted in the limitations of data collection techniques. The researcher has utilised secondary data, which is data obtained for a primary purpose. However, the data can be used for secondary research purposes. The aim of this study is distinct, from the various primary data purposes. Acquiring data for the aim of the study, required the researcher to collect data relevant to the research aim and objectives.

### **3.10. Conclusion**

This chapter has discussed the research methodology of this study. The chapter has firstly defined the research methodology. The chapter has secondly, defined the various research approaches. Additionally, it has indicated the research approach adopted for the study. Furthermore, the chapter

has described the setting of the research study. Thirdly, the chapter has discussed the research design as well as the data collection process. The data analysis process for this particular study has been thoroughly explained. The credibility of the research study is an important factor in the production of social science research. The chapter has discussed the reliability, validity and rigour within a mixed methods approach. Furthermore, the chapter has indicated their relevance to the study and how these items will be maintained. Lastly the chapter has discussed ethics to be considered in research and in this particular study.

The next chapter of the chapter will provide the findings of this study.

# CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

## 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the data analysis, findings and discussion of this particular study. This study utilised a primary data set of a study. The study aimed to interrogate the socio-economic impact of the coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) on the livelihoods of the informally employed in South Africa. The study was carried out in the eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality and in the KwaDukuza Local Municipality area. The study utilised a survey questionnaire as a data collection tool. The survey comprised of six sections namely: Demographic information, Socio-economic data, the Impact of COVID-19 on the Informal Economy, Government support and Social security for the Informal Economy. Furthermore, the study conducted a semi-structured interview with Municipal Officials in eThekweni Municipality.

The presentation of the study's findings is based on descriptive statistics, comprising of pie charts, graphs and tables, which aid data presentation. The results are presented and in the same chapter to enable a smooth transition in the data.

### *4.1.1 Objectives of the study:*

To recap, the study was based on the following objectives derived from the observed impact of the pandemic.

- To explore the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the informal economy in the eThekweni region.
- To explore the challenges faced by the informal economy during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- To explore the effectiveness of the state interventionist policies on the informal sector.

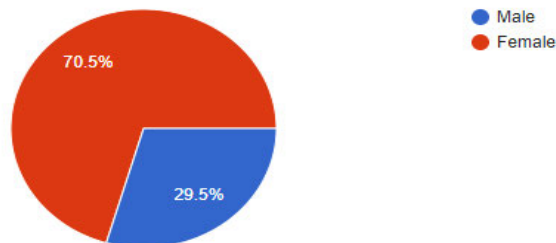
## 4.2 Analysis, Findings and Discussions of the Study

### *4.2.1 The Socio-demographic Background of Participants*

Informality is noted to be prevalent in developing countries because of a lack of formal jobs and underdeveloped markets. Globally, gender make-up in the informal economy is influenced by a

number of factors, such as occupation and the physical demand of the job. The majority of the participants in this particular study are female participants as demonstrated in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Pie chart on Gender of the Participants



Source: Author's own from computation from the dataset

Based on Figure 4.1, there were less than 30% of males that participated in this particular study, while just over 70% of females participated. A study conducted to measure the informal economy employment globally in 2016 revealed that more women (85%) were employed in the informal sector, than men (78%) in developing nations (Bonnet et al., 2019). Bonnet et al. (2019) shares that women in South Africa tend to commonly occupy employment in vulnerable and low paying informal activities. In this particular study, females are overrepresented in the informal sector because most of the participants were vendors in the city centre.

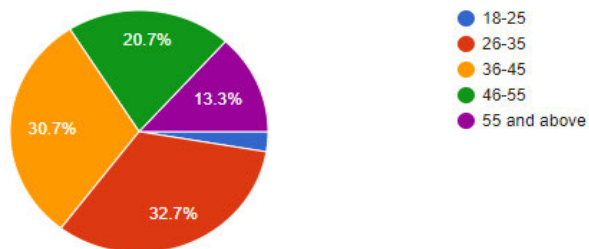
Statistics South Africa (2021b) Quarterly Labour Force Survey of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter in 2021, states that the South African labour markets are more favourable to men than women. This indicates that there is gender inequality in the South African labour markets. The gender inequality in South African labour markets is part of the contributing factors driving women in the informal sector as evident in the concentration of women in the informal sector as per figure 4.1. These inequalities were likely amplified because feminized sectors faced the greatest burden of COVID-19 (UN Women, 2020). It is estimated that 72% of domestic workers, which are mostly women, lost their jobs due to COVID-19 (UN Women, 2020). Women's employment is noted to be at a greater risk of 19% than men's employment (UN Women, 2020).

The United Nations Women (2020) state that women face more adversity in times of crisis compared to men, as they have less financial capital, land and other assets making. The lack of



these resources makes it a challenge for women to restore and rebuild their businesses. Figure 4.2 shows the age of participants.

Figure 4.2: Pie Chart Demonstrating Age of Participants

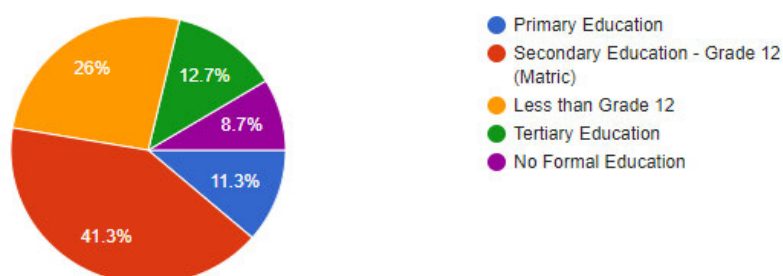


Source: Author's own from computation from the dataset

The dominating age group in the eThekweni region is individuals in the age group 26 to 35 years (32.7%). This age group falls under the category of the youth. Followed by the 36 years to 45 years (30.7%) age group. The unemployment rate in South Africa in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2021 is reported at 34.4% a 1.8% increase from the previous quarter (Statistics South Africa, 2021c). Unemployment is high amongst the following age groups, 15-24 years age group has an unemployment rate of 64.4% and the 25-34 years age group has a 42.9% unemployment rate (Statistics South Africa, 2021c). The prevalence of unemployment in South Africa, does push the youth into engaging in the informal sector for livelihood purposes as evident in the high rate of youth in the informal economy.

Literacy and numeracy skills play a role in the operations of the informal sector. Figure 4.3 shows the various education levels of participants in the informal sector in the eThekweni Region.

Figure 4.3: Pie Chart on Education levels



Source: Author's own from computation from the dataset

The majority of the participants had acquired their Secondary Education (41,3%). This information reveals that 41.3% of the population has obtained basic education and skills. The basic education and skills acquired in secondary education enables individuals to transition into entry level employment as well as enter into higher education institutions (Department of Basic Education, 2021). There was less participation in the informal economy by individuals with no formal education (8.7%). Moreover, participation in the eThekweni region informal sector is less amongst individuals with primary school education (11.3%). It can be said that a certain level of skills is necessary when joining the informal economy, particularly for those who seek to be self-employed. It also shows that some level of education is important to gain access to employment opportunities in the informal sector.

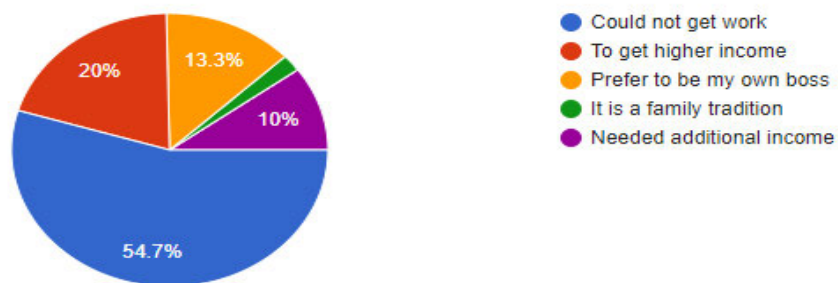
Palmer (2017) shares that the young people in the low- and middle-income countries utilise their skills and education in the informal sector. The European Commission (2012) identifies basic skills that include literacy, numeracy and the knowledge of foreign languages as critical to accessing the informal labour market. The presence of these skills enables the informal worker to operate effectively. In the regions of Northern Africa, Central Asia, Western Asia and Arab states, there is a skills mismatch in the informal economy (Palmer, 2017). The lack of creation of quality and stable formal employment opportunities forces these over-educated and over-skilled individuals to enter the informal economy (Palmer, 2017). Those operating in the informal economy have surplus skills and are over educated for the informal economy in those regions. However, it is essential to note that these regions, Northern Africa, Central Asia, Western Asia and the Arab states have a moderate level of informality.

The International Labour Organization (2018) argues that as education levels increase globally, the level of informality decreases. Furthermore, those with secondary and tertiary education are less likely to be in the informal sector (ILO, 2018). In comparison to this study, the eThekweni region informal sector is dominated by individuals with secondary education. The global informal employment share of those with secondary education in the informal sector is 51.7% which is said to be largely influenced by the emerging and developing states, where there is a greater concentration of informal employment (ILO,2018). This study's findings differ from the ILO's

because of excessive unemployment in South Africa, which has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world.

There are various reasons for individuals to decide to enter the informal economy and operate in this sector. Figure 4 illustrates the various reasons for engaging in the informal economy as shared by the research participants.

Figure 4.4: Pie Chart illustrating Reasons for joining the Informal sector.



Source: Author's own from computation from the dataset

Based on figure 4.4, approximately 55% of the participants entered the informal economy due to the fact that they could not get work. A 20% portion of the participants shared that they entered the informal economy to get a higher income. A lower share of the participants (2%) expressed that they were maintaining a family tradition by entering this sector. Further to this, 13% of the population entered the informal sector to be their own boss and employer. Additionally, 10% of the participants engage in the informal sector as they require an additional income. Cumulatively, figure 4.4 shows that there are several reasons for people to utilise the informal economy as an employment net. The ILO (2020c) shares that unemployment is a result of the inability of the economy to generate employment for persons who are seeking employment and the rate is an indication of the efficiency of an economy to absorb its labour force.

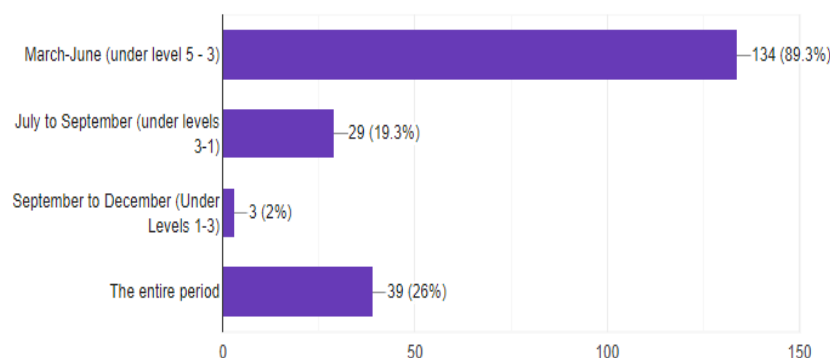
Contrary to the South African context, Williams (2014) shares that the motives of informal entrepreneurship in the European regions is 60% based on voluntarily opportunity-oriented reasons and only 17% of the informal entrepreneurs are necessity-driven. However, Williams (2014) also shares those that are necessity driven into informal entrepreneurship are lower-income groups,

with lower educational levels, women and not formally employed. Opportunity-driven entrepreneurs dominate informal entrepreneurship in the EU region. This means the entrepreneurs enter the sector by choice, whereas unemployment mainly pushes people into the informal economy in South Africa. Deléchat and Medina (2021) state that high levels of inequality are associated with the prevalence of the informal sector. In Latin America, there was a significant decline in informality, which is significantly associated with a large reduction in inequality (Deléchat & Medina, 2021). The presence of inequality influences individuals to enter the informal sector. Given that South Africa is the most unequal country in the world based on Gini-coefficient, the increasing rate of informality can be linked to the country's inequality.

#### ***4.2.2 Socio-economic impact of COVID-19***

The COVID-19 pandemic affected many livelihoods in the informal sector. The changes brought by the presence of COVID-19 resulted in a shift in operations for many informal workers. The changes include the adoption of restrictions, social distancing and quarantines to isolate the population (Alzueta et al., 2021). All the participants in the study indicated that they were impacted by the pandemic. Figure 4.5 shows the hardest periods during the pandemic.

Figure 4.5: Bar Graph illustrating the heavy months during lockdown



Source: Author's own from computation from the dataset

Figure 4.5 represents the various views of participants on the heavy months of the imposed lockdown. The participants identify the months that were burdensome based on their experiences of the lockdown. The majority of participants (89.3%) experienced difficulty during the first four months of the National lockdown. The first four months of the lockdown had the Alert Levels 5, 4 and 3, where the country had placed the stringent lockdown measures. The Municipal official

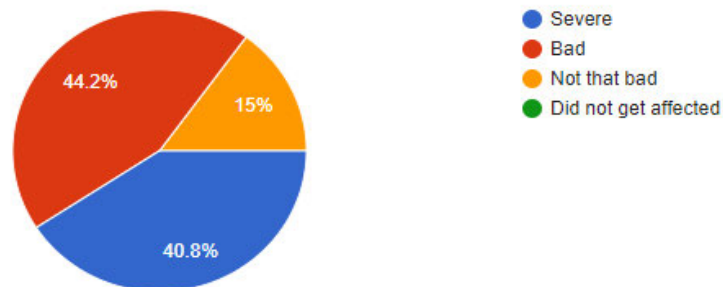
interviewed shared that the Lockdown Alert level 5 was the hardest time for the informal economy. The official stated that “*the most critical level of the lockdown was Level 5, as the traders were unable to operate*” (Municipal Official, 2021) The various levels encompass various measures taken to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. However, the level of alert is decided based on the rate of transmission and the capacity of the health system (Government of South Africa, 2021a). Given the high rate of transmission during the first few months, it is expected that there are increased measures in place to reduce transmission hampered the entire economy because of the lockdown.

A reduced rate of transmission results in the shift of the lockdown phases. The phases are eased through shifting the alert levels, the lower the level more economic activity can resume (Government of South Africa, 2021a). The period of September to December were identified by 2% of the population as heavy. This period had less restrictions and more economic activity. These improved conditions are much more favourable to informal sector traders because of limited lockdown regulations as the informal sector survives on daily income. However, 26% of the population still upheld that the entire period was difficult given the conditions and imposed rules and regulations. In addition to this, 50% of the population identified that business activity was affected by the second wave, which occurred in December and January and saw the sharpest increase in COVID cases and mortality rates. The difficulty in this period is that it is linked to the festive season where there is usually an increase in spending and increased revenue for those in the informal economy.

It is noted that during the period of March, April and May, more than half of the world’s population had experienced a lockdown containing strong containment measures (Allain-Dupré et al., 2020). These hard months attributed to the social, health and economic impacts. Various countries were globally identified to impose lockdowns from March 2020, resulting in the limitations in movement in attempts to protect national borders from foreign agents (Onyeaka et al., 2021). These lockdowns were initiated by the declaration of the coronavirus as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (Onyeaka et al., 2021). A study conducted on nine Sub-Saharan countries on the lockdown demonstrated variations in the design, timing and the implementation of the lockdown measures (Haider et al., 2020). The nine Sub-Saharan countries in the study were Tanzania, South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Majority of these

countries imposed lockdowns in March 2020 (Haider et al., 2020). Tanzania is the only country that imposed a lockdown in April 2020 with minimal use of lockdown measures (Haider et al., 2020).

Figure 4.6: Pie Chart demonstrating the severity of the impact of COVID-19 on business and socio-economic income



Source: Author's own from computation from the dataset

The severity of the impact of COVID-19 on businesses and socio-economic income is demonstrated on Figure 4.6. Most of the participants expressed their experiences of the impact as Bad (44.2%). A further 40.8% of the participants stated that the impact of the COVID-19 on their socio-economic income and businesses was severe. It is essential to note that none of the participants stated that their businesses and socio-economic income were not affected by the COVID-19. The Municipal official (2021) shared that the COVID-19 pandemic had caused irreversible damage, disrupting livelihoods. The “*pandemic hugely impacts livelihoods of people and even impacting those we call survivalists... the damage caused by the pandemic was irreversible.*” (Municipal Official, 2021). Makoni and Tichaawa (2021) conducted an analysis on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the informal sector business tourism economy in Zimbabwe. This socio-economic impact assessment discovered that over three quarters of the region's population is struggling to survive due to the strict lockdown imposed by governments (Makoni & Tichaawa, 2021). The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (2020) shares that the COVID-19 pandemic has increased vulnerability globally in low-income countries. Furthermore, the UNCTAD (2020) notes a significant reduction in the market demand in microenterprises and SME's. It essential to note that the UNCTAD's data

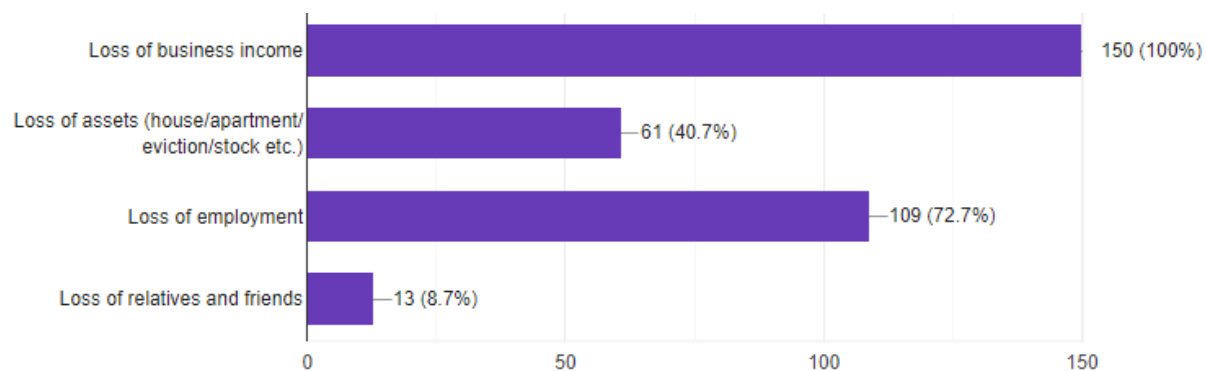
includes the informal sector in microenterprises and SME's as some of the heavily impacted businesses.

The United Nations Development Programme (2020) explored the various socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in Central Asia. The findings of revealed that there was a crisis on household income, which stems from the disruptions in the activities of firms and businesses (United Nations Development Programme, 2020). The socio-economic assessment in the Central Asia region identifies SME's and the self-employed as vulnerable as there has been a decline in the demand for the services they provide (United Nations Development Programme, 2020).

#### ***4.2.3 Socio-economic Challenges experienced***

With the various changes brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is expected that these changes will bring new experiences. Figure 4.7 demonstrates the livelihood challenges encountered by the informal workers.

Figure 4.7: Bar Graph illustrating the livelihood challenges encountered



Source: Author's own from computation from the dataset

The graph on figure 4.7 demonstrates the various livelihood challenges brought upon those living on the informal sector. The various challenges include the loss of business income, loss of assets, loss of employment and loss of friends and relatives. All of the participants (100%) shared that they had lost business income during the COVID-19 lockdown. Approximately 40% of the participants shared that they had lost R10 000 and more of their business income due to the

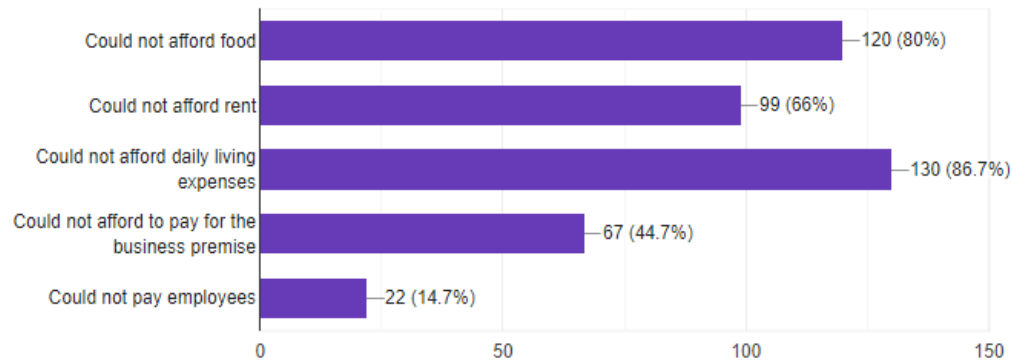
COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown. 22.7% of the population lost between R5000 and R7500 during this adversity. The restrictions imposed resulted in the loss of employment which amounted to 72.7%. During the Alert Level 5, there were movement restrictions from the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 to 30 April 2020, essential workers were permitted to move to travel to work and home and public members were only permitted to access essential goods and services (Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2020). The informal economy was not included in the essential service providers. Less participants (8.7%) experienced the loss of relatives and friends. The loss of relatives and friends contributes to the social challenges experienced. The Municipal official (2021) expressed the various livelihood challenges posed to the informal workers in the eThekweni Region. *“The pandemic forced many business closures, as they were unable to survive the effects of the pandemic. There was loss of income during the peak of the pandemic. The COVID-19 resulted in the termination of the lease agreements of informal traders”* (Municipal Official, 2021). The livelihood challenges include the exposure to the coronavirus by those disobedient to COVID-19 rules, unsuccessful applications for COVID-19 relief funds, the closures of businesses and the loss of income (Municipal official, 2021).

The Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) (2020) conducted research on the impact of the public health measures on the livelihoods and health of informal workers. The assessment was conducted in Asia, Latin America and in Asia (WIEGO, 2020). The findings of the study reveal that some experiences vary from the type of informal activity engaged in. The study was inclusive of informal workers involved in the following activities: domestic work, home-based work, street vendors, market traders and waste pickers (WIEGO, 2020). The challenges faced by these informal workers include: the permanent loss of income, lack of income, loss of employment, loss of housing, exposure to police harassment, uncertainty and the lack of adequate knowledge on the Coronavirus (WIEGO, 2020). It is essential to note that some of the livelihood challenges in this particular study are similar to challenges encountered in this study.

The livelihood challenges encountered by the informal workers have the power to shift the socio-economic status of the informal workers. Figure 4.8 demonstrates the various challenges on socio-economic status.



Figure 4.8: Bar graph representing the socio-economic challenges on status.



Source: Author's own from computation from the dataset

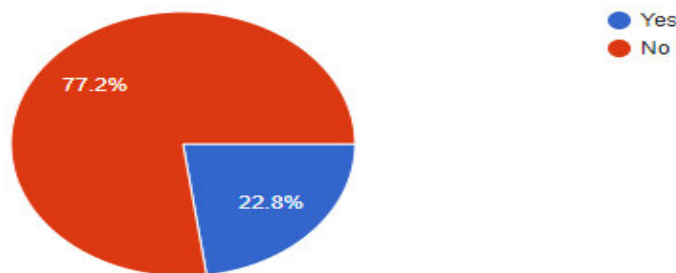
Figure 4.8 represents the socio-economic challenges encountered that impacted the status of the participants. The various challenges consisted of the inability to buy food, incapacity to pay rent, inability to afford the daily living expenses, inability to pay for the business premise occupied and incapable to pay employees. As evident in figure 4.8, approximately 7% of population could not afford their daily living expenses due to the impact of COVID-19. The cost of living was greater than what they could afford. Further to this, 80% of the population identified that they could not afford food. These experiences encountered by participants had an impact on their socio-economic status. Based on the fact that 95.3% of the participants are self-employed in the informal sector, only 14.7% of the participants encountered challenges in terms of paying their employees.

Approximately 76% of the participants shared that they do not have any employees in their businesses, while 44.7% of the participants faced challenges with paying for the business premise they were occupying. A further 66% of the population shared that they were unable to afford rent for their personal spaces. The presence of the COVID-19 pandemic brought upon great challenges to livelihoods and economic status of those operating in the informal sector. With these challenges, only 23.3% of the population shared that they experienced hunger and went without food. This is an unfortunate circumstance brought by the crisis because of the lack of sustained income for those who work in the precarious informal sector. The experience of going without food ranged between 1 to 4 days for the affected participants. Contrastingly, 77.3% of the population shared that they did not encounter the challenge of going without food within their households. Although the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic brought uncertainty, the majority of the participants were

able to secure meals. The municipal official shared that the socio-economic challenges of the informal workers include the termination of lease agreements, the retrenchment of the staff operating in the informal sector and the permanent closure of businesses (Municipal official, 2021).

#### 4.2.4 Government Interventions

Figure 4.9: Pie chart on government relief funds



Source: Author's own from computation from the dataset

The chart in figure 4.9 shows the participants that received government assistance and those who did not receive any form of assistance. Most of the participants (77.2%) stated that they did not receive government support relief funds. In the findings of the study, there were various reasons shared by the participants for not receiving government relief funds. Of these reasons, 24.6% of those who did not receive funding were still in the process of applying for the relief funds, whilst 20% of the participants perceived government relief as support for mainly formal businesses. Another 16.9% participants did not apply for the funding due to the process having too many requirements. These many requirements required resulted in reluctance from the participants. A minority of 1.5% expressed that they had no knowledge about the government relief funding.

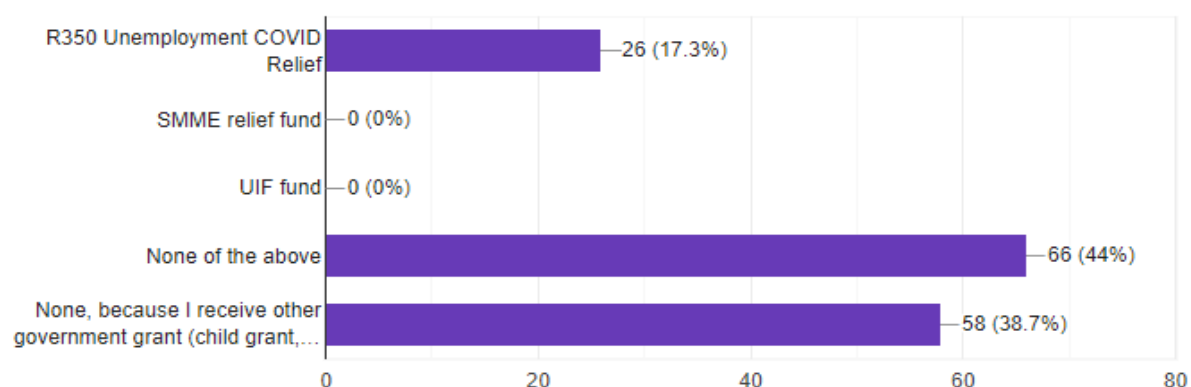
There were a few informal traders who were beneficiaries of the Operation Vula, which was intervention by the Provincial government. *“However, this money was a lot per informal business trader”* (Municipal official, 2021). The National government intervened through the Township and Rural Entrepreneurship Programme (TREP) provided 700 informal traders in the eThekweni region with COVID-19 relief funds (Municipal official, 2021). *“In terms of the National Government measures part of the Township and Rural Entrepreneurship Programme (TREP), there were delays in the dispersing of the money to successful beneficiaries* (Municipal Official,

2021). Approximately, more than 3000 informal traders and SMME's were beneficiaries of the Informal Micro Enterprise Development programme (IMED) at the hand of the National Government (Municipal official, 2021). Based on these findings, it can be said that government did allocate COVID-19 relief funds for the informal sector, but it was not sufficient to cover everyone in the country.

Amongst the many interventions provided by governments, the Nigerian government provided the poor, vulnerable citizens and those whose livelihoods were negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic a conditional cash transfer (Awofeso & Irabor, 2020). This conditional cash transfer is part of the COVID-19 relief funds. Schwettmann (2020) shares that some governments have made means of providing relief funds for their informal economy in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Cabo Verde, the government has provided those in the informal sector with solidarity grants and one month income support (Schwettmann, 2020). In Ivory Coast, the government established a Support fund for informal workers (Schwettmann, 2020). The Lesotho government has provided cash transfers for three months to vulnerable groups including those working in the informal sector (Schwettmann, 2020). Furthermore, cash benefits have also been available to self-employed and informal workers in India, Portugal, New Zealand and Ireland (Kurpayanidi et al., 2020). These examples of COVID-19 relief funds in various countries, prove that the governments have considered the informal economy in the distribution of relief funds.

There were various COVID-19 relief funds that were administered by the government and other organisations. Figure 4.10 sows the types of relief funds received by those in the informal economy.

Figure 4.10: Bar graph on the types of COVID-19 relief funds received



Source: Author's own from computation from the dataset

As evident from Figure 4.10, approximately 23% of the participants in the study expressed that they received government support. The only COVID-19 relief funds received by most of the participants is the R350 Unemployment COVID-19 Relief Funds. None of the participants received SMME and UIF funds. However, the Municipal official (2021) expressed that about 3000 informal traders and SMME's were beneficiaries of the Informal Micro Enterprise Development programme (IMED), which only assisted with infrastructure support. A further 38.7% of the participants did not receive the R350 Unemployment COVID-19 relief funds as they were receiving other grants from the government. The R350 Unemployment COVID-19 relief requires the applicant to receive no social grant from the government (Government of South Africa, 2021b).

It can be said that none of the participants received relief funds directed to the informal sector from the government. A study conducted on the domestic workers in India, revealed that 33.8% of these domestic workers received financial aid from the state (Sumalatha et al., 2021). It is noted that globally, the government and development partners have provided emergency assistance to such as aid and financial assistance in both low- and high-income countries seafood systems (Love et al., 2021). In both these high- and low-income countries, there has been challenges in the access to the funds by small holders and the informal sector of the seafood systems (Love et al., 2021). There seems to be an inadequate distribution of relief funds into the informal sector, not only in South Africa, but across many developing countries.

While the national government has the prerogative to ensure the transfer of funds to subnational governments, municipalities also have an essential role in supporting businesses that operate in their jurisdiction. Figure 4.11 shows the percentage of people who received some form of municipal support.

Figure 4.11: Pie chart on Municipal financial support



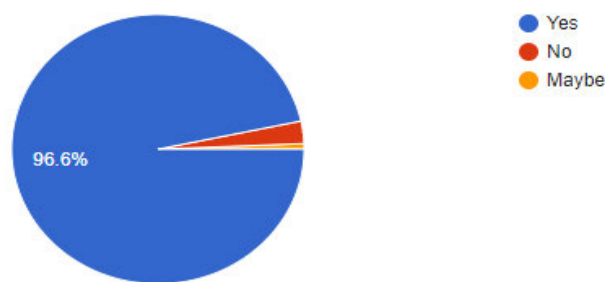
Source: Author's own from computation from the dataset

Approximately 89% of the population did not receive the municipal financial support. A further 5.4% of the participants did not receive the financial support as they are foreign nationals with no valid work permits, whilst only a minority of 4.7% of the participants received the financial support provided by the Municipality. This support is however insufficient as it only reached less than 5% of the population. In the Mpumalanga Province, the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) (2020) has partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to provide COVID-19 relief funds to the informal sector and Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMME's). The funding is directed at traders in the following local municipalities: Victor Khanye, City of Mbombela, Nkomazi, Thaba Chweu, Dipaleseng, Dr Pixley Ka Isaka Seme, Lekwa, Thembisile Hani and Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality (South African Local Government Association, 2020). SALGA has not provided a report as yet on the number of informal traders that did acquire support from the municipality.

The eThekweni Municipality has not issued any financial support directly to the informal economy. The eThekweni Municipality has provided other means of support to the informal traders including a six-months rent free holiday, food vouchers, provision of personal protective equipment and sanitisers (Municipal Official, 2021). The municipality has further provided informal traders an opportunity to apply for relief funding (Municipal official, 2021). In addition, the municipality has re-demarcated flea market sites to reduce congestion (Municipal official, 2021). The reduction in congestion reduces the spread of the coronavirus and adheres to social distancing protocol. Lastly, the eThekweni Municipality has partnered with Vodacom to dispensing payment gadgets to street traders reducing the touching of cash during the pandemic (Municipality official, 2021). The various support methods from the municipality have the potential of alleviating some of the challenges encountered.

Given that it was the government that initiated a series of lockdown measures, it is often expected for government to provide support to cushion citizens. Figure 4.12 shows the participants' perceptions on government support during the pandemic.

Figure 4.12: Pie chart on Views on the Government releasing funds for the Informal economy



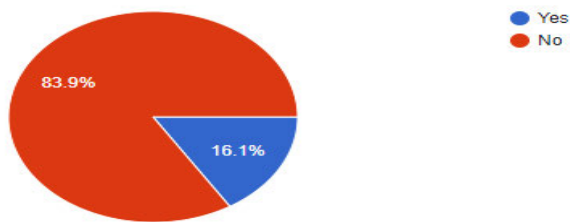
Source: Author's own from computation from the dataset

Approximately 97% of the participants expressed that the government was supposed to release funds to cater for the informal economy. This majority of the participants are of the opinion that funds released for the informal economy during this adversity would be useful in ensuring business recovery. The remaining 3% of the population is of the opinion that government is not supposed to release funds for the informal economy. There is a huge expectation that the government should intervene in such disastrous state of emergencies. The government has been noted to provide support to those within the formal sector. Imposing of travel and movement restrictions are part of the interventions of the government. The government has provided decent COVID-19 relief funds to those in the formal sector. Unfortunately, those in the eThekwin region informal sector have not received adequate cushioning from the shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### ***4.2.5 Social security***

One of the fundamental lacking tools in the informal economy is the issue of social security. Without social security, the informal economy poses a threat during volatile periods. Figure 4.13 shows the participants' perceptions on social security.

Figure 4.13: Availability of Social security or insurance

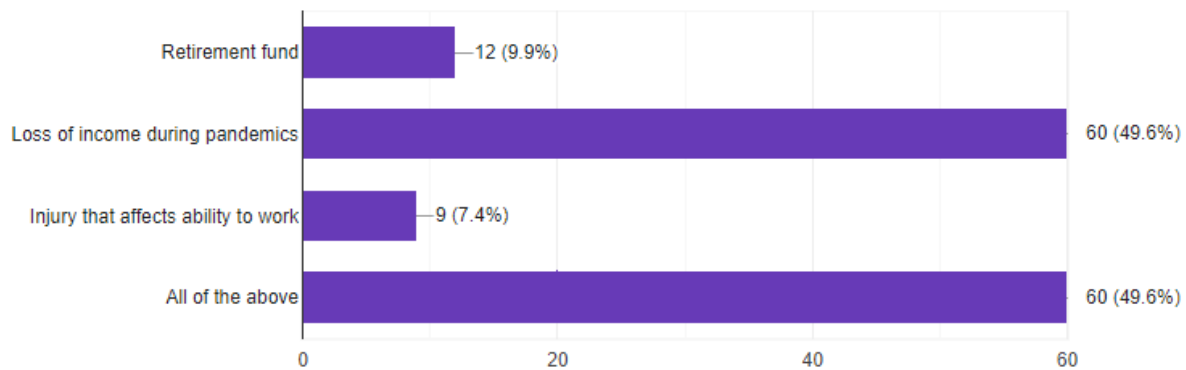


Source: Author's own from computation from the dataset Based on figure 4.13, 83.9% of the participants shared that they do not have any social security or insurance. The ILO (2021b) shares that social security is a human right in which responds to the universal need of protection against certain life risks and social needs. Social security intends to ensure income security in the events that include unemployment, illness, employment injury, maternity, retirement and old age. The presence of social security decreases poverty and inequality. Approximately 16% of the population had taken insurance and social security schemes. Only 8.7% of those that had taken social security and insurance received social security payments during the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately 91% of those that took out social security schemes, did not receive any payments during these times of adversity. The eThekweni Municipality official (2021) shares that social security for those in the informal sector is a huge policy gap.

In Indonesia, social security is available for informal workers through the Indonesian Social Security Agency for Health (Dartanto et al., 2020). However, the findings of a study conducted reveal that the informal workers display challenges in regularly paying their premiums (Dartanto et al., 2020). These inconsistencies in payments results in the ineffectiveness of the National Health Insurance System to deliver their services (Dartanto et al., 2020). The availability of social protection is noted by the ILO (2020b) to further labour productivity in the informal sector. The following countries Japan, Australia, Turkey, New Zealand and Iran are part of the countries that have a greater percentage of social protection and a great level of labour productivity (ILO, 2020d). There is a presence of social security systems in place within the informal economy in some regions.

The participants were provided with various options they would like to have covered should a social security scheme be availed to the informal sector. Figure 4.14 shows the respondents' decisions.

Figure 4.14: Bar graph demonstrating items to be covered by social security fund



Source: Author's own from computation from the dataset

Approximately 81% of the participants stated that they would be willing to take out a social security fund which will cater for unpleasant times. Less than 20% of the population shared that they would not take or join a social security fund. Figure 4.14 shows that 49.6% of the population answered that the social security fund must provide funds for retirement, loss of income during pandemics and physical injuries that affect the ability to work. Due to the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic, 49.6% participants stated they require a social security fund which will cater for the loss of income in the midst of pandemics. A lower share of participants required the social fund to cater for solely their retirement fund and injury that affects the ability to work. Based on these findings, there is a need for a social security fund for those in the informal sector. The government support was only received by approximately 22% of the population.

The ILO (2021c) shares that social security is commonly targeted at covering health treatment, maternity, disability, injury and old age. This purpose of the coverage is quite beneficial to any person. Smit and Mpedi (2010) share that social protection in South Africa is oriented towards those who are employed in the formal sector. In Tanzania, there is the National Social Security Fund for those in the informal sector (Research, Network and Support Facility (RNSF), 2017). The National Social Security Fund is a means of social protection for those in the informal sector covering old age pension and medical benefits (National Social Security Fund, 2022). India is also



noted to have an Unorganised Sector Social Security catering for pension and health (RNSF, 2017). Ghana has an Informal Sector Fund which is a pension social security fund for informal workers through the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (Adzawla et al., 2015). The Research, Network and Support Facility (2017) also shares that Kenya, Mboia has a pension scheme for informal workers. It is essential to note that the examples provided of the social security funds listed are in developing countries.

The availability of a social security fund is quite necessary in protecting the informal workers from social and economic shocks. The presence of such security will enable those operating in the informal sector to be cushioned from the shocks and vulnerabilities occurring. However, the voluntary contributions in these funds and insurance gives informal workers the power to decide. The informal traders in the eThekweni Region desire social security, which will mainly cater for the loss of income in the midst of pandemics. This benefit is different compared to the social security schemes of the informal sector in the other countries which prioritise health and pension benefits.

#### **4.3. Conclusion**

This chapter has demonstrated the findings of this particular study. The chapter has further discussed the findings of the study extensively and has made comparisons with various regions. The findings of the study revealed the dominant presence of women in the informal economy. A significant finding of the study was the strong presence of the youth in this sector. A number of individuals in the informal sector possess the necessary education and skills to enter the labour market. The high unemployment rate in South Africa amongst the youth reveals the inability of the South African economy to generate employment. This issue forces individuals to seek means to sustain their livelihoods and enter the informal sector. The economic and social shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic have disrupted the livelihoods and operations of the informal sector. However, the need for protection and relief from the disaster was identified as a need in the eThekweni Region. The following chapter will provide the conclusion of the chapter. The chapter will present a summary of the key findings and recommendations for governments.



# CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

## 5.1. Introduction

The role of the informal economy in the current South Africa is rapidly growing. The less restrictions in the entry and exit in the sector, enables this rapid growth. This phenomenon is proving to be prevalent in the current climate, where more than 35% of South Africa's population cannot find employment. One cannot ignore the unexpected social and economic shocks posed by the coronavirus pandemic. With the variations in experiences, this research has explored the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in the eThekweni Region informal sector.

This chapter reflects on the aims and objectives of the study that were met in this research. The chapter further shares the methods utilised to achieve these findings. Lastly the chapter provides recommendations based on the findings of the study. The chapter has reviewed literature on the informal sector, previous pandemics and the current coronavirus.

The objectives of the dissertation were to:

1. Explore the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the informal economy in the eThekweni region.
2. Explore the challenges faced by the informal economy during the COVID-19 lockdown.
3. Explore the effectiveness of the state interventions policies on the informal sector.

The chapter utilised the secondary data analysis as a data collection tool, informed by the mixed methods approach. The secondary data utilised in the chapter was acquired from credible and peer-reviewed sources such as journals, articles and published reports. Additionally, the data utilised was relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact it has had on informal workers. The data was analysed through the descriptive statistics and the content analysis techniques.

### *5.1.1. Dissertation Summary*

Chapter 1: This chapter introduced the research study. The chapter also provided a background and a brief motivation on the research topic and study. Furthermore, the problem statement is a statement of the issue the chapter explored. The chapter provided the aim of the research study, the objectives and the research questions of the study. The research methodology employed in the study was briefly discussed in this chapter. It was of importance that the chapter shared the

significance of the study. Lastly, the chapter provided the breakdown of all the chapters in the dissertation.

Chapter 2: This chapter was mainly attributed to the review of literature of interest to the research study. The chapter first reviewed literature on the informal economy globally. Furthermore, the chapter theorised the informal economy and discussed the various types of activities in the informal economy. The chapter went further to discuss the informal economy in developing countries, Africa and in South Africa. The chapter reviewed pandemics and the economy, the various pandemics that have occurred and their impact. The current COVID-19 pandemic and the informal economy was discussed. Additionally, the chapter reviewed literature on the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had globally, in Africa, in the informal economy and in South Africa.

Chapter 3: This chapter focused on providing the research methodology employed by the study. The chapter discussed the various types of research methods available in the social sciences. Additionally, the chapter demonstrated the research method employed in the study. The location of the study was also provided in this chapter. Further discussions in the chapter were on the data collection process, data collection tools and the data analysis. Lastly the chapter discussed how the elements of reliability, validity and rigour were maintained throughout the dissertation and the ethical considerations of the study.

Chapter 4: The fourth chapter of the dissertation presented the findings of the study and the discussion of the findings. The chapter firstly provided a background of the utilised dataset in the study. Furthermore, the chapter recapped on the objectives of the study. The chapter presented the findings of the study through various visual representations. The chapter went further to interpret these findings and discussed the findings.

## **5.2. Meeting of Objectives**

Objective 1: To explore the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the informal economy in the eThekweni region.

The study captured the various experiences of the informal workers with the COVID-19 pandemic in the eThekweni region. Experiences of the informal workers with the COVID-19 pandemic were negative, however the severity of the experiences varied from each informal worker. The socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the informal economy in the eThekweni Region

was negative. The socio-economic impact resulted in the disruption of the livelihoods of the informal traders in the eThekweni Region. Furthermore, the impact of the pandemic ranged between severe and bad on the informal businesses and socio-economic income. More than 80% of the informal traders have shared that they were impacted severely and bad by the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of informal traders in the eThekweni Region highlighted that the most challenging months of the lockdown were March, April, May and June. The lockdown restrictions and the presence of the COVID-19 pandemic have forced unfavourable conditions upon the informal traders in the eThekweni Region.

Objective 2: To explore the challenges faced by the informal economy during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The study further identified and explored the various challenges encountered by the informal economy during the lockdown period. The experiences of hardship varied at the different alert levels. The first three months of the pandemic, comprising of Alert Levels 5, 4 and 3 were noted to be the hardest months of the lockdown in the eThekweni region. The restrictions in movement and in trade brought upon great challenges to the informal workers. There was a great loss in business income and loss in employment due to the COVID-19 lockdown. It was established that 100% of the population lost business income during the COVID-19 lockdown. Moreover, approximately 72% of the informal traders had lost their employment. There were also losses in assets as well as the loss of relatives and friends.

The inability of the informal workers to sustain their livelihoods was a huge challenge. More than 80% of the informal traders were incapable of meeting their daily living expenses. Informal workers encountered challenges in affording their daily living expenses, inability to afford rent and food. These challenges also affected the businesses of these informal workers, resulting in the informal workers not possessing sufficient funds to pay their employees and to rent their business premises.

Objective 3: To explore the effectiveness of the state interventions policies on the informal sector.

In terms of the COVID-19 relief funds released by the state, the informal workers that indicated that they received their individual relief funds were those that received the R350 Social Relief of Distress grant. The R350 Social Relief of Distress grant was however allocated by the government

to the unemployed. The less regulations and registrations in the informal sector have enabled some informal workers to acquire these relief funds in the eThekweni region. A minority of 22.8% received government relief funds. There was a strong view by the study participants that the government should provide COVID-19 relief funds directed at the informal sector. The results of the study indicated that there was an inadequate intervention of the government in the eThekweni region. The government has provided inadequate measures to assist those operating in the informal economy within the eThekweni Region.

Approximately 89% of the informal traders went without receiving financial support from the eThekweni Municipality. There is a great difference between those that had access to the Municipal relief funds and those that did not receive any. A huge percentage of the informal workers have received no COVID-19 relief funds from the state to cushion them in the midst of such volatile shocks.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

The coronavirus pandemic has had multiple psychological, social and economic effects on the informal workers. There are a few recommendations which will be provided for improving our current policies and legislation, based on the findings of the study.

1. Distribution of adequate COVID-19 relief funds: The ineffective response of the government challenges the government to formulate better responses for the informal sector. The informal sector contributes to the sustenance of many livelihoods. As noted by the Municipal Official (2021) that the sector contributes approximately R2.7 billion per annum. The formal sector has received relief funds to assist with the effects of the pandemic, the informal sector does require appropriate distribution of funds to sustain the informal businesses and livelihoods.
2. Education on Social Security scheme and Insurance: With the presence of such an unexpected crisis, there is a huge need for those in the informal economy to be educated on social security schemes and insurance. These insurance and social security scheme can assist in times of adversity. This education might influence informal workers to seek some form of protection for their lives and unforeseen circumstances which may affect their work operations.

3. A Social Security Scheme: The lack of social protection and safety nets for the informal workers in this region has exposed the workers to economic and social risks. There is a gap in the social protection of the informal workers in the eThekweni Region. This huge gap requires institutions and organisations closely working with the informal sector to establish a social security viable for the sector. The social security should be designed and applicable for informal workers.
4. Protection of Informal Workers: There is a strong need for the government to protect informal workers. The creation of policies that are enabling to the informal workers. The policies should target at lessening the vulnerability of informal traders and encouraging sustainable livelihoods. Furthermore, the establishment of a working relationship between the government and the informal economy is necessary. The presence of the informal sector has been noted to challenge socio-economic ills such as poverty and unemployment. The informal sector does require additional support from the government through finance and infrastructure development.

#### **5.4. Recommendations for future studies**

Future studies should explore and investigate the relationship between the government and the informal economy. The investigation of this relationship may provide a clear image on how the government and the informal economy co-exist. Future studies should also investigate the obedience and attitudes of the informal workers to the imposed lockdown regulations. This investigation will also demonstrate the various attitudes the informal workers have towards the government. Lastly, future studies should investigate the presence of educational and development programmes provided for the youth which has infiltrated the informal sector as a mode of survival. Educational and development programmes are expected to enhance knowledge and develop skills.

#### **5.5. Conclusion**

The chapter has recapped on the objectives of the study and provided a summary of what all the previous chapters have done. Moreover, the chapter discussed how the objectives of the study were achieved and provided recommendations for legislation, policies and future research. The informal sector has been able to absorb a share of the unemployed South Africans. The huge share of the youth that has entered the sector, demonstrates the ability of the sector to sustain livelihoods. Engaging in the informal sector as a livelihood method demonstrates the capabilities, skills and

knowledge vested in various individuals. The sector has attempted to tackle the socio-economic issues of unemployment, food insecurity and poverty. The less protection in the sector does subject the informal workers to unfavourable conditions.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative socio-economic impact on the informal workers in the eThekweni Region. The resilience of the informal workers does demonstrate the strength of the sector and the aspiration of the individuals in the sector to obtain better quality lives. The dissertation concludes by sharing that there is a huge requirement of the informal sector to be protected from various vulnerabilities encountered in the sector. Furthermore, the informal economy does require support from the national, provincial and local government to cushion the informal traders from the adversity of the COVID-19 pandemic.



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## APPENDIX A: Turnitin Report

### Masters Dissertation: Exploring the Impact of COVID-19

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## APPENDIX B:



Miss Thulile Sinethemba Mhlangu (215049672)  
School Of Built Env & Dev Stud  
Howard College

Dear Miss Thulile Sinethemba Mhlangu,

**Original application number:** 00019594

**Project title:** Exploring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Informal Economy in Durban, South Africa

### Exemption from Ethics Review

In response to your application received on [redacted], your school has indicated that the protocol has been granted **EXEMPTION FROM ETHICS REVIEW**.

Any alteration/s to the exempted research protocol, e.g., Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment/modification prior to its implementation. The original exemption number must be cited.

For any changes that could result in potential risk, an ethics application including the proposed amendments must be submitted to the relevant UKZN Research Ethics Committee. The original exemption number must be cited.

In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

#### PLEASE NOTE:

Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Prof Catherine Grace Sutherland  
Academic Leader Research  
School Of Built Env & Dev Stud