

**Exploring the perception
of copreneurship in the
Vaal Triangle, South
Africa**

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ABSTRACT

Family businesses constitute a significant share of economic activities globally. In South Africa, over 80% of companies are family-owned. Many studies have been conducted on the nature of family businesses, exploring the opportunities and challenges faced by such companies. Copreneurship or couple-owned businesses form an integral part of the literature on family businesses. Some scholars have argued that it is a challenging type of business partnership as it involves merging two critical domains of business and love, and failure to integrate the two can result in adverse consequences. However, other studies argue that there is no superior business partnership to copreneurship, citing its unique competitive advantages. This study's primary objective was to explore the perception of copreneurship in the Vaal Triangle.

The study followed a qualitative research method framed within an inductive approach. The researcher used a literature review to gather an understanding of copreneurship and an empirical research study, using semi-structured face-to-face interviews to collect data. The researcher selected a sample of ten (10) copreneurial businesses in the Vaal Triangle through non-probability and snowball sampling techniques. Furthermore, the researcher analysed the research data using a Thematic Analysis approach.

The study, through the six themes identified through coding, revealed that copreneurship is composed of challenges and benefits. Role allocation, separating business and home issues, conflict management, the measurement of business growth, and the involvement of family members in the business form part of the critical discussions in this study. Overall, participants in this study encouraged copreneurship, citing that it gives the business a unique, difficult-to-imitate competitive advantage. However, participants also provided recommendations for success to existing and aspiring copreneurs. They argue that failure to follow these recommendations could result in challenges in the business and family spheres.

Keywords: Family business, Family-owned businesses, Copreneurship, Couple-owned businesses, Entrepreneurship.

DECLARATION

I, Cindy Ntombi Nhlapo, hereby declare that this mini-dissertation, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Business Administration at the faculty of Economics and Management Science at the Nort-West University, is my original work and has not been submitted to any institution of Higher Education. All the sources used in this study are cited and referenced in the reference list.

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“We do not always know what is right. It is not always clear whether or not we should move. What we should say is not known in every situation. But there is one word which should never be far from our lips. It is ‘thanks’ (1 Thess. 5:18).” —Wayne Detzler

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SMMES – Small, Medium and Micro-Enterprises

CHAPTER 1

NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Family-owned businesses are prevalent worldwide and comprise a large share of assets and economic activity (Belenzon *et al.*, 2016:2611; El Shoubaki *et al.*, 2021:1). In South Africa, approximately 80% of all companies are family-owned (Gomba & Kele, 2016:9). Research by Michael and Peter (2015:427) shows that family-owned companies have a competitive advantage. The advantage is based on their capacity to nurture long-term value through mutually beneficial relationships with business associates and non-financial stakeholders (Michael & Peter, 2015:427). However, regardless of their size, family-owned businesses have unique complexities, issues, and problems that non-family-owned companies do not confront (Alderson, 2015:140).

In addition, the ownership and management of family businesses vary. A couple's partnership is one form of a family-owned business. Barnett and Barnett (1988) coined the term copreneurship to refer to couples jointly owning a business (Mário & Patricia, 2018:16). This partnership is distinct from other business partnerships due to particular behavioural norms and expectations associated with role identities (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:112).

Different bodies of literature and research streams, such as Management, Economics, Psychology and Sociology, studied the phenomenon of copreneurship (El Shoubaki *et al.*, 2021:2). However, according to Dyer *et al.* (2013:69), previous studies are primarily anecdotal and focus on the boundaries between work and family. These studies emphasise the sustainability of copreneurship enterprises and use cross-sectional data or analyse the demographic characteristics of copreneurial companies.

Although the literature recognises the benefits of copreneurial partnerships, substantial challenges are also mentioned. According to Machek *et al.* (2015:351), spousal

relationships can negatively affect companies when copreneurs fail to separate work and family commitments. Other scholars believe that family members bring unhealthy conflicts to the workplace. These further state that working with family members will breed mediocrity in management and a lack of accountability (Dyer *et al.*, 2013:69). Jonathan *et al.* (2014:318) propose that role allocation and decision-making can be challenging for copreneurs. For example, copreneur spouses adhere to traditional gender-role orientations - wives usually to a feminine role and husbands a masculine role (Jonathan *et al.*, 2014:318). Belenzon *et al.* (2016:2616) assert that family owners, more so married owners, usually employ conservative business strategies because they typically use the enterprise to generate secure income for their children. Conversely, non-family owners may be more willing to take risks and adopt growth strategies.

Against this background, this study will explore the perception of copreneurship in the Vaal Triangle, South Africa, focusing on small and medium-sized businesses. This study aims to unpack the unique advantages and challenges copreneurs experience. It also aims to identify the strategies they employ to succeed.

1.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The research study on the perception of copreneurship includes the following terms: copreneurs, family-owned businesses, SMMEs, entrepreneurship, and perception. The next section will briefly define each of the terms, but the literature review will provide a detailed account of the concepts.

1.2.1 Copreneurship

Mário and Patricia (2018:16) define copreneurship as a specific type of family-owned business wherein married or cohabiting couples share a business' ownership, management, and responsibilities.

1.2.2 Family-owned business

Carney and Nason (2016:1192) define a family-owned business as an entity that combines ownership and management and puts it under the control of a family.

1.2.3 Small, medium, and micro-enterprises (SMMEs)

SMMEs are businesses with a small market share, usually personally managed by the owners (Karadag, 2015:27).

1.2.4 Entrepreneurship

Hayter (2015:1005) states that entrepreneurship involves identifying business opportunities and taking action to pursue them - with no guarantee of success and usually with significant risk exposure.

1.2.5 Perception

Glavas and Godwin (2013:2) state that perception is an individual's point of view and a powerful force that propels them to take action.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Previous studies on copreneurship have primarily been anecdotal, predominantly focused on the boundaries between work and family, or have studied the demographic characteristics of copreneurial businesses (Dyer *et al.*, 2013:69). Nevertheless, the literature indicates a worldwide increase in the number of copreneurship businesses (Wu *et al.*, 2010:742). Furthermore, Machek *et al.* (2015:351) suggest positive benefits related to family control in copreneur companies. These benefits may include a high level of trust (compared to non-married business partners), flexibility in work schedules, similarities in career orientation (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:112), and more significant knowledge spillover (compared to non-married owners) (Belenzon *et al.*, 2016:2616). In addition, because married couples usually live together and own a

majority of common resources outside the business, they may be better able to monitor one another, monitor market information, and implement tacit contracts compared to other types of owners (Belenzon *et al.*, 2016:2616). Finally, with only two family members involved in ownership, dysfunctional conflict in management can be lower (Madanoglu *et al.*, 2020:994).

Although some researchers state that couple-run businesses are an essential social and economic phenomenon (El Shoubaki *et al.*, 2021:1), some researchers see this kind of business partnership as a potential disaster (Belenzon *et al.*, 2016:2612). These critics of copreneurship suggest it is difficult for romantically involved individuals to separate personal and professional matters, and the blurred lines can result in conflict in business management.

This study will explore the perception of copreneurship in the Vaal Triangle by recording copreneurship owners' experiences. After exploring the target population's perceptions of copreneurships, the researcher will make recommendations for achieving success, aiming to help current and future copreneurships.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 Primary objective

The primary objective of this study is to explore the perception of copreneurship in the Vaal Triangle.

1.4.2 Secondary objectives

The following methodological objectives must be reached to assist the researcher in achieving the above-mentioned primary objective:

- To conduct comprehensive literature research on the perception of copreneurship and business success.

- To gather primary data from a representative sample of copreneurs in the Vaal Triangle and thematically analyse the data. Then, formulate insights that add value to the field of entrepreneurship.
- To provide recommendations for successful copreneurship, guided by research findings, to assist current and future entrepreneurs.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

1.5.1 Field of study

This study falls under the discipline of entrepreneurship, with a specific focus on copreneurs (couple-owned businesses).

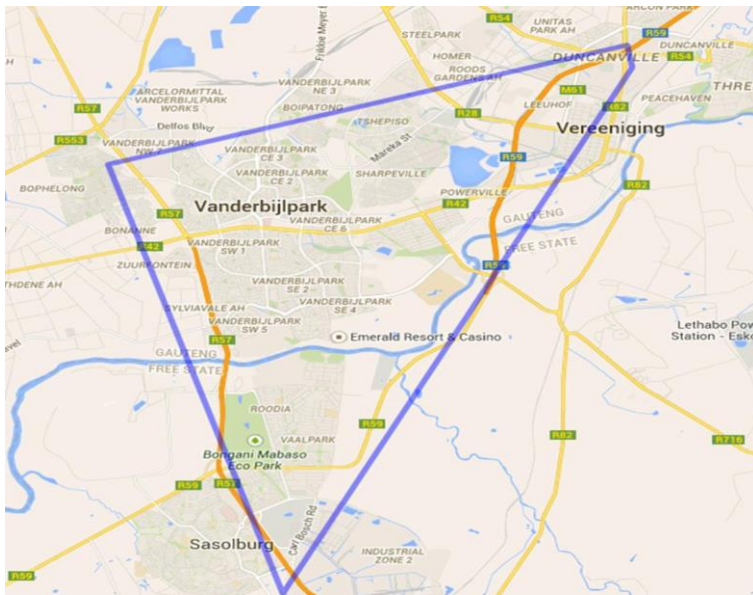
1.5.2 Industry

Historically, the literature on copreneurship has been predominantly conducted under the family-owned business domain. Also, although some big corporations are family-owned in South Africa, most family-owned businesses fall within the SMME classification. Therefore, this study will focus on family businesses and the SMME sector.

1.5.3 Geographical demarcation

This research study will be limited to companies located in the Vaal Triangle. The Vaal Triangle is about 60 km south-west of Johannesburg, and the name is derived from the triangle that forms on a map when connecting its principal towns. The Vaal Triangle covers parts of Gauteng and the Free State (Vereeniging, Vanderbijlpark, Sasolburg, Meyerton, Sharpeville, Boipatong, Bophelong, Sebokeng, Evaton, Orange Farm, Heidelberg, Zamdela, and Deneysville).

Figure 1.1: Vaal Triangle map



Source: Wikipedia

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in two phases to achieve the research objectives. The first phase consists of the literature review on copreneurship and related disciplines; the second phase consists of empirical research.

1.6.1 Literature review

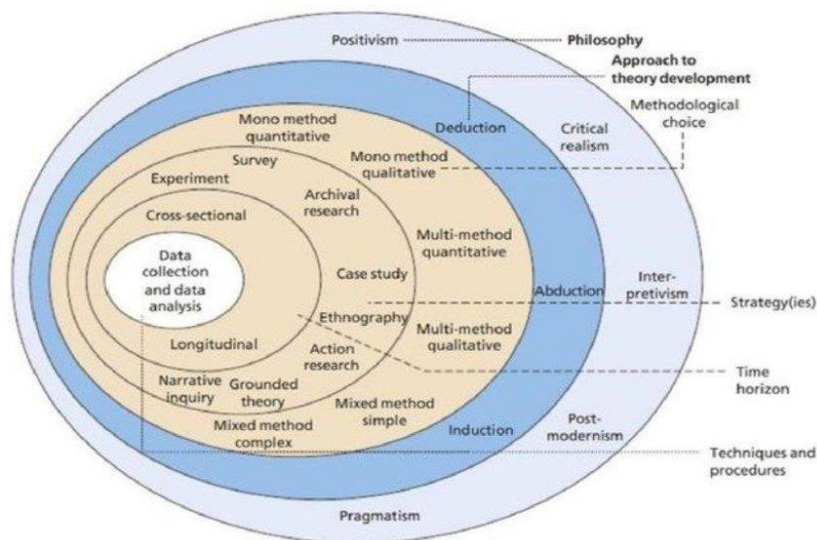
The cornerstone of all academic research activities is constructing a research study based on existing literature. (Snyder, 2019:333). Regardless of the discipline, authors of scholarly research begin by describing and referencing previous research on the topic. This process is called a literature review (Snyder, 2019:334). This process guides the researcher's study, assesses the research area, motivates the reason for the study, and justifies research questions (Snyder, 2019:334). According to Bryman *et al.* (2014:92), the reason for a literature review is for the researcher to get broadly exposed to the research field of study.

The literature review in this study helped the researcher understand the origin of copreneurship and previous research findings regarding the concept. The researcher used the following sources to obtain comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the concept under study:

- Publications
- Peer-reviewed journals
- Academic textbooks
- Internet articles

1.6.2 Empirical study

Figure 1.2: The research onion



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

The researcher followed a qualitative research approach for data collection, using a semi-structured interview guide as a tool. The interview guide questions emanated from existing literature on the topic - and probing was used, where necessary, to enable the researcher to unpack further issues raised during the discussion. Finally, the researcher transcribed the data and applied the thematic analysis technique to identify critical themes in the interviews that would be selected for analysis.

1.6.2.1 Research paradigm

Underlying assumptions influence a research study and how data is collected and interpreted. These assumptions are referred to as a research paradigm (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:140). According to Bryman *et al.* (2014:19), assumptions can be presented as objectivist (rational explanations) or subjectivist (social experiences). The following table stipulates the research philosophy and paradigm this study undertook:

Table 1.1: Research paradigm summary

| RESEARCH PARADIGM | DEFINITION | CHOSEN APPROACH |
|-------------------|---|-----------------|
| Ontology | Assumptions about reality (Saunders <i>et al.</i> , 2019:133) | Interpretive |
| Epistemology | Acceptable knowledge in a discipline (Bryman <i>et al.</i> , 2014:12) | Inductive |

Source: Researcher

1.6.2.2 Research approach

Any research study needs to define the degree to which a research study tests the existing theory or constructs new ideas (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:152). There are usually two contrasting approaches that a researcher can adopt in research development: deductive and inductive (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:152). This study followed an inductive research approach. According to Woo *et al.* (2017:257), an inductive approach involves making observations and identifying patterns in the data and relationships among variables that can be generalised from a sample at hand to broader populations of interest. The researcher collected data to explore the perception of copreneurship in the Vaal Triangle and then developed a theory to contribute to the existing literature.

1.6.2.3 Methodological choice

Saunders *et al.* (2019:175) provide an easy way to differentiate qualitative and quantitative research methods. Quantitative utilises numerical data; qualitative utilises non-numerical data. Qualitative research is the systematic collection, organisation, and interpretation of information resulting from a conversation (Grossoehme, 2014:109). Qualitative research studies how participants construct meanings using different data-gathering techniques to develop new theories (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:179). According to Cooper and Schindler (2014:114), qualitative research includes selecting interpretive techniques to describe, decode, translate, and understand the meaning (not the regularity) of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world. This research adopted a qualitative method using the one-on-one interviews technique (semi-structured interviews).

1.6.2.4 Research strategy

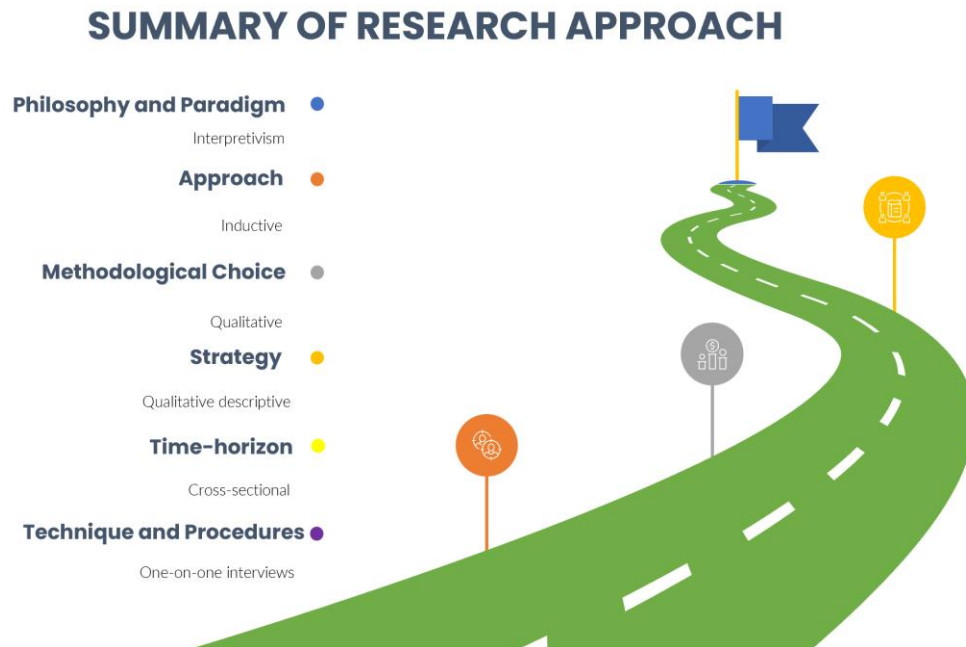
A research strategy is a researcher's roadmap, used as a guide when answering research questions (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:179). Various factors usually guide a researcher in choosing an appropriate strategy, such as research questions, objectives, the selected research philosophy, research approach, existing knowledge, time limitations, and access to participants (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:190). This study adopted the qualitative, descriptive research strategy.

1.6.2.5 Time horizon

A time horizon refers to the duration of a research study (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:212). Deciding on an appropriate time horizon is essential when designing a research study as it guides the researcher on how to allocate resources effectively. Saunders *et al.* (2019:212) state that the "snapshot" time horizon is referred to as cross-sectional, whereas a "diary" time horizon is called longitudinal. Bryman *et al.* (2014:106) agree that a cross-sectional design involves gathering data on more than one instance at a

single time horizon. This study adopted a cross-sectional time horizon due to the limited time and resources available to conclude the research.

Figure 1.3: Summary of the study’s research approach



Source: Researcher

1.6.2.6 Study population and sampling

A study population is the entire group of elements the researcher wants to conclude on (Cooper & Schindler 2014:338). Unfortunately, it is usually impossible for many research studies to collect data from the total population under investigation due to limited access and resources (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:292). Instead, researchers select a sample representative of the total population under study. Therefore, this study is limited to select copreneurship businesses in the Vaal Triangle.

Access to the sample determined the sample frame. In addition, the researcher is an entrepreneur based in the Vaal Triangle and has been in a copreneurial business partnership for over eight years. Therefore, the researcher used personal business networks to find potential participants and then used the snowball strategy to expand the sample.

Inclusion criteria specify the attributes of subjects included in the research study (Connelly, 2020:125). The inclusion criteria for this study are:

- Companies legally co-owned by romantically involved partners in the Vaal Triangle.
- Companies in which one partner is a legal owner, and the other considers themselves a co-owner and has decision-making power in the business, although they are not legally registered as directors.
- The company must be active and generate some revenue.
- The company must have a maximum of 250 full-time employees.

Exclusion criteria are not the opposite of inclusion criteria; instead, they specify attributes that exclude an individual from participating in the study (Connelly, 2020:125). Therefore, the exclusion criteria for this study are:

- Companies that are legally co-owned by couples but managed only by one partner as the only decision-maker.
- Start-ups with no employees or revenue income.

1.6.2.7 Sample size

The sample size issue is generally ambiguous and a point of contention for many scholars (Saunders *et al.*, 2019: 315; Cooper & Schindler, 2014:349; Bryman *et al.*, 2014:176). According to Saunders *et al.* (2019:315), many research books recommend gathering data until data saturation is reached - adding more participants will not result in new information for the study. However, some scholars argue that many qualitative researchers usually misunderstand the phenomenon of data saturation and that there is no clear indication of how saturation was assessed. Malterud *et al.* (2015:2) propose the concept of information power as a tool to determine sample size. This concept suggests that the more study-relevant information the sample possesses, the lower the required number of participants - and vice versa. In this study, the researcher interviewed ten copreneurial businesses. Both couples could attend seven interviews, and one partner represented the business for the remaining three. Thus, a total of seventeen individuals were interviewed. Furthermore, the researcher adopted the

concept of information power throughout the study to ensure adequate information gathering, which will be used for the analysis of the research topic.

1.6.2.8 Sampling technique

Sampling derives from the idea that one may conclude on the entire population by determining its characteristics (Cooper & Schindler 2014:338). According to Saunders *et al.* (2019:296), there are two sampling techniques: probability and non-probability. This study used the non-probability sampling technique. Bryman *et al.* (2014:171) define a non-probability sample as one that was not randomly selected. Cooper and Schindler (2014:343) concur that a non-probability sampling strategy is random and subjective, and therefore the researcher will select a sample based on access and convenience.

Furthermore, the researcher used a snowball sampling strategy. With the snowball strategy, research respondents refer the researcher to others who possess comparable characteristics, and they, in turn, identify others (Cooper & Schindler 2014:360). Most management and organisational researchers advocate using existing contacts to access the desired research sample (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:245). Furthermore, the researcher adhered to the new Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA / the POPI Act) regulations in accessing and managing participants' personal information. The Act requires accountability from the person collecting an individual's personal information (sec. 8), processing limitations (sec. 9 - 12), which require lawfulness of processing, minimality, consent, justification and objection, and direct collection from data subjects (POPIA, 2019). Furthermore, Sections 13 and 14 of the POPI Act require purpose specification, which involves collecting personal information for a specific purpose and retaining and restricting records (POPIA, 2019). The Act imposes further processing limitations, information quality, openness, security safeguards, and data subject participation (POPIA, 2019).

This means that the person identifying the potential participants should get their consent before forwarding their contact details to the researcher. Or, the originator

should give the researcher's contact details to the prospective participants to initiate the contact. This will ensure that the POPI Act is not violated.

1.6.2.9 Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest occurs when one's duties and self-interest conflict in a way that has a substantial possibility of distorting one's perceptions, motivations, actions, passions, values, and judgment (Curzer & Santillanes, 2012:144). However, there is no known conflict of interest between the targeted research sample and the researcher.

1.6.2.10 Designing the measuring instrument

As the methodology section indicates, this research study adopted a qualitative method through one-on-one interviews with copreneurs in the Vaal Triangle. In addition, the researcher used a semi-structured interview guide as an instrument to manage the interviews. According to Bryman *et al.* (2014:228), interview guides differ. Some brief prompts remind the interviewer of critical areas in an unstructured interview, and others consist of a structured list of themes to be discussed in an unstructured interview. For this research study, the interviewer prepared a list of questions and prompts derived from the literature review on family-owned businesses and couple-owned enterprises. The primary research questions guided the formulation of the questions.

The researcher ensured that:

- The basic information about participants and the nature of their business was researched and investigated,
- a reliable audio recording device was purchased, and
- the interview venue would be comfortable and quiet.

The interviewer also ensured that the nature of the questions posed to participants was as follows:

- **Introducing questions:** “Tell me about your company and how it was founded?”
- **Follow-up questions:** “Can you expand on that point?”; “What do you mean by that?”
- **Probing questions:** “In your view, what do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of this kind of business partnership?”
- **Specifying questions:** “What is the shareholder percentage split, if I may ask? And how did you decide on it?”
- **Direct questions:** “Do you think co-owning the business has impacted your business growth? In what way?”
- **Indirect questions:** “How do you think your employees respond to your intertwined domains of business and work, and the impact of that on your management?”
- **Structuring questions:** “I want us to focus on something different now, if you do not mind.”
- **Silence:** The interviewer will allow pauses and silence to serve as a cue for the participant to expand and reflect on their answers
- **Interpreting questions:** “Will I be correct to conclude that gender role expectations do not affect your partnership?”

1.6.2.11 Collection of data

The researcher met with the prospective participants in person to get their informed consent for the study.

To gather data, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews at a location convenient for the participants. According to Saunders *et al.* (2019:434), the research interview is a determined conversation between two or more people. Therefore, the interviewer asks brief and precise questions and listens carefully to the interviewee's responses.

The researcher used a semi-structured interview format for discussions. According to Saunders *et al.* (2019:437), in semi-structured interviews, the conversation starts with a predetermined list of themes, preferably with critical questions related to the themes to guide the conduct of the interview. Furthermore, the researcher used probing to further assist participants in elaborating on the topic, encouraging rich data collection. The researcher also used an electronic transcribing application (otter.ai) to record and transcribe interviews.

In addition, some who formerly researched copreneurship have highlighted the disadvantages of interviewing couples together, citing issues of freedom of expression and perception management. They argue that failure to consider this potential pitfall could result in skewed research outcomes. However, most interviews were conducted with both partners due to the participants' time availability. The researcher did not note any apparent discomfort or limited freedom of expression by the couple participants.

1.6.2.12 Informed consent

The principle of informed consent necessitates that researchers provide sufficient information and assurances about participation in the study. This allows individuals to understand the implications of participating and to reach a fully informed, considered, and voluntary decision to participate - without any pressure from the researcher (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:258).

- Participants received communication via email detailing the purpose of the study.
- Participation in the study was voluntary; respondents could withdraw from the study anytime they wanted.
- The informed consent form stipulated that data collected in the study would be used only for academic reasons.
- For confidentiality and anonymity, participants were assigned codes only known to the researcher. These codes will be used as identification.
- The research gave no incentives or rewards to participants.

1.6.2.13 Data analysis

Data gathering and analysis are interrelated and collaborative processes in qualitative research (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:640). The researcher used a Thematic Analysis approach for data analysis. Thematic Analysis involves a researcher coding the qualitative data to find themes for further analysis linked to the research question (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:651). It offers the researcher a systematic yet flexible approach to data analysis (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:651). According to Saunders *et al.* (2019:652), the four elements of this approach include becoming familiar with the collected data, coding, identifying themes and recognising relationships, and refining themes and testing propositions.

Becoming familiar with data

The researcher used the interview transcriptions to immerse herself in the data and generate summaries during the analysis process. This process assisted the researcher in identifying recurring themes and patterns in the collected data.

Coding

In the case of a qualitative approach, coding refers to labelling every unit of data within a transcript (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:653). It is a method used to group data of identical meanings and allocates codes that symbolise each data unit's meaning (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:653). The researcher followed this approach during the transcription of each interview. This was done to build up the data analysis process. In addition, the researcher used this coding process to derive key themes from the interviews.

Identifying themes and recognising relationships

Identifying themes entails recognising relationships in the codes (created in the coding process) to minimise data and focus only on the themes relevant to answering the research question (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:657). In the theme identification process, the

researcher referred to the research objective, research questions, and recurring issues during the interviews.

Refining themes and testing propositions

Refining themes involves rereading the coded data to check for relevance, sufficiency, or duplications (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:658). In addition, apparent relationships and propositions need to be tested sufficiently by exploring alternative explanations to ensure the study's credibility (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:658). The researcher used this process to amend the themes as necessary and tested apparent propositions to eliminate personal biases.

1.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

In qualitative research, trustworthiness enriches the understanding and interpretation of research findings and allows others to have confidence in the quality of an investigation (Daniel, 2018:265). Trustworthiness comprises four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Bryman *et al.*, 2014:44).

1.7.1 Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research parallels internal validity in quantitative research (Daniel, 2018:266). It entails ensuring that research was done according to good practice standards and that findings were verified by research participants (Bryman *et al.*, 2014:44). The researcher followed prescribed academic guidelines for conducting a qualitative study. The researcher also shared the study's findings with participants to verify the accuracy of the information before finalisation.

1.7.2 Transferability

Transferability in qualitative research is similar to reliability in quantitative research; it implies that the findings of a study accurately reflect the views of the participants

involved in the study (Daniel, 2018:266). The researcher shared the study's findings with participants to verify the accuracy of the information before finalisation.

1.7.3 Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research is similar to reliability in quantitative research. However, it entails adopting an “auditing” approach when establishing the merit of the research for trustworthiness (Bryman *et al.*, 2014:44). The researcher kept all records of the research process. Two fellow MBA students were asked to verify, via an audit, the records against the researcher’s findings.

1.7.4 Confirmability

According to Bryman *et al.* (2014:44), confirmability entails ensuring that the researcher displayed objectivity as much as possible and did not allow personal values and theoretical predispositions to affect the research. The researcher used the research records' peers and supervisor “audit” to check for confirmability.

1.8 LAYOUT OF THE STUDY

This research study adopted the following layout.

Chapter 1: Nature and scope of the study

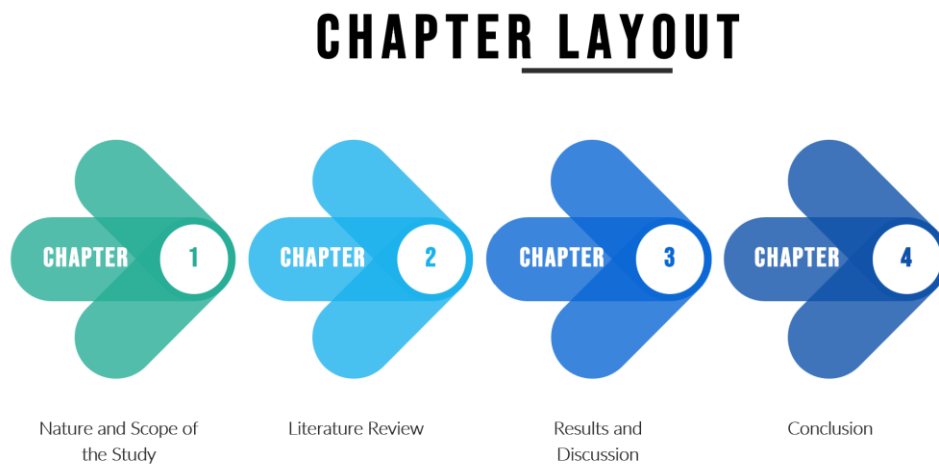
This first chapter aims to give the reader a background and the study's theoretical foundation. It consists of the introduction, the problem statement, the research objectives, the scope of the study, the research methodology, and the study limitations.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This second chapter of the study examines the different views of scholars on copreneurship. It covers seminal as well as recent findings on copreneurship. It further

provides the researcher with critical themes about copreneurship that guided the data collection process.

Figure 1.4: Chapter layout



Source: Researcher

Chapter 3: Results and discussion

This chapter entails the research study's findings and a discussion of the results.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The closing chapter consists of a summary of the results. The researcher makes recommendations and conclusions based on their findings from the reviewed literature and the empirical study.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics refers to the standards and conduct that guide the researcher's actions concerning the rights of respondents or those affected by the research (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:651). The researcher ensured careful consideration of the following ethical issues:

Table 1.2: Research ethics principles

| ETHICAL PRINCIPLES | ETHICAL ACTION |
|--|--|
| Integrity, fairness, and open-mindedness of the researcher | The researcher acted truthfully, openly, reasonably, and accurately in this study's recruiting, gathering, and analysis process. |
| Respect for others | The researcher treated all the research respondents with the utmost respect and dignity. |
| Avoidance of harm | The researcher avoided anything that could result in emotional, mental, or physical harm to the respondents. In selecting the research topic, the researcher considered any potential harm resulting from the study, and none could be identified. |
| Privacy/confidentiality | The researcher ensured anonymity concerning respondents' identities, data analysis, and reporting of research findings. |
| Voluntary participation | Before and during the interviews, the researcher ensured that respondents were aware of their right to refuse to participate by way of consent forms, the invitation to participate in the study, and thorough communication. They were aware that they did not need to answer questions if they did not want to, nor provide data they did not wish to, and were welcome to withdraw from the study anytime they wanted to. |

| ETHICAL PRINCIPLES | ETHICAL ACTION |
|--|--|
| Informed consent | The researcher provided participants with informed consent forms to ensure that participation was not coerced. |
| Data confidentiality | The researcher ensured that all data collected throughout the study was kept safe and confidential. Any research data shared with third parties (to manage the study's trustworthiness) was done in a non-attributable manner. |
| Responsible analysis and reporting of findings | The researcher upheld privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality when analysing and reporting research findings. |
| Compliance in the management of data | Research usually involves collecting respondents' personal information. The researcher took note of the POPI Act and did not share participants' data with anyone without their consent. |
| Safety of the researcher | The researcher prioritised the safety of both parties when deciding the location for interviews. Close family members were notified of the time and place of the interview. |

Source: Saunders *et al.* (2019:258)

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW ON COPRENEURSHIP

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to explore the concept of copreneurship and how small and medium-sized copreneurship businesses in the Vaal Triangle perceive this type of business. In addition, the objective was to highlight success stories, document the entrepreneurs' formula for success, and identify challenges accompanying this type of business ownership. This literature review chapter explores previous studies on family-owned businesses, which are fundamental for copreneurship enterprises. In addition, the researcher continued exploring underlying theories of copreneurship, including the social-identity theory, work-life balance theory, resource-based theory, embeddedness theory, the family fundamental interpersonal relationship orientation (FIRO), and the sustainable family-owned business theory. The literature review also explored the motivations for couples to enter into copreneurial ventures, the characteristics of copreneurial ventures, the requirements for success, role allocation, benefits and challenges faced by copreneurs, and the conceptualisation of business success by copreneurs.

2.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The below section defines key terms covered in this study. The terms include perception, entrepreneurship, SMMEs (small, medium, and micro enterprises), and family-owned businesses.

2.2.1 Defining perception

Qiong (2017:18) defines perception as the way people think about something, their idea of what that thing is like, and their use of physical senses to notice things. McDonald (2011:2) states that perception is an individual's unique experience. He

further states that understanding the concept of perception is complex because it is interdisciplinary with multiple layers. Glavas and Godwin (2013:2) state that perception is an individual's point of view and a powerful force that propels them to take action.

2.2.2 Defining entrepreneurship

According to scholars, there is no single definition of entrepreneurship. According to Toma *et al.* (2014:437), there is a lack of agreement regarding the definition of entrepreneurship because the concept represents a multidimensional phenomenon that is viewed by some as a process, some as a resource, and others as a state of being. Entrepreneurship can be defined as an individual's unique thinking, reasoning, and action in the context of possible opportunities for creating, improving, or adding value - which will benefit the entrepreneur and others (Raimi, 2015:371). It involves identifying business opportunities and taking action to pursue them, with no guarantee of success and usually with significant risk exposure (Hayter, 2015:1005). Some entrepreneurship scholars argue that most definitions of an entrepreneur are problematic and biased toward masculine attributes. Jurik *et al.* (2019:320) theorise that traditional entrepreneurship frameworks are fixated on profit, growth, competition, and risk but ignore pertinent issues concerning the off-work experiences of business owners - almost discounting how work and family life are interdependent. Choosing a business partner is critical and may significantly impact the business' success. Factors such as trust, support (emotional and financial), and commitment are important - which may explain why many people would rather opt for family members with whom they have a strong relationship (such as a spouse).

2.2.3 Small, Medium and Micro-Enterprises (SMMEs)

SMMEs are the driver of many economies, particularly in developing countries (Andriani *et al.*, 2020:1). It is estimated that about 80% of businesses in South-Africa are family-owned. Most of these fall under the SMME classification (Gomba & Kele, 2016:9). Berisha and Pula (2015) state that there is no single definition of SMME. However, the term is generally described by its characteristics: business size, number

of permanent employees, and annual income. Karadag (2015:27) defines SMMEs as businesses with a small market share, usually personally managed by the owners. The Department of Small Business Development in South Africa, in the Government Gazette (2019:110), classifies SMMEs under a single comprehensive term, namely “small enterprise”. The Department defines it as “a separate and distinct business entity, together with its branches or subsidiaries, if any, including cooperative enterprises. In addition, it is managed by one owner or more predominantly carried on in any sector or subsector of the economy, classified as a micro, a small or a medium enterprise by satisfying the set criteria.”

Table 1.3: South Africa’s latest SMME definition by sector table using two proxies

| Sectors or sub-sectors in accordance with the Standard Industrial Classification | Size or class of enterprise | Total full-time equivalent of paid employees | Total annual turnover |
|--|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Agriculture | Medium | 51 - 250 | ≤ 35,0 million |
| | Small | 11- 50 | ≤ 17,0 million |
| | Micro | 0 – 10 | ≤ 7,0 million |
| Mining and Quarrying | Medium | 51 - 250 | ≤ 210,0 million |
| | Small | 11- 50 | ≤ 50,0 million |
| | Micro | 0 – 10 | ≤ 15,0 million |
| Manufacturing | Medium | 51 - 250 | ≤ 170,0 million |
| | Small | 11- 50 | ≤ 50,0 million |
| | Micro | 0 – 10 | ≤ 10,0 million |
| Electricity, Gas and Water | Medium | 51 - 250 | ≤ 180,0 million |
| | Small | 11- 50 | ≤ 60,0 million |
| | Micro | 0- 10 | ≤ 10,0 million |
| Construction | Medium | 51 - 250 | ≤ 170,0 million |
| | Small | 11- 50 | ≤ 75,0 million |
| | Micro | 0- 10 | ≤ 10,0 million |
| Retail, motor trade and repair services. | Medium | 51 - 250 | ≤ 80,0 million |
| | Small | 11- 50 | ≤ 25,0 million |
| | Micro | 0 – 10 | ≤ 7,5 million |
| Wholesale | Medium | 51 - 250 | ≤ 220,0 million |
| | Small | 11- 50 | ≤ 80,0 million |
| | Micro | 0 – 10 | ≤ 20,0 million |
| Catering, Accommodation and other Trade | Medium | 51 - 250 | ≤ 40,0 million |
| | Small | 11- 50 | ≤ 15,0 million |
| | Micro | 0 – 10 | ≤ 5,0 million |
| Transport, Storage and Communications | Medium | 51 - 250 | ≤ 140,0 million |
| | Small | 11- 50 | ≤ 45,0 million |
| | Micro | 0 – 10 | ≤ 7,5 million |
| Finance and Business Services | Medium | 51 - 250 | ≤ 85,0 million |
| | Small | 11- 50 | ≤ 35,0 million |
| | Micro | 0- 10 | ≤ 7,5 million |
| Community, Social and Personal Services | Medium | 51 - 250 | ≤ 70,0 million |
| | Small | 11- 50 | ≤ 22,0 million |
| | Micro | 0 – 10 | ≤ 5,0 million |

Source: DSB, (2019:111)

2.2.4 Family-owned businesses

A family-owned business is an organisation dominantly controlled by a family, with the vision to maintain family control throughout generations (Tetzlaff & Jaskiewicz, 2020:122). Al-Dajani *et al.* (2014:219) define a family-owned business as an organisation owned and controlled by various members belonging to a single family. This research study adopted the definition of a family-owned business provided by Carney and Nason (2016:1192) as an entity that combines ownership and management into the control of a family.

2.3 FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESSES AS A FOUNDATION OF COPRENEURSHIP

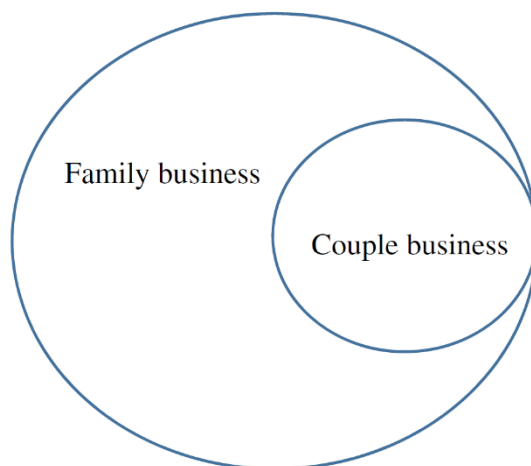
There has been a significant increase in the amount of research conducted on family-owned businesses over the years. The field of family business has also attained substantial external validity across various research fields (Gomez-Mejia *et al.*, 2020:121). To link the phenomenon of family-owned businesses to this research study, it is necessary to define and understand what the term means and how it functions as the foundation of copreneurship. Most family-owned business and entrepreneurship scholars adopted a structural definition of the family based on assumptions that biological and legal ties bind a family unit (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:108), and its members usually live under the same roof (or used to in the past) (Danes *et al.*, 2016:180).

In general, researchers define a family business according to ownership and management by members of a single family, their level of involvement, and the potential for generational transfer (Danes *et al.*, 2016:180). Contrary to traditional shareholder value and managerial corporate governance models (in which owners, managers, and workers are seen as different constituencies), family businesses combine ownership and management into the control of the owning family (Carney & Nason, 2016:1192). Most scholars agree that a significant difference between family-owned and non-family-owned businesses is the emphasis of family-owned businesses

on emotional and affective attachments. For non-family-owned businesses, the emphasis is elsewhere (Belenzon *et al.*, 2016:2611).

Families own or control most businesses worldwide (Alderson, 2015:140). They comprise a considerable share of assets and economic activity (Belenzon *et al.*, 2016:2611; El Shoubaki *et al.*, 2021:1). Regardless of their size, family businesses have unique complexities, issues, and problems that non-family-owned businesses do not confront (Alderson, 2015:140). However, Michael and Peter (2015:427) argue that family-owned companies have a competitive advantage. This is based on their capacity to nurture long-term value from mutually beneficial relationships with business associates and non-financial stakeholders (Michael & Peter, 2015:427).

Figure 2.1: Relationship between the family business and couple-owned business



Source: El Shoubaki *et al.* (2021:4)

Copreneurship family-owned businesses are also becoming prevalent globally. There are not enough studies on copreneurial partnerships. However, the subject has been receiving increasing attention in the entrepreneurship and family business literature (Mário & Patricia, 2018:16). Copreneurship is an exciting area of study due to particular behavioural norms and expectations associated with role identities (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:112). According to El Shoubaki *et al.* (2021:3), many terms are used in the literature to define the phenomenon of romantic partners running a business together.

These terms include family-owned business-owning couples, couple-run companies, entrepreneurial couples, or copreneurs.

This study focuses on this distinctive type of family-owned business, particularly how it is perceived by copreneurial owners of small and medium-sized businesses in the Vaal Triangle. The terms copreneurship and couple-owned business are used interchangeably throughout this study. Both terms refer to a business partnership involving two romantically involved individuals, whether married or in a cohabiting relationship. In the following section, the researcher explores copreneurship as a specific type of business partnership.

2.4 THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF COPRENEURSHIP

Barnett and Barnett (1988) coined the term copreneurs to describe business partnerships between romantic partners (Fitzgerald & Muske, 2002:3). Mário and Patricia (2018:16) expanded the definition to include equal management and responsibility of the business. Furthermore, Busch *et al.* (2021:66) take the definition further by adding commitment, accountability, and equal decision-making power as a characteristic of copreneurship.

Copreneurship is a unique and vital link between research on family-owned businesses and entrepreneurship. The concept of copreneurship has been studied across different literature and research streams, including Management, Economics, Psychology, and Sociology (El Shoubaki *et al.*, 2021:2).

According to Dyer *et al.* (2013:69), previous studies on copreneurship are primarily anecdotal, predominantly focused on the boundaries between work and family, have used cross-sectional data, or have studied the demographic characteristics of copreneurial businesses - emphasising the sustainability of such businesses. Machek *et al.* (2015:351), in their study on the profitability of copreneurial businesses, mentioned that past research focused on social support, work and family conflicts, or communication between spouses and less on studying copreneurial business performance. Furthermore, Kuschel and Lepeley (2016:183) cite that literature on

copreneurship highlights four major challenges: the dual relationship, management of dual roles, preservation of the marriage, and labour division concerning gender roles. This study is not unique because its objective was also to understand how the population sample manages the intertwined worlds of personal and business life - and the effect of this management on both these domains. Although similar studies exist in other parts of the world, this study is unique because it focuses on copreneurs in the Vaal Triangle. The aim is to determine if the dynamics discovered in other parts of the world are present in this community.

2.5 MOTIVATION FOR COPRENEURSHIP

Motivations for the creation of copreneurial ventures differ from couple to couple. Some couples do it because of a lack of job opportunities in the job market. Others do it because the entrepreneur partner requires their partner's competencies for their business (El Shoubaki *et al.*, 2021:3). Spousal support and engagement, especially during a business start-up, contribute to an increase in copreneurship businesses (McAdam & Marlow, 2013:153). During the business start-up phase, family resources (such as finances and family time) are invested heavily, and support and commitment are required from the non-founding partner/spouse. This process automatically makes both partners critical shareholders of the start-up. In addition, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic led many countries to call for lockdowns, which included social distancing. As a result, businesses had to shut doors temporarily, thereby changing economic and social behaviours. According to El Shoubaki *et al.* (2021:2), the persistence of the Coronavirus situation was expected to transform the organisation of work, social, and family dynamics - more than before, couples might have had to join forces in multiple areas of their lives.

Research cites various reasons behind the formation of copreneurial ventures, ranging from economic to non-economic motivations (Dahl *et al.*, 2014:8). Economic reasons include limited opportunities in the market for a spouse or partner, leaving them with no option but to join the entrepreneurial partner's business. Research indicates that spouses, especially women, join the other spouse in business because they do not have much to forgo in the labour market (Dahl *et al.*, 2014:8). They usually have an

unfavourable job market experience or many unemployment spells during their work life.

Entrepreneurial spouses or partners may enter a copreneurial venture to consolidate limited financial resources. By doing this, they can focus on a single venture instead of each pursuing different business ventures (Dahl *et al.*, 2014:11). However, because the couple share financial resources, they may be compelled to partner and drive a single business if they have limited access to capital resources. Although they may not enjoy the autonomy of owning their companies separately, they still own the business - which they control and are fully vested in.

According to Dahl *et al.* (2014:11), another financial motivation that could inspire copreneurs is cost-saving in communication and coordination, made possible by the trust and intimacy between a couple. Typically, couples with a successful relationship, greater affection, satisfaction, and mutual trust tend to benefit from that pre-existing cohesion in their copreneurial ventures. This kind of cohesion is not present in other types of business partnerships and is limited, to a certain extent, in other forms of family businesses. In addition, entrepreneurship studies reveal the importance of cohesion for business performance (Dahl *et al.*, 2014:13). A senior management team with a good working relationship will quickly react to essential issues, be flexible, productive, and efficient. They apply better problem-solving methods than less cohesive teams do. New business ventures especially benefit from cohesion, which lessens the complexity and uncertainty of the tasks necessary for building a successful venture.

Finally, copreneurs enjoy a higher Organisational Capital (OC) (Dahl *et al.*, 2014:13). Organisational Capital is defined by Dahl *et al.* (2014:13) as 'confidential information a company uses to improve its production processes'. This information may include work practices like planning and organising, coordination and communication, work design, and staff training. In their seminal work, Prescott and Visscher (1980) explained OC as a process a company learns through trial and error concerning the skills and talents of its workforce. They claim that companies that succeed in this process have enhanced productivity. Copreneurs usually find their business with a higher OC because they have extensive knowledge of each other's abilities and skills.

Non-financial motivations for copreneurship include the opportunity for a couple to spend more time together and experience each other in a different and meaningful context, during which their individual skills and talents would be revealed. Another motivation cited in research on copreneurial ventures is the flexibility partners enjoy when working together

2.6 UNDERLYING THEORIES OF COPRENEURSHIP

The following section covers critical foundation theories of copreneurship. These theories include social identity, work-life balance, resource-based, embeddedness, family fundamental interpersonal relationship orientation (FIRO), and sustainable family business theory.

2.6.1 Social identity theory

Social identity theory is premised on the belief that people see themselves as individuals and as group members (Brown, 2020:6). The theory also declares that an individual's concept of themselves originates from membership in a particular social group and the value of that membership (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:109; Guan & So, 2016:4).

Social identity directs, motivates, and controls behaviour. As a result, people behave in ways that meet behavioural expectations correlated with a salient role identity (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:110). For example, in the organisational context, employees that strongly identify with workgroups are likely to stay with the organisation for longer, display significant job involvement, and exhibit more positive work-related behaviours (Guan & So, 2016:5).

It is, therefore, essential to note that people assume multiple social identities due to the various roles they assume in society. Management and entrepreneurship scholars have devoted proportional attention to understanding how individuals manage instances in which seemingly different identities are simultaneously initiated, with

particular attention to managing boundaries and transitioning between identities (Islam, 2014:1782). In this study, copreneur couples represent a salient in-group belonging to a family unit. The two identities are that of a life partner and a business partner. Copreneurs must master the management of these identities, a challenge that dual-career couples do not experience.

According to Brannon *et al.* (2013:111), researchers have used social identity theory to study the effects of identity conflict in organisational roles. This includes role conflict resulting from conflicting expectations associated with salient identities: an organisational role identity and off-work role identity. The various identities are witnessed in copreneurial partnerships in which normative and practical systems are merged, and both identities can improve or harm the union. Another challenge for copreneurs relates to the two identities (family and entrepreneurship) where social expectation plays a role. Family is associated with nurturing, protection, loyalty, and commitment. On the other hand, successful entrepreneurship is related to external success, social legitimacy, commitment to the organisation and its employees, and financial prosperity. Therefore, it is argued that the success of copreneurial organisations depends on the ability to foster synergies between expected behaviour associated with the family role identity and the entrepreneurship role identity.

2.6.2 Work-life balance theory

Helmle *et al.* (2014:113) state that four themes have characterised research on work-life. The first is organisational responses to work-life conflict (the impact of organisational services and policies for assisting employees in managing work-life conflict). The second theme is work-life balance (an individual's state of satisfaction resulting from a perception of the balance between home- and work-life). The third is work-life conflict (the struggle and conflict of balancing the demands of work and personal life), and finally, the gendered nature of work-life challenges (how gender roles and expectations impact an individual's perception of work and family roles).

Work-life balance refers to an individual's satisfaction with their work and life roles, according to their life priorities (Felstead & Henseke, 2017:198). Ferdous *et al.*

(2021:1) define work-life balance as the degree to which an individual can adequately manage various life roles such as family, work, and other vital responsibilities. According to this theory, there is a high probability for people who juggle multiple work and life roles to feel a conflict between the two domains. This conflict can be attributed to the hypothesis of scarcity. According to this hypothesis, people have limited time, energy, and attention; therefore, the number of roles they can perform will be affected by the number of available resources.

Other studies have emphasised the importance of employee physical and mental well-being and its importance for the organisation's success. For example, empirical evidence indicates that employees who are happy at home and work are likely to be satisfied at work, have higher organisational commitment, and are supportive of the organisation (Ferdous *et al.*, 2021:1). All these behaviours mentioned above are positively correlated to organisational success. On the contrary, organisational success can be negatively affected by stressed employees who show signs of anger, depression, and related physical symptoms (Garg & Rani, 2015:1476).

A perception exists that running or owning a business brings better control over an individual's work-life. However, Helmle *et al.* (2014:111) are concerned that insufficient empirical evidence supports this view. They suggest that family businesses struggle to manage the interference of work-life with home life. This challenge emanates from their multiple interdependent roles, creating potential conflict at work and home. In addition, the challenges faced by many family-owned businesses result from couples' relationship problems (Danes *et al.*, 2013:516). An example is time management difficulties due to the demands of a new business venture. Time constraints may reduce the time and energy previously allocated to quality time.

Numerous copreneurship scholars raise concerns about couples' challenges in dealing with home and organisational issues, trying to prevent one domain from affecting the other. However, Helmle *et al.* (2014:115) suggest it is a myth that work-life and family life are separate and managed independently. Instead, they maintain that an investigation into this matter reveals these roles as inherently linked and impossible to separate.

2.6.3 Resource-based view theory

The resource-based view (RBV) theory is regarded as an influential theoretical framework for understanding the conditions necessary for an organisation to gain a sustainable competitive advantage (Chien, 2014:919). The theory states that the higher an organisation's resources, the better its market performance will be - provided these resources are rare, valuable, and difficult to copy or substitute. The spousal resources relevant to copreneurship businesses are valuable. They are challenging to formalise or transfer across organisational contexts, giving the copreneurial venture a unique competitive advantage, according to Michael and Peter (2015:427).

2.6.4 Embeddedness theory

According to Morganson *et al.* (2015:349-350), the embeddedness theory was developed to challenge the findings of the turnover research regarding organisational and career commitment. This research argues that people choose to stay at their jobs and careers primarily due to positive factors, such as organisational commitment or job satisfaction. The theory also states that these positive factors (organisational commitment and job satisfaction) do not sufficiently account for everything that influences an individual's decision to stay at the job. Job embeddedness has been found to account for incremental differences in voluntary turnover, exceeding job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and other job opportunities. Embeddedness theory further states that individuals are entangled in their current job by various physical and psychological ties and connections (Lee *et al.*, 2014:201). The theory provides three factors that bind people to their jobs: fit, links, and sacrifice. Fit refers to the degree to which an individual considers their abilities a match for the organisation's requirements (or employment) and whether the rewards for staying at the job are desirable. Links refer to the degree to which an individual has connections to other people and activities of the job or career. Finally, sacrifice refers to the losses an individual will incur if they were to leave an organisation or occupation.

The theory of embeddedness acknowledges that organisational or job fit, links, and sacrifice are linked to an individual's broader social and geographic environment.

2.6.5 The Family FIRO (Fundamental Interpersonal Relationship Orientation) theory

William Schutz's (1958) FIRO theory describes individual behaviour and interactions with others (Nikou & Khiabani, 2020:5). According to Forrester *et al.* (2016:113), the theory proposes that people are predisposed to behave predictably when interacting with others. This is influenced by how much they value inclusion, control, and affection. According to the FIRO theory, inclusion involves the need to sustain a relationship with others, to be included, and to include others in activities. Control refers to an individual's desire to maintain a good balance of influence and power in relationships. Furthermore, affection speaks to people's need to form close personal relationships with others (Furnham & Crump, 2015). The three dimensions of inclusion, control, and affection have two behavioural directions: expressed and wanted behaviour. According to this framework, the expressed behaviour concerns the degree of people's willingness to include, love, and control others. On the other hand, wanted behaviour involves people's desire to be included, loved, and controlled by others.

The FIRO theory offers a systemic view that prioritises a wide range of family dynamics and changes (Danes *et al.*, 2013:517). Danes *et al.* (2002:35) applied the theory to family-owned businesses. They confirmed that the non-founding partner/spouse's sense of inclusion in the family-owned business (including its control) had a vital influence on the family-owned business' integration results. The developmental order specifies inclusion (shared meaning, connectedness and structure) as the priority for all families. In addition, inclusion is expected to affect matters of control which affect integration results (e.g., business financial health, business goal achievement, and effective employee management).

The developmental nature of the FIRO theory advocates that a thriving and healthy family-owned business is rooted in a strong family (Danes *et al.*, 2013:518). It states that inclusion tests whether the spouse feels a sense of belonging in the family-owned business. It comprises three categories: structure, connectedness, and shared meaning. The structure is seen as the skeleton that keeps the system working, such as boundaries between the family and business systems and role allocation between

spouses. Connectedness refers to the feeling of togetherness or separateness, affiliation, and belonging in the family business. The theory further states that recreated issues of structure, connectedness, and shared meaning are grounded in the strength of the couple's relationship.

2.6.6 The Sustainable Family Business Theory (SFBT)

The sustainable family business theory (SFBT) is grounded in the behavioural theories of Business Management and the family systems theory. It recognises that family and business relationships achieve sustainability in family-owned businesses (Matzek *et al.*, 2010:61). According to Danes (2008:244-245), the fundamental tenets of the sustainable family business theory (SFBT) are:

- A family is a rational social arrangement.
- The sustainability of a family business is a consequence of business success and family functionality.
- Interpersonal processes and resources vary during stability and change in the family business.
- Family and business exchange resources across both domains.
- Families who own businesses rationally jointly manage work and home domains to achieve their objectives.
- The family or the business can be ruined if the business and home boundaries are too separate.
- Conflict emerges when resources do not match the demands.
- Positive cooperation between family, business, and community is good for the family business and the community.

Unlike traditional models of entrepreneurial success, the SFBT acknowledges the role family plays in an entrepreneur's social context. With this theory, business success is related to family and business factors - giving credit to the role of spousal capital in the success of an entrepreneurial venture (Matzek *et al.*, 2010:61).

In SFBT, family capital resources include human, social, and financial resources (Danes *et al.*, 2016:182-183). Human capital is an individual's attributes, such as

education, knowledge, experience, values, beliefs, and the business owners' energy. Family members transfer human capital to the business to benefit the venture. Furthermore, according to the SFBT theory, social capital refers to goodwill, confidence in family members, and trust (Danes *et al.*, 2016:182-183). These relational behaviours are based on contextual beliefs, values, and norms in family structures. Lastly, financial capital, in this theory, refers to money, assets, credit, and investments that family members put towards the family business. Most entrepreneurs use their savings and/or family money to fund their businesses.

2.7 CHARACTERISTICS OF A COPRENEURIAL PARTNERSHIP

Copreneurial organisations vary in size: from small to medium businesses to large corporations. The revenue they yield is also proportionate to the size of the company. Furthermore, couples who run these companies can have varying levels of education and skills. A couple-run family-owned business differs from other family-owned businesses. Although a life partner is considered family, they are voluntarily chosen based on personal standards. This could make them valuable business partners emotionally, socially, and psychologically (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:112). A life partner represents a strong family in-group. In addition, other family-owned businesses include individuals who share the same lineage but stay in different households and have different life goals. Conversely, copreneurs do not only share the company and their household, but they also share life goals (El Shoubaki *et al.*, 2021:5).

Copreneurs are distinct because they can flexibly perform business and household duties, and how tensions between these two domains can be transferable. Furthermore, copreneurs possess special behavioural norms and expectations linked to role identities. Power distribution and roles usually follow these gendered social norms (El Shoubaki *et al.*, 2021:5). A study done in Australia, with 20 participating couples, reported that independence and family-friendliness in copreneurial companies make it easy for couples to merge work and family domains.

Another interesting finding by Helmle *et al.* (2014:112) was that couples who start copreneurial businesses are likely to be older, have an education, and are already

running one or more successful companies. They also state that copreneurial businesses are predominantly managed by men rather than women but that women have equal decision-making authority.

2.8 REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCCESS IN COPRENEURIAL PARTNERSHIP

Entrepreneurial identity dominates the literature on creating new business ventures, but little is known about how copreneurs mutually form a collective identity (Danes *et al.*, 2016:188). Instead, they argue that entrepreneurial identity has been understood as a concept relevant to the individual. For a copreneurial venture to be established, a copreneurial identity (involving a shared vision and investment from each partner) is required. The individuals move from the perception of being individual entrepreneurs to form a collective cognition. This collective cognition is the foundation of commitment, which results in the sustainability of the business (Danes *et al.*, 2016:188). The following section reviews various inputs required for establishing a successful copreneurship: teamwork, leadership, authority structures, a shared dream, and communication.

2.8.1 Teamwork

Although couples have unique challenges in a family-owned business, they also function as a team and experience team dynamics similar to other organisational settings (Farrington *et al.*, 2011:25). Therefore, teamwork and collaboration are essential for the success of a copreneurship. The input-process-output (I-P-O) model is used in organisational processes and applies to any type of team. According to this model, inputs result in processes, resulting in outcomes (Körner *et al.*, 2015:2). Teams are effective when they have highly skilled and competent individuals who bring diverse but complementary skills and experiences to the organisation. Individuals within a copreneurial venture need to be competent, and when they join, the skills they contribute should complement each other - enabling their business to grow.

2.8.2 Leadership

In any organisational team, leadership is vital as it influences the team's composition and behaviour (Farrington *et al.*, 2011:28). Therefore, copreneurs should also realistically decide on how leadership will be established in the business. The leadership decision should be based on an individual's competence and skills rather than their role or position in the household. This allocation of leadership positions can be a challenge for copreneurs if not carefully implemented; it can result in conflict that can adversely affect the business. According to Farrington *et al.* (2011:28), leadership that embraces flexibility, a win-win attitude, quality over quantity, vigour, and forethought is vital for copreneurship success. Finally, trust and employee confidence are cornerstones of effective business leadership (Karakitapoğlu-Aygün & Gumusluoglu, 2013:108). In this research study, effective leadership involves the spouse/s possessing a consultative, open-minded, skilful, and visionary leadership approach.

2.8.3 Authority structures

Those with family-owned businesses face a complex interaction between family life and business responsibilities, resulting in various governance challenges. The challenges can be related to ownership and control, performance, succession, and governance structures (Ediriweera *et al.*, 2015:40). These challenges impact business success, ownership structure decisions, and business decision-making (Pindado & Requejo, 2015:292).

The family-owned business' size and listing status determine the governance structures required for business success. According to Ediriweera *et al.* (2015:41), family businesses have two related subsystems when using a systems approach: the business and the family governance system. The business' governance subsystem involves administration and control; it comprises shareholders, a board of directors, and top management. The family governance subsystem consists of representatives of the family, whose role it is to secure and manage cohesion in the family.

Farrington *et al.* (2011:29) state that authority structures (such as boards of directors, advisory boards, and regular family meetings) are increasingly associated with family business longevity over numerous generations and business performance. In this study, authority structures refer to the copreneurship's general implementation of governance bodies, policies, and procedures. This is put in place to prevent the business from being run by individuals' emotions and viewpoints, which could result in the wrong business decisions or cause conflict between the couple.

According to Ediriweera *et al.* (2015:40), family-owned businesses not only require governance structures for the supervision and control of management, but the structures should help with cohesion. It should also drive the shared visions of the family whilst managing harmful conflict. They further state that considering the family dimension (family governance) is a crucial part of the governance structure of family-owned businesses. Furthermore, boards also play an essential role as advisors and resource providers (Pindado & Requejo, 2015:292). This role is critical for family businesses because board members can supplement deficiencies in managerial skills. However, Pindado and Requejo (2015:292) argue that independent directors may struggle to offset family control when family authority dominates independent directors, although there still are benefits to having an independent board in family-owned businesses.

2.8.4 Shared dream

The term shared dream can be defined as a family's shared vision for the future that motivates family members to plan carefully and work hard (as a unit) to ensure that the vision is accomplished. Other scholars maintain that the voluntary involvement of the spouse/s in the copreneurship contributes to aligning business and personal goals. Farrington *et al.* (2011:29) suggest that failure to align dreams in a copreneurial venture may result in feelings of resentment, ultimately leading to marital discord. A shared dream in this study refers to the alignment of the copreneurs' dreams for the future of their business and relationship.

2.8.5 Communication

Continual, effective communication between the couple regarding the business vision and goals is key when forming a collective entrepreneurial identity (Danes & Jang, 2013:46). However, Danes *et al.* (2016:189) argue that communication between spouses about a business venture's goals may have advantages and disadvantages. They state that, due to the nature of spousal relationships, it is impossible to determine the ideal amount of business-related communication that will result in business and marital sustainability. Although it can help some couples to share concerns about the business, excessive communication may result in conflict for other couples. Good communication about the business between spouses creates a shared meaning that expands into the belief that investing more resources is sensible (Matzek *et al.*, 2010:64).

2.9 ROLE ALLOCATION/DIVISION OF WORK

Copreneurs encounter role allocation challenges, and men usually occupy the leadership role; the essential contribution of the woman is overlooked, and they are not deemed true owners (McAdam & Marlow, 2013:153). As a result, some women in copreneurial partnerships are stuck on the gender-based role allocations that often make the men superior and relegate women to a support service. Research indicates that copreneurs can be affected by psychological and social processes that influence work and family-related role allocation decisions. Thus, copreneurs usually function under traditional sex-role orientations. Furthermore, it was discovered that male spouses were primarily responsible for business decisions and spent most of their time at work. As a result, they usually become the boss (Nimeshi, 2018:92). Conversely, female spouses were more responsible for home and child care duties and less involved in the business. Their role in the family business is presumed to be a natural extension of the wife's role to the man. According to Jurik *et al.* (2019:321), details about the allocation of responsibilities differ in most copreneurial ventures based on which partner was interviewed. Compared to women's claims, men exaggerated their contribution to household chores and childminding. However, how the couple decides to allocate and share roles in the business and home is immaterial. If the couple is

satisfied, then the venture is viewed as cordial. However, some, like (McAdam & Marlow, 2013:153), continue to advocate that copreneurships promote male superiority, with the woman consistently being devalued.

Copreneurs must be clear and specific regarding each partner's roles and responsibilities in the business. The more distinct copreneurs' roles and responsibilities are, the more beneficial they will be for the organisation. Clarifying roles and responsibilities ensures respect and order. It reduces the possibilities of power struggles and rivalry between the copreneur partners (Farrington *et al.*, 2011:30). For this study, the researcher also explored role allocation, the division of work, and how responsibilities are assigned in the copreneurial ventures under investigation - and whether each partner was satisfied in accepting the allocation. Further role allocation issues in copreneurial ventures are discussed in the section that addresses the challenges faced by copreneurs.

2.10 BENEFITS OF COPRENEURSHIP

Literature on the effects of family on business performance has yielded conflicting findings, with some studies indicating a positive and others a negative impact (Belenzon *et al.*, 2016:2612). Furthermore, the full effect of copreneurships is an additional debate with a wide range of conflicting opinions and views. This section discusses the positive impact of a copreneurship: the solid emotional bond, increased trust, shared goals, flexibility, reduced agency costs, and spousal support.

2.10.1 Strong emotional bond

Literature on copreneurship indicates that couples who co-run businesses have flexible work schedules and similar career orientations. This blending of work and family roles can spill over and possibly enrich their family life. Unlike dual-career couples with separate work and family life, copreneur spouses share the pressures from both domains. Their ability to overcome challenges together is predicted to strengthen their emotional ties. According to Helmle *et al.* (2014:112), a couple's bond can encourage

communication behaviours that enhance the relationship. This can help them manage conflict and effectively reduce tension. It can also improve positive feelings such as joy, personal satisfaction, and autonomy - resulting from working with and being in charge alongside someone you love. This can result in a better connection, understanding, and commitment to the family and business.

Furthermore, Brannon *et al.* (2013:112) state that these couples are more likely to make decisions that can result in greater family satisfaction and work-life satisfaction. Furthermore, unlike other couples, they have an additional setting to nurture connections, creating better intimacy between the couple (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:112). Copreneurs are anticipated to have a stronger marriage (Dyer *et al.*, 2013:69). This is because the marriage is strengthened by the shared vision, goals, and dreams in their family and work life. The strength of the romantic relationship indicates the couple's ability to co-exist even when it is sometimes challenging, which can be transferred to the business venture.

2.10.2 Increased trust

Trust is a vital governance tool in family-owned businesses and can give a company a competitive advantage and lower transactional costs (Madanoglu *et al.*, 2020:993). According to Brannon *et al.* (2013:112), there are higher trust levels in copreneurship businesses than in traditional business partnerships. In addition, because married couples usually live together and own a majority of common resources outside the business, they may be better able to monitor one another, monitor market information, and implement tacit contracts compared to other types of owners (Belenzon *et al.*, 2016:2616).

Empirical studies on copreneurs indicate that the majority consider themselves equal partners with considerable mutual trust. They also stated that co-dependence on the partner's advice is highly valued (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:112). Literature on couple-owned businesses suggests that the advantage of this kind of business partnership is that, over time, couples understand each other's unique gifts, strengths and weaknesses - both in their work and personal capacity. This enables accurate resource

allocation (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:113). According to Danes and Jang (2013:47), an investigation of the spousal context during the formation of a business indicates that the strength of the relationship determines how willing copreneurs are to invest spousal resources in the business.

2.10.3 Shared goals

Finding competent partners and employees is critical for business success (Dyer *et al.*, 2013:68). This explains why it is a global phenomenon for many businesses to consist of individuals with a family affiliation (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:107). Machek *et al.* (2015:351) suggest that the positive benefits of family control also exist in copreneurial businesses, including the synergistic effects resulting from the shared values of the copreneur unit.

Brannon *et al.* (2013:112) postulate another advantage of copreneurship; the household is usually established before the business; therefore, the identity of the copreneurial business is typically found in line with family role identity. The gender roles assumed in the households of copreneurs are usually upheld in their business partnerships, creating a beneficial collaboration necessary for success in both work and home domains. When couples already have an agreement on how their finances are managed in their households, it is easier for them to apply the same arrangement when managing the business' finances. Married owners may demonstrate strong altruistic motives, especially when they have children (Belenzon *et al.*, 2016:2617). They may be motivated to work hard to provide a better life for their children. When a partnership forms between two people with similar goals and aspirations, who share a living space and personal resources outside the company, it may result in a competitive business advantage, according to Michael and Peter (2015:427).

2.10.4 Flexibility

Copreneurs value the flexibility inherent in running a business with a spouse. In addition, it enhances the possibility of managing home- and work-life with less difficulty in copreneurships because both partners share the responsibilities of both domains. They can better negotiate how they will manage the related tasks (Dahl *et al.*, 2014:14).

According to Madanoglu *et al.* (2020:5), spouses possess a greater concentration of discretionary capacity, which can encourage flexibility in business decisions. Conversely, non-family businesses generally deliberate between parties at various levels and have to reach a consensus on business decisions.

In addition, because couples share a household and a workplace, they can allocate related roles according to their work-life and family-life demands. The roles can also be adapted when needed (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:112). This type of flexibility across both spheres is unique to copreneurs and impossible to find in other forms of business partnerships (Hirigoyen & Villegier, 2017:2). Mário and Patricia (2018:8) suggest that, compared to couples with dual-careers, copreneurs find more time to spend with their children. El Shoubaki *et al.* (2021:133) maintain that this flexibility of work-home boundaries gives copreneurs a competitive advantage in most cases.

However, it is possible for this flexibility to have the opposite effect and result in copreneurs bringing business activities home more often, reducing the time spent with family (Mário & Patricia, 2018:8).

2.10.5 Reduced agency costs

Agency conflict occurs between family members and non-family members who hold different positions in an organisation. It is typically characterised by either party presenting opportunistic conduct with ulterior motives. Most studies reveal mixed views on whether family or external executives are better at running family-owned businesses. However, the commonly agreed-upon advantage of family management is low principal-agent conflict (Amore *et al.*, 2017:462). Agency costs are reduced in

copreneurial businesses. This standpoint assumes that family involvement reduces agency costs since business and family goals are usually aligned (Dyer *et al.*, 2013:69). Madanoglu *et al.* (2020:994) concur that copreneurship can ensure trust by reducing dependence on external agents, which would have led to costly contracts and transactions. On the contrary, Belenzon *et al.* (2016:7) postulate that the concentration of family ownership can result in a principal-principal problem, whereby family shareholders manipulate processes for their personal benefit at the expense of external minority shareholders.

2.10.6 Spousal support

Danes *et al.* (2016:187) theorise that most new businesses are copreneurial with different levels of spousal involvement. Irrespective of how much the spouse is actively involved in the physical activities of the business, they are considered copreneurs because they share business and family goals. They further argue that couples starting new business ventures already have the foundation of adequate social capital, which is grounded in their relationship (Danes *et al.*, 2016:187).

They also have a better chance of conquering the liability of newness, defined as the risk of business failure that start-ups face. This risk exists due to the pending learning and coordination of roles and responsibilities, mutual socialisation of family members, and the difficulty of effectively competing with existing competitors (Danes *et al.*, 2016:186).

A copreneur couple's context has a significant impact on new business ventures. It affects the opportunities, choices, and challenges the entrepreneur faces, over and above the ability to manage a business. Interactions and the flow of resources between spouses reduce the liability of newness in start-up businesses; they are instrumental in influencing the success and sustainability of a new business (Danes *et al.*, 2016:187).

Spousal support can be human, social, and financial capital (Danes *et al.*, 2016:187). It is considered spousal human capital when a spouse contributes professional

experience to the new business venture. Furthermore, it is considered spousal social capital when one spouse accepts a more significant portion of home responsibilities, like caring for the children, so the other can focus their time and energy on the business. Spousal social capital is more comprehensive when the partner emotionally supports the entrepreneur. It involves commitment, transferring resources across the business and home (when required), spousal perception of the other's business management abilities, and joint decision-making (Danes *et al.*, 2016:187).

The spousal relationship on its own is a form of social capital for entrepreneurs. They can use transactions with their spouses to accumulate resources to achieve business and family goals. These transactions can be time, effort, or interpersonal transactions, like developing affective ties and rules about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour of the family members involved in the business. They are rooted in the couple's cultural values, norms, and beliefs, increasing or reducing an entrepreneur's stress (Danes *et al.*, 2016:187).

An investigation into copreneurial couple goal congruence and new business success indicated that copreneurs with high goal congruence were likely to have quality business-related communication. Furthermore, it was discovered that couples with mutual agreement on family and business goals were more likely to work on their goals together, creating an environment of oneness (Danes *et al.*, 2016:188).

2.11 CHALLENGES OF COPRENEURSHIP

The challenges of copreneurs include the daily challenges of sharing a home and the additional strain of managing a business together. Unlike dual-career couples, the work and home boundaries are non-existent; the two worlds are so intricately merged that they become one. The ability to manage these combined worlds is the catalyst for success (Machek *et al.*, 2015:351). Copreneurs face several challenges, including having different work habits and management styles, having disagreements concerning the use of finances in the business, struggling with separating home and business life, disagreeing on business goals and decisions, struggling with time management in both domains, possibly tiring of constantly being in each other's space,

and feeling trapped. These challenges can cause stress and conflict, harming their family and business (Helmle *et al.*, 2014:113). Furthermore, on average, copreneurial businesses are likely to have lower financial and perceived success when compared to non-copreneurial businesses (McDonald *et al.*, 2017:477). The following section outlines the challenges copreneurs face, such as conflict management, role allocation, divorce, and high business risk aversion.

2.11.1 Conflict management

The types of conflict in family-owned businesses are distinctive because they originate from two combined dimensions (work and home). Family businesses could also be perceived as fertile ground for conflict, and family issues can easily be transferred to work and vice versa. Alderson (2015:141) states that family-owned businesses, regardless of their size, face particular challenges not encountered by non-family-owned businesses. These issues can be related to sibling rivalry, drug abuse, incompetent family employees, extended family members, succession, interpersonal conflict, and divorce. Families are attached emotionally, and the nature of the relationship is long-term. Therefore, discord between family members can adversely affect both domains if not addressed.

However, Madanoglu *et al.* (2020:994) argue that married couples would be incentivised to resolve conflict effectively because the family's wealth could be at stake. Caputo *et al.* (2018) state that three categories of conflict affect businesses: task, process, and relationship conflict. The task-related conflict concerns disagreement on strategies and objectives, and process conflict involves disputes on how business activities should be carried out. Relationship conflict is emotionally driven and affects how members feel about each other; this is alarming as it may lead to stress and unfavourable behaviour, which could adversely affect a business' success. Madanoglu *et al.* (2020:994) state that relational conflict between non-family business partners can result in inefficiencies, such as omitted contracting with stakeholders.

Copreneurs are more likely to have higher motivation for resolving conflict effectively and prioritising business goals over their feelings because the family's wealth is at risk.

2.11.2 Role allocation

Role allocation challenges take two forms: role identity and multiple-role challenges. The first, role identity conflict, occurs when an individual's home role identity transcends contexts and enters the work arena. It includes issues concerning the distribution of power and roles; societal gender norms tend to contribute significantly to role allocations (McAdam & Marlow, 2013:153).

The second, role allocation conflict, occurs when it is expected of an individual to perform too many roles (Caputo *et al.*, 2018:523). This is usually the case with owners, especially in the start-up stages of the business. The over-allocation of roles may seem like a sound method for saving resources; however, it can compromise another critical role held by the partner.

2.11.3 Separation/Divorce

Divorce is considered a significant threat to copreneurial companies (Machek *et al.*, 2015:352), and the following challenges are usually the cause of divorce for copreneurs:

- Separating work and family commitments.
- Lack of physical restrictions between work and family.
- Distribution of responsibilities and roles in decision-making.
- Lack of "me-time", due to spouses being together most of the time.
- Bringing work issues home.
- Pressure to hire unqualified spouses.

2.11.4 Risk aversion challenge

Belenzon *et al.* (2016:2616) maintain that family owners usually employ conservative business strategies. Although risky investments may hold significant gains for the business and be perceived as professionalism by shareholders, family businesses may be willing to forego the possible gains. They take calculated risks and settle for lower

profits to protect the family's socio-emotional wealth (Madanoglu *et al.*, 2020:993). As a result, copreneurs usually put significant weight on generational wealth compared to non-family owners, who may be more willing to take on risks and adopt growth strategies.

A comparison study between copreneurs and non-copreneurial ventures indicated a significant difference in how the owners perceived their businesses. Copreneurs view business as a way of life, not a method for earning income (Kuschel & Lepeley, 2016:184).

Lone owners, or owners with no affective ties to other shareholders, may be more willing to take risks and adopt growth strategies (Belenzon *et al.*, 2016:3). Conversely, family owners, tend to have a significant portion of their wealth locked up in their businesses. In addition, they also personally manage business operations, which ties up their human capital as well. This lack of diversification causes conservative investment behaviour in family-owned businesses (Belenzon *et al.*, 2016:7).

2.12 BUSINESS SUCCESS IN COPRENEURIAL BUSINESSES

According to Danes *et al.* (2016:180), due to the variations in the definition of a family business, the jury is out on whether family businesses perform better than non-family businesses.. For example, some define family businesses by the family's degree of ownership and management, and others consider the degree of influence in business operations as the qualifying criterion. Furthermore, other scholars insist that family businesses must have family members working in the business. Lastly, it is suggested that the definition should include the potential for generational transfer to those family members preparing for succession.

According to McDonald *et al.* (2017:491), improved relationship satisfaction in the family and business should result in increased business profit, for which they provide two reasons. Firstly, relationship satisfaction can result in positive synergy where copreneurs' joint efforts are more productive than the sum of their efforts. Secondly,

higher levels of relationship satisfaction enable teamwork; coordination between spouses is expected to increase business profits.

Amore *et al.* (2017:474) studied marital leadership in businesses. Their findings suggest that companies led by couples displayed higher business performance compared to businesses managed by an individual or multiple non-family leaders and companies with one or multiple family leaders. According to them, copreneurs are more likely to invest in times of uncertainty, experience low staff turnover, and have better labour efficiencies. However, their findings contradict the findings by McDonald *et al.* (2017:1); in their study on the effects of working with a spouse, they found that, on average, copreneurial ventures yielded less profit than their non-copreneurial counterparts. Belenzon *et al.* (2016:2616) also state that businesses owned by married couples employ conservative financial approaches and, thus, see more financial gains than non-married owners. Finally, having only two spouses involved in family ownership could reduce dysfunctional conflict in management (Madanoglu *et al.*, 2020:994)

Danes *et al.* (2016:180), in their study on challenges in family-owned businesses, argue that although there is some indication of family businesses performing better than non-family businesses, many studies refute this finding. Instead, they suggest that family businesses are affected by inefficiency issues because family members are employed in key management roles, thus, increasing opportunities for conflict and interfering with business performance. Additionally, nepotism (a norm in family businesses) affects business performance; it is argued that it breeds mediocrity in management and reduces accountability (Dyer *et al.*, 2013:69).

2.13 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

Family-owned business literature provides a significant contribution to understanding copreneurship. There is a considerable amount of research on various issues facing family businesses and copreneurial ventures; even so, there is still a need to test and contextualise existing findings based on geographical dynamics. In addition, the lack

of consensus on specific topics (as identified in the literature reviews) further necessitates additional research.

Copreneurial ventures are complex, and although literature concerning challenges and benefits contains many similarities, the nature of relationships necessitates different formulas for success.

The literature review defines relevant critical concepts; it highlights family-owned businesses as a foundation for copreneurship and the conceptualisation of copreneurship. The researcher further discussed motivational factors for copreneurship ventures, the critical underlying theories of copreneurship, the characteristics of a copreneurial business, requirements for success, and role allocation. Next, the researcher proceeded to explore the literature on the benefits and challenges of copreneurships and, finally, the prospects of success for copreneurial businesses.

This literature review serves as a foundation for the subsequent empirical study. Moreover, it guided the researcher on vital issues based on a comprehensive analysis of various scholars in different areas of copreneurship. Finally, the literature review assisted the researcher in formulating the interview discussion guide.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and analyses data collected from the research participants in a copreneurial business partnership; it presents qualitative findings that answer the stated objectives in Chapter 1. The researcher used ATLAS.ti version 22 to manage and support the qualitative thematic analysis of the data obtained from the interviews with ten copreneurial businesses. This qualitative software facilitated the virtual findings of the study, as qualitative data was networked and projected to gain a better understanding of participants' understanding and perceptions of copreneurship.

The data is presented using a structured and systematic scientific interpretation technique, and the results are presented in line with the semi-structured interview questions.

Chapter 3 covers the study participants' demographic profile, presents the findings, and provides a summary. Although a comprehensive account of the methodology was covered in Chapter 1, this chapter starts by reiterating the research methodology adopted by the researcher.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGICAL CHOICE

This study adopts an inductive research approach, as noted in Section 1.6.2.2. According to Woo *et al.* (2017:257), the inductive approach involves making observations, identifying patterns in the data, and identifying relationships among variables that can be generalised from a sample at hand to broader populations of interest. Furthermore, the researcher followed a qualitative, descriptive method to gather data (see Section 1.6.2.3). The qualitative method involves systematically collecting, organising, and interpreting conversation information (Grossoehme,

2014:109). Qualitative research studies how participants construct meanings; it makes use of different data-gathering techniques to develop new theories (Saunders *et al.*, 2019:179).

3.3 DATA COLLECTION

As noted in Chapter 1, Section 1.6, the researcher used two data types for this study. First, the researcher conducted a literature review to gain an understanding of the research topic. The literature exposed the researcher to critical issues, both scientific and anecdotal, that were previously considered in relation to the concept of copreneurship. The literature review is composed of multi-disciplinary studies, done locally and abroad, and considers various challenges and opportunities for entrepreneurship, with a particular focus on family businesses and copreneurship. The researcher subsequently used the insights gained from the literature review to map out the data collection strategy and guide the development of research questions.

The second phase of data gathering took the form of an empirical study. During this phase, the researcher interviewed representatives of ten copreneurial businesses based in the Vaal Triangle. The researcher used a semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions that allowed participants to expand their responses. The interview guide also contained probing questions, allowing the researcher to delve deeper into the discussion questions; questions on participants' demographic information; and seven main questions, which were populated based on the literature review study. The interview guide is enclosed as Appendix A of this research study.

The researcher sent the informed consent letter and the interview guide to participants before the interview; these documents are attached to this study as Appendix A and B. All ten interviews were conducted face-to-face at venues convenient to both the researcher and the participants. The researcher used a cell phone and voice recording computer software to record the interviews. The researcher obtained the participants' consent to make the recordings. The interviews were approximately 55 minutes in duration.

3.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

As noted in Chapter 1, Section 1.6.2.6, the population for the study was limited to couples who own businesses in the Vaal Triangle. The researcher used a non-probability sampling technique, as mentioned in Section 1.6.2.8. Furthermore, the researcher used a snowball sampling strategy to find more participants. From this population, the researcher conducted interviews with representatives from ten copreneurial businesses. Seven of the ten interviews were conducted with both spouses present; the remaining three interviews were conducted with only one partner. The researcher interviewed a total of 17 participants.

3.5 TRANSCRIBING THE INTERVIEWS

The researcher conducted eight interviews in English and used a digital transcribing application called otter.ai for transcription. However, two interviews were conducted in South Sotho, as the participants could not express themselves freely in English. The researcher is a fluent South Sotho speaker, and could effectively translate the research questions for the participants. In addition, the researcher commissioned a South Sotho language translator to translate the interviews back into English. Upon receiving the translated transcripts, the researcher cross-checked the transcription using the original voice recording to confirm the accuracy of the translation. All transcripts are available upon request.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher used a thematic analysis approach to analyse data for this study. The details of the data analysis process are noted in Section 1.6.2.13 of Chapter 1.

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS

In qualitative research, trustworthiness enriches the understanding and interpretation of research findings, and allows others to have confidence in the quality of an investigation (Daniel, 2018:265). A detailed account of how the researcher managed trustworthiness for the study is noted in Section 1.6.3.

3.8 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

This study focuses on the perception of copreneurship in the Vaal Triangle, documenting the experiences of couples who jointly run businesses. Table 3.1 shows the demographic profile of participants and the breakdown of participant and business profiles.

Table 3.1: Demographic profile of study participants

| PARTICIPANTS | AGE | EDUCATION | BUSINESS AGE/YEARS | BUSINESS LOCATION | PERMANENT STAFF | OWNERSHIP DESIGN |
|--------------|-----|------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| C1:PA1 | 40 | National Diploma | 9 | Johannesburg | 0 | 50/50 |
| C1:PA2 | 41 | Master's | | | | |
| C2:PA3 | 50 | Matric | 30+ | Evaton | 20 | 60/40 (male majority) |
| C2:PA4 | 45 | Matric | | | | |
| C3:PA5 | 44 | MBA | 19 | Vanderbijlpark | 25 | 51/49 (female majority) |
| C3:PA6 | 50 | National Diploma | | | | |
| C4:PA7 | 45 | Honours | 13 | Vanderbijlpark | 8 | 100/0 (female-owned) |
| C4:PA8 | 50 | National Diploma | | | | |
| C5:PA9 | 36 | National Diploma | 15 | Vaal (Palm Springs) and Soweto | 120 | 100/0 (male-owned) |
| C5:PA10 | 51 | National Diploma | | | | |
| C6:PA11 | 37 | Degree | 14 | Soweto | 102 | 50/50 |

| PARTICIPANTS | AGE | EDUCATION | BUSINESS AGE/YEARS | BUSINESS LOCATION | PERMANENT STAFF | OWNERSHIP DESIGN |
|--------------|-----|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| C7:PA12 | 42 | Degree | 9 | Vereeniging | 0 | 51/49 (female majority) |
| C8:PA13 | 42 | National Diploma | 20 | Sasolburg | 5 | 100/0 (female- owned) |
| C8:PA14 | 45 | National Diploma | | | | |
| C9:PA15 | 46 | MBA | 14 | Sebokeng | 160 | 50/50 |
| C9:PA16 | 52 | MBA | | | | |
| C10:PA17 | 42 | Certificate | 7 | Meyerton | 7 | 51/49 (female majority) |

Source: Researcher

The researcher assigned codes to the couples to facilitate the identification of the participants' perceptions of the study. The study contains ten couples, and a couple is represented by the letter C; therefore, the codes are C1-C10. Furthermore, for this study, PA stands for participants.

Because there are two members in a couple, each C code denotes two participants; therefore, the codes are assigned as follows:

For the first couple, the codes assigned are:

C1:PA1 = Couple 1, participant 1

C1:PA2 = Couple 1, participant 2

For the second couple, the codes assigned are:

C2:PA3 = Couple 2, participant 3

C2:PA4 = Couple 2, participant 4

3.9 CODING

The interview transcripts were analysed (coded) using ATLAS.ti 22. According to Soratto, *et al.* (2020:2), ATLAS.ti is a valuable tool for data analysis in qualitative research; it can be used with various theoretical frameworks and data analysis methods, including thematic analysis.

The present study uses a thematic analysis method of data analysis. Thematic analysis is a research technique for arbitrarily interpreting the data through methodological coding and a theme- or pattern identification process (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

The interview transcripts were auto-coded through a text search tool to depict participants' understanding of copreneurship in the Vaal Triangle; this tool allowed the researcher to become familiar with participants' voices and their perceptions of couple-owned businesses, and allowed the researcher to begin the coding process.

According to Saldaña (2015:4), a code is a word or a brief phrase to which the researcher assigns a particular piece of data. Whether the researcher uses lump or split coding affects how much code is produced. Split coding refers to dividing parts into separate portions. In contrast, lump coding refers to assigning a single code that encapsulates the substance of a section (Saldaña, 2015:23). The researcher used a lump coding approach for this exploration. Saldaña (2015:3) describes 32 different coding techniques in his guidebook. The researcher mostly used the descriptive coding method in this study, which Saldaña (2015:88) notes as appropriate for practically all qualitative investigations and as especially helpful for a researcher who is still learning how to code. In descriptive coding, words or short phrases are used to describe the data.

Following the initial coding, the codes were categorised into three organisational levels; these included six primary themes, 19 sub-themes, and 69 categories. These codes and sub-categories are presented in Table 3.2 as the themes and sub-themes for this study. The following section details the empirical findings of the study.

Table 3.2: Findings of the study

| THEMES | SUB-THEMES |
|---|---|
| MAIN THEME 1: ROLE ALLOCATIONS IN COPRENEURSHIP | |
| 1.1 Copreneurship roles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management and Administration • Human Resources and Finance • Operational • Sales and Marketing |
| 1.2 Role determination | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masculinity and femininity characteristics • Skill and knowledge • Work-passion • Personality type |
| MAIN THEME 2: BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP | |
| 2.1 Management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional-focused • Family-focused |
| 2.1.1 Professional-focused | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared vision • Business commitment • Work ethics • Separate personal- and work life |
| 2.1.2 Family-focused | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mutual understanding and agreement • Immediate conflict resolution • Communication • Religion |
| 2.2 Nature | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits • Risks |
| 2.3 Employees' work relation in a copreneurship | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of professionalism • Gender stereotype • Work culture |
| 2.3.1 Level of professionalism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear • Respect and loyalty • Insecurity |
| 2.3.2 Gender stereotypes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of recognition • Preference communication |
| 2.3.3 Work culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive dynamism • Employee manipulation |
| 2.4 Strategies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication-focused |

| THEMES | SUB-THEMES |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-role engagement • Practice openness • Combine work trips and family holidays • Flexible work and break time schedules |
| 2.5 Effect on family planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family goals • Skill development • Childbearing • Family connections • Shared responsibilities • Quality of life |
| MAIN THEME 3: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT | |
| 3.1 Conflict management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructive dialogue • Team decision-making • Trust in partner's judgement • Understanding • Learning and working smart • Power of love |
| MAIN THEME 4: BUSINESS GROWTH | |
| 4.1 Growth measurement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business success • Personal success • Social investment |
| 4.1.1 Business success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous projects • Good customer feedback • Achievement of yearly business objectives |
| 4.1.2 Personal success | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material evidence • Creating legacy |
| 4.1.3 Social investment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wealth creation • People empowerment • Changing lives |
| MAIN THEME 5: FAMILY MEMBERS MANAGEMENT IN COPRENEURSHIP | |
| 5.1 Family members management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job dismissal • No preferential treatment • Clear job descriptions • Counselling |

| THEMES | SUB-THEMES |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| MAIN THEME 6: RECOMMENDATIONS | |
| Recommendations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct proper risk assessment • Seek legal advice • Ensure stable marriage • Spirituality and religion • Healthy communication • Trust and love • Common goal |

Source: Researcher

NOTE

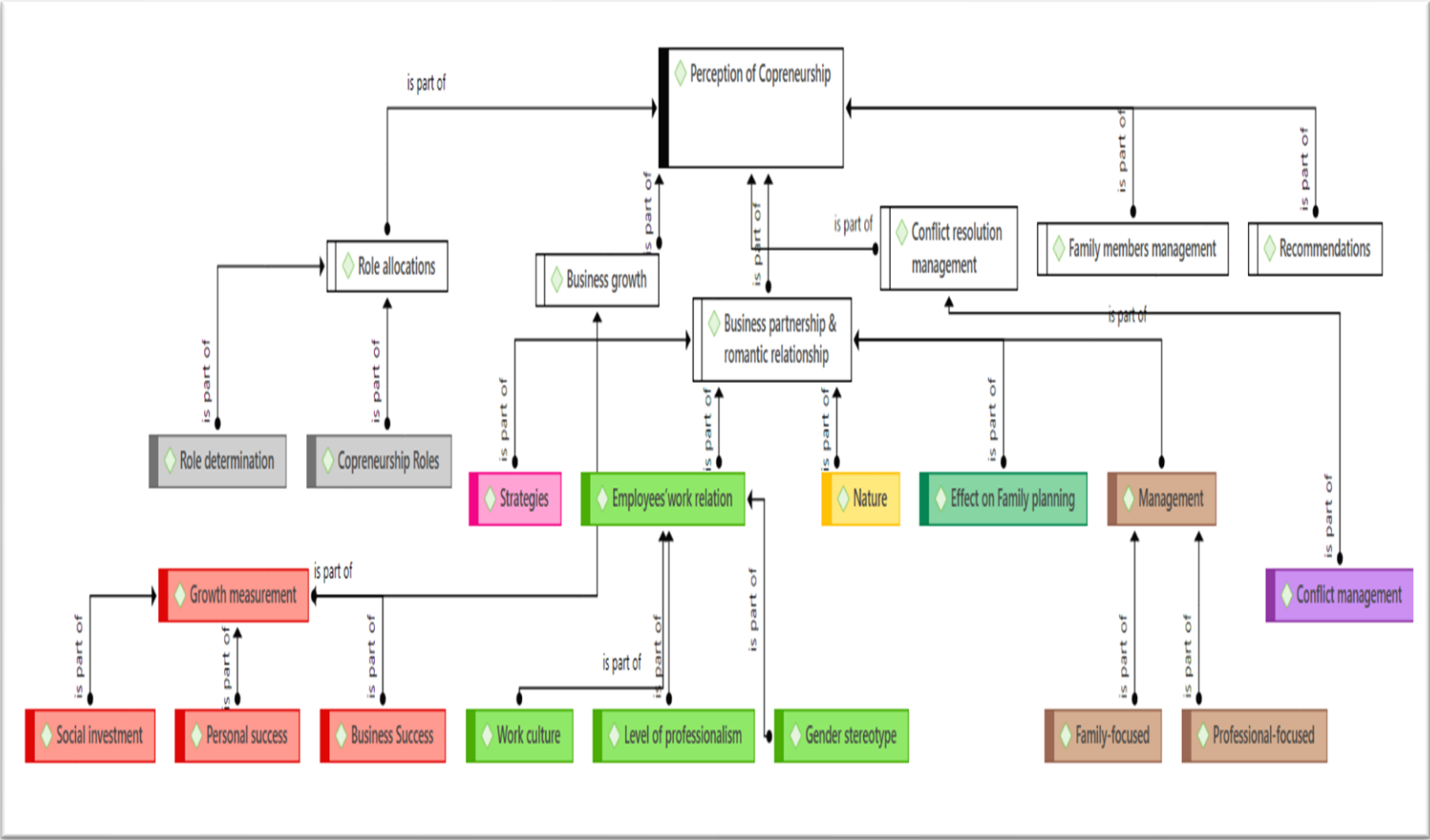
- C1 = couple 1
- C10 = couple 10
- PA1 = participant 1
- C1:PA1 = couple 1, participant 1
- Secb-Q2A = section B, question 2 A in the transcript

The primary objective of this study is to explore the perception of copreneurship in the Vaal Triangle, as indicated in Chapter 1, Section 1.4.

3.10 EMPIRICAL QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

The interviews with the owners of ten copreneurial businesses regarding their perception of copreneurship in the Vaal Triangle yielded several opinions, categorised into six main themes. Figure 3.1 below illustrates all the themes that emerged from this study.

Figure 3.1: Themes in the study



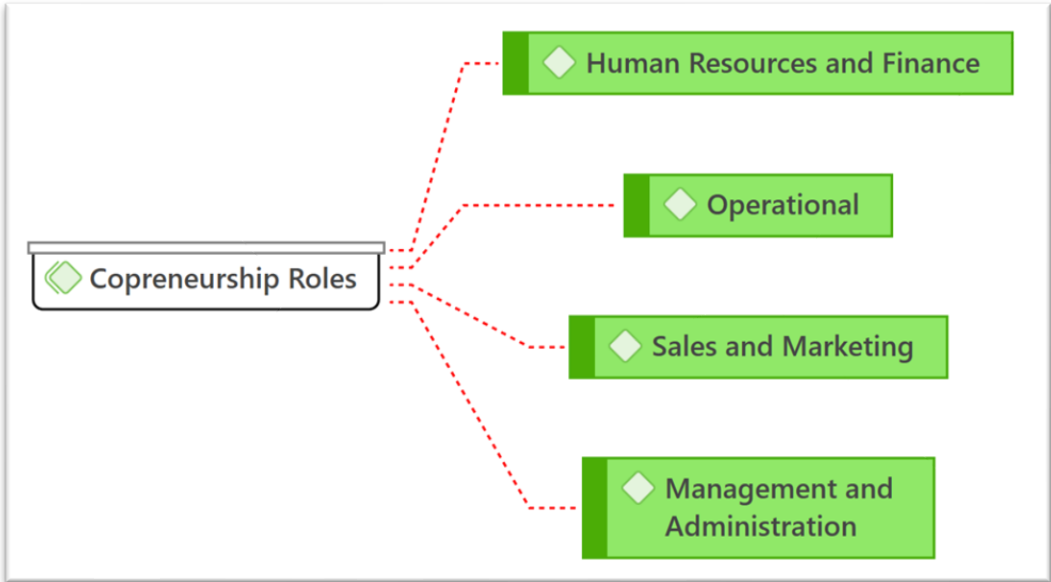
Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

3.10.1 Findings on role allocations in copreneurship

This theme seeks to investigate the roles occupied by each partner in the copreneurial businesses involved in this study, and how the roles were determined. The participants were asked to describe their day-to-day involvement in the business and the rationale behind how they split the roles. The findings on role allocations in copreneurship comprise copreneurship roles and role determination. The sub-themes of these two groups are presented in figure 3.2 below.

3.10.1.1 Copreneurship Roles

Figure 3.2: Copreneurship Roles



Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

Management and Administration

The results indicate that couples who co-own enterprises each have different roles in the business, and their day-to-day involvement is closely related to their titles in the business. For example, in the job descriptions for managerial and administrative positions, couples highlighted responsibilities and obligations that are related to

management and administration. One participant commented that she is attentive to people, thereby guaranteeing that their representatives and customer services are handled well, and that goods and prices are correct and accurate.

“So, I will say that my wife does the admin side.” (C9:PA16, SecB-Q2A)

“I'm people focused. I'm more hands-on with people. That is why it puts me on the admin side of things: I'm hands-on with people. So, I ensure that our people representative and customer services are right and that our product and pricing are correct. So, we overlap a lot.” (C9:PA15, SecB-Q2A).

Participants mentioned that they are both actively involved in the business. Further, couples complement each other's roles, as reflected in the quotes below.

“When it comes to the finances, to balance the workload, my wife will do the invoices.” (C1:PA2, SecB-Q2A)

“Okay, I'm more than an accountant. I do manage the admin side of the business, the whole administration.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q2A)

“So, it's constantly evolving. It all depends on where we are in the business and the need. So, if I just go back earlier, some years ago. He was heading up the financial services because he was very experienced in the financial sector.” (C5:PA9, SecB-Q2A)

“...and he helps out with the administration and decision-making. So, for example, let's say we need to write the company's constitution or we need to make applications. He will go ahead and start writing.” (C7:PA12, SecB-Q2A)

“I wanted to say the payroll and human resources also include that. So, I also do HR for the business and the payroll for the business, but I oversee the entire administration.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q2A)

The findings suggest that couples are collaborating to make the companies successful. Both partners carefully allocate and fulfil their respective roles. The partner involved in

the managerial and administrative tasks, regardless of gender, ensures that everything related to administration in the business is in order. However, it is vital to note that in most of the couples who participated in this study the female partners were responsible for the administration. This observation is in line with the literature on entrepreneurship and gender roles, which indicates the effects of occupational segregation and crowding. According to Marlow and McAdam (2013:117), labour markets have been characterised historically by vertical and horizontal segregation of women. Vertical segregation involves women in the workplace being concentrated in lower levels than their male counterparts; horizontal segregation involves women being over-represented in roles associated with low remuneration and skill levels. In many organisations, women handle the administrative function, thus decreasing the number of skilled males in administration-related roles. This automatically positions women as appropriate for the role, even in a copreneurship.

Human Resources and Finance

The study reveals that couples are actively involved in managing tasks related to Human Resources in their businesses. Due to the flat management structures in SMMEs, owners are responsible for all matters related to staff hiring, management, and dismissal. They are also responsible for the financial management of the business. The same is true with copreneurial venture owners who participated in this study.

“Initially, I started the business right, so I was an all-rounder, but as the business grew, she became a finance person when she came on board.” (C8:PA14, SecB-Q2A)

“Even sometimes, in finance, he would have to step in and make the proposal with the finance lady. He is the one who knows the rates for all the SETAs. He would charge them. They have their rates, and we have to know those rates. He gets involved, and then they would work it out regarding travelling and accommodation for facilitators. So, we don't have specific role allocations; otherwise, the absence of one will mean the business must stand still until they return.” (C8:PA13, SecB-Q2A)

“My husband is more finance, numbers, and stock. So, when he says operations, it is from that angle. He discusses deals with suppliers or discounts. So, you know that part of operations, the trucks, are they coming, is there enough stock, stock flow, things like that.” (C9:PA15, SecB-Q2A)

Each partner's educational and career background, skills, and personality determines who takes charge of the HR and Finance in the business. This finding correlates with Brannon *et al.* (2013:113), who assert that due to the nature of a romantic relationship, couples develop a better understanding of each other's abilities and limitations in both market and home labour compared to people who do not live together. This understanding is helpful in determining how copreneurs allocate roles in their businesses.

Operational

Another role that is mentioned by copreneurs is that of Operations Management. Although couples overlap in most of the roles in their businesses, male partners are predominantly tasked with Operations Management. According to El Shoubaki *et al.* (2021:3), the distribution of roles and power in copreneurship businesses often follow gendered social norms. The same is true with this role; men automatically opt to handle all activities that require masculinity and leadership, as stated below.

“Some roles need you to go to the site where construction is happening personally, say maybe there is road construction happening in Zone 7 or Pretoria. If you send a TLB and a truck there, and when you are at the site, and a problem arises, you must be there to attend to it, so there must be someone looking after the hardware business; that is where my wife comes in. So, if I am to put it, I am in charge of the operational side.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q2A)

“He is the visionary behind the operations, the main and basic operations of the business.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q2A)

“But he's more operational and more strategic, growing the business level. And I'm more in maintaining.” (C9:PA15, SecB-Q2A)

“I do most of the business side, like the admin, banking and things like that. So, anything that has to do with paperwork and stuff. So, I handle most of that and anything related to numbers, salaries, and everything I do. So, he's more operational.” (C10:PA17, SecB-Q2A)

The male partners state that they predominantly take care of operations in the business that are related to the technical, and usually labour-intensive nature, of day-to-day workings in their businesses. Although skills and previous career experience are vital factors in determining role-allocation in a copreneurial business, the male partners see the operational role as masculine and tend to take responsibility for the hard labour, allowing their wives to focus on other parts of the business. The finding aligns with research on entrepreneurship that states that the domain of entrepreneurship is generally historically popularised as an individualised act centred around identifying opportunities rooted in masculine traits (McAdam & Marlow, 2013:152).

Sales and Marketing

Another role mentioned in this study is Sales and Marketing. According to participants, this role is usually managed by a partner with related skills and experience. As noted, according to the literature on couple-owned businesses, the advantage of copreneurship is that couples grow to understand each other's unique gifts, strengths, and weaknesses in the business over time, which enables accurate resource allocation (Brannon et al., 2013:113).

“Initially, I started the business right, so I was an all-rounder, but as the business grew, she became a finance person when she came on board. I am stronger in marketing and securing business, so that's how we allocated our positions and roles. So, she's taking care of the financial side of the business.” (C8:PA14, SecB-Q2A)

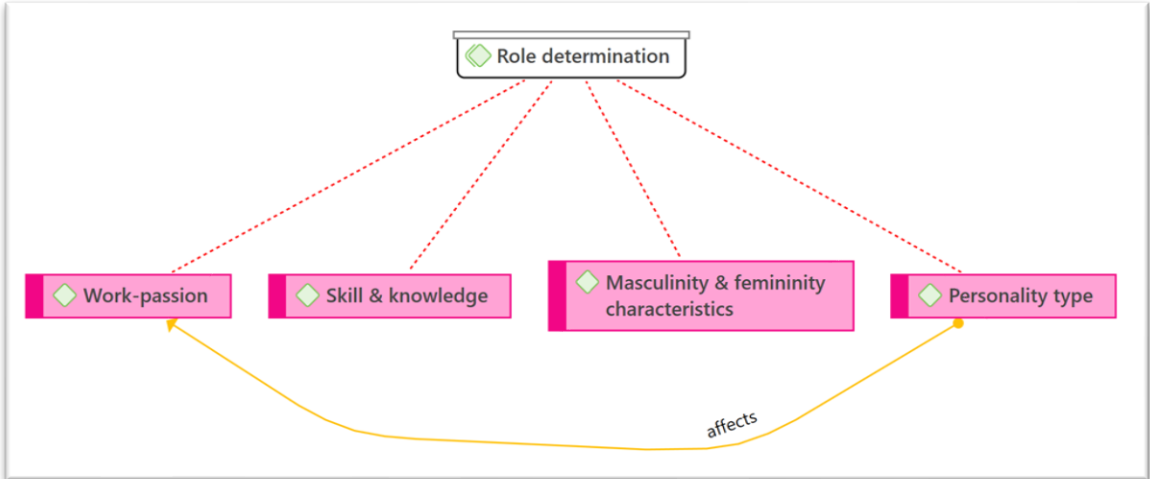
“So, things evolved and changed, but I think ultimately, he's more responsible for pushing sales and more of the visionary.” (C5:PA9, SecB-Q2A)

In conclusion, the results on role allocation indicate that copreneurs handle individual role-allocation based on various reasons, including social norms, skills, talents, and work experience.

3.10.1.2 Role Determination

Role determination is closely related to the discussion on role allocation. This theme emerges from the discussion on how copreneurs decide on and allocate responsibilities. Figure 3.3 shows the findings on role determination according to the participants of this study. Masculine and feminine characteristics, skills and knowledge, work passion, and personality type were noted as role determinants in the copreneurial businesses under study.

Figure 3.3: Role determination



Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

Masculinity and femininity characteristics

Masculine and feminine biases are apparent in the way the couples determined roles in the businesses. For example, female partners were often allocated roles regarded as “light” in physical labour. According to one of the couples:

“I prefer to do heavier work because I feel safer. That's not a good place for her. Like she'll go more with the clients to see the kitchen and towels. She sources all of that out for the clients.” (C1:PA2, SecB-Q2A)

The results indicate that, although the majority of the couples share most responsibilities in the business, the female partners are mainly tasked with office and administrative responsibilities. In contrast, male partners prefer challenging tasks that involve physical- and strategic thinking abilities. This is in line with McAdam and Marlow's (2013:153) finding that in copreneurial businesses, men usually occupy the leadership role, and women occupy support roles.

“My wife is in charge of the management, sales, clients and deliveries.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q2A)

“My partner being the husband, I would say he is the kind of person that wants to get things done. So, I think somehow in him making sure that things are done, it's kind of, I got to relax, and you know, I stepped back a bit which I feel it's not the right thing to do, but you know, it gives me that peace to know that at least my husband is in charge. However, I still do most things. He runs most of the business.” (C10:PA17, SecB-Q2A)

Although the couples interviewed for this study may be of the opinion that societal gender role expectations do not influence their role allocation decisions, it is evident that whatever role a partner assumes in the couple's household is transferred to the business to a certain degree. Men are deemed leaders of the household, and thus they are responsible for leadership roles in the businesses. The finding confirms the research that states that copreneurs can be affected by psychological and social processes that influence work and family-related role allocation decisions (Nimeshi, 2018:92). Thus, copreneurs usually function under traditional sex-role orientations; however, another study argues that women can feign submission to their spouses in the business context to avoid putting undue strain on the relationship, and to align with cultural assumptions (El Shoubaki *et al.*, 2021:16).

Skill and knowledge

Copreneurships are formed by couples who possess knowledge and various skills. The skills usually complement each other, thus allowing each partner to take responsibility for tasks related to their skills and knowledge base. According to El Shoubaki *et al.* (2021:18), couples get into business together because they work well as a team and have complementary competencies. In addition, some skills are transferable, and over time, couples tend to empower each other to the degree that when one person is absent, the remaining partner can continue running the business.

“I would call it the administration, you know. Naturally, there are lots of skills that I bring, and it was inevitable for me to be the one who oversees.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q2A)

“It is something he is comfortable doing; it's something that he knows and understands. And I'm creative, which is quite a lot more for me. So, if I had to do a lot of admin, although I do it, it worked better because we bring in different strengths. We came with varying sets of skills in the business, and I think it works better. I mean, I know a few couples who would come in, and maybe they share the same kind of knowledge and skill set, and then it never really works out, but I think it works out better when you bring in different skills and you kind of know each other's strengths and then you need to give each other that space. So, we did not speak about it, but it just became, you know, an automatic thing because mainly the company is driven by productions in television. So, I guess that's the field I have experience in, so it makes sense.” (C4:PA7, SecB-Q2A)

“And he had the necessary accreditations and qualifications, so he took on that part. He was also experienced in sales, and then because of my experience with administration, I remained on the burial side because that was the part that needed a lot more process and structure.” (C5:PA9, SecB-Q2A)

“I knew what I wanted to do but didn't know how. My husband will tell you if it were for him, he would work and get a salary and be fine. I was different. I knew that I got the experience I had for a reason. So, the things that I learned, and hence most

of the companies I worked for, were mainly white companies. I was exposed to many things most black people don't know about hair.” (C10:PA17, SecB-Q2A)

A high level of co-dependency is present in each couple, and each partner is aware of their unique contributions as individuals, as well as the power they possess when the two individuals support each other in the business. This finding confirms the findings of a study by Brannon *et al.* (2013:112) that notes that copreneurs value each other's advice.

Work-passion

Results of this study show that partners in copreneurial ventures are naturally driven into the roles they occupy by their passion. The freedom that comes with working with a spouse enables each partner to manage tasks they are generally interested in.

“My role is being hands-on in the business. Do you know why I'm hands-on, n? It's because I am the one who is 100% or more passionate about the business.” (C7:PA12 SecB-Q2A)

Stakeholder relations management is essential for business success, and the person tasked with the role in a couple-owned business is usually the person who is skilled and exhibits good interpersonal skills.

“So, he's growing, and I'm maintaining what we have. So yeah, I think that's how we separate the roles. I'm very much hands-on and very much people-facing. He's very strategic.” (C9:PA15, SecB-Q2A)

“Most people take hairdressing as a last resort when things fail in their careers. I came with that mentality of saying it would be a career for us. So, the minute I had that in mind, I just knew that this is how I wanted this thing to run. So, when my husband came, it was now a case of at least we can both do hair, we can both do everything, and we were not in a rush to hire more people.” (C10:PA17, SecB-Q2A)

The results indicate that role allocation in copreneurial ventures is influenced by each partner's passion, in combination with their skills, talents, and knowledge.

Personality type

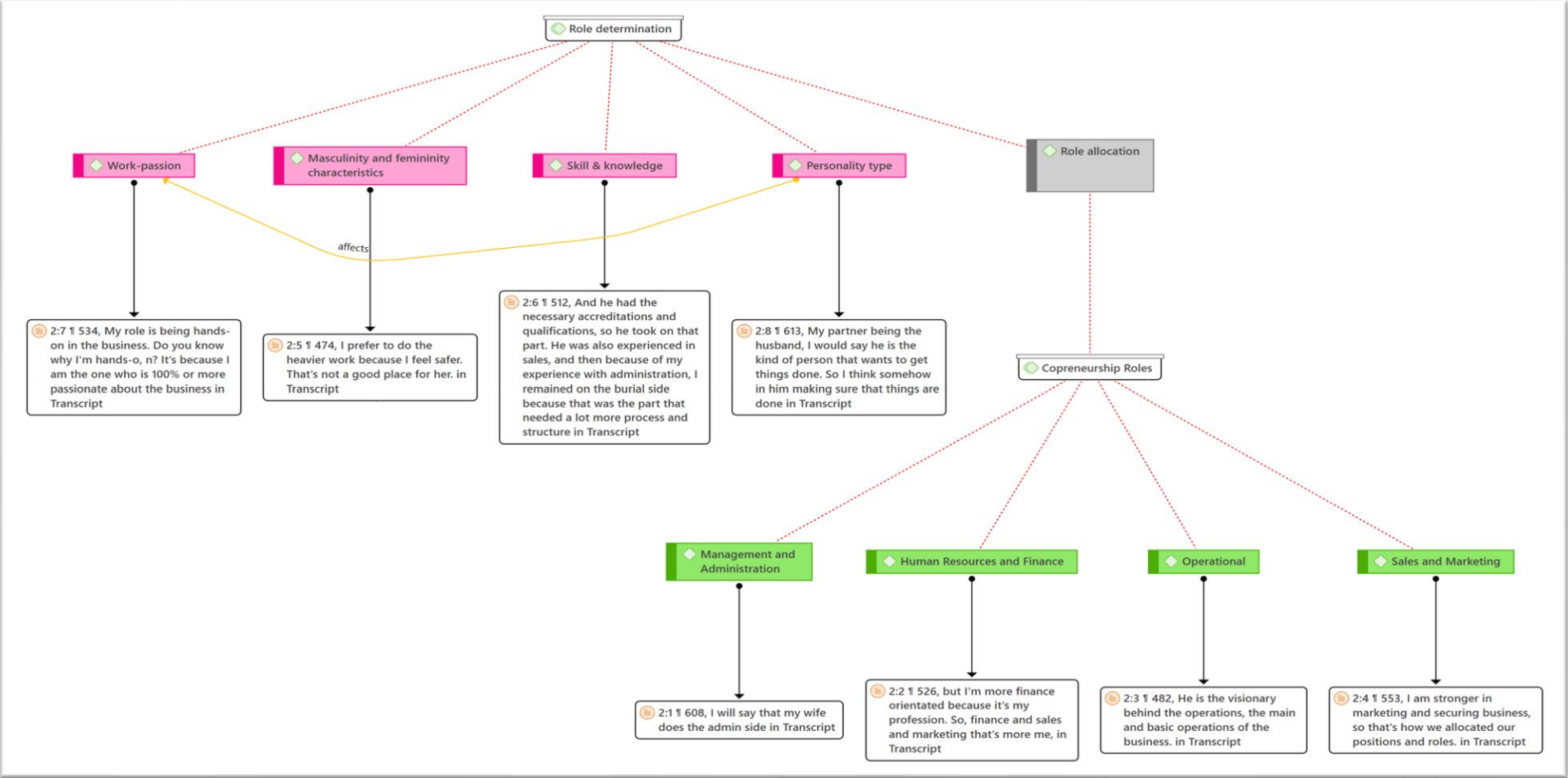
The findings indicate that an individual's personality type plays a significant role in how copreneurs determine role allocation in the business. The Big-5 model is a multidimensional method for defining personality. It measures openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism (Kerr *et al.*, 2018:12). According to research, these traits influence an individual's career choice and work performance.

"I think we kind of rest in what we are. And that is where sometimes we get those conflicts, you know, especially with people. So, he would want the departmental heads to report to him, and then he's a bit hard on them. And I'm like, no, but maybe there was a reason for their actions, let them try and explain, and he would be focused on the financial implications of their actions. So, he's more money and business-focused, and I care more about people." (C9:PA15, SecB-Q2A)

"My partner being the husband, I would say he is the kind of person that wants to get things done." (C10:PA17, SecB-Q2A)

Individual personalities vary, and although there are observable gender differences according to the Big-5 personality model, this did not significantly affect role allocation among copreneur participants in this study. Both genders occupied both "background roles" and "people-facing roles" based on their personalities, among other attributes.

Figure 3.4: Overview of role allocation



Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

3.10.2 Findings on business partnership and romantic relationship

The theme of investigation in this section is the couple's ability to manage the business and romantic partnerships in such a way that they do not affect each other. Referring to Table 3.1, the data findings on business partnerships and romantic relationships comprise five themes:

- Management of business and romantic partnerships,
- Nature of copreneurship,
- Employees' work relations in copreneurship,
- Strategies, and
- Effect on family planning.

3.10.2.1 Management

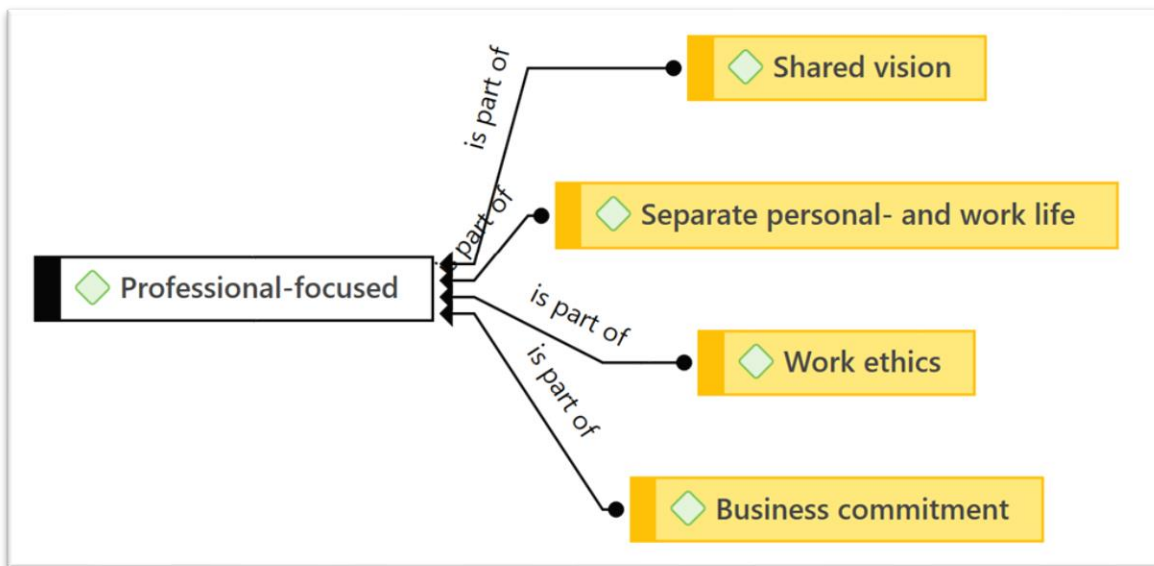
The findings on business and romantic partnership management is categorised according to professional-focused and family-focused management. A detailed account of the two sub-themes is discussed below.

Professional-focused management

Below is a discussion of couples' opinions on how they manage the dynamics of a business partnership and marriage; the results indicate professional-focused management. Figure 3.5 illustrates that participants apply professional principles in managing their intertwined relationships to succeed in the business. The principles are:

- Shared vision,
- Separate personal life and work,
- Work ethics, and
- Business commitment.

Figure 3.5: Professional-Focused Management



Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

Shared vision

The participants indicated that aligning personal and professional visions are necessary for a successful copreneurial venture. They mentioned that it is easier when the couple is working towards the same goals. Furthermore, because they already share a personal vision in the marriage, the business vision is directly linked to the family's success.

“He's pretty correct. What makes it work? I want to believe we don't plan to be honest, but I think we share the same vision about the business, and I understood what he wanted to achieve with all of this. So, the other EXCO members may not quite see it the way we see it.” (C5:PA9, SecB-Q2C)

“I think what contributes to the business not affecting our relationship is the fact that we are both pushing hard. We see ourselves doing so well in the future; you will not hear either of us complaining about a shortage or a need that has not been met.” (C7:PA12, SecB-Q2C)

The results indicate that for copreneurs to balance romance and business, they must first agree on the business's future. This finding is congruent with Machek *et al.*

(2015:351). They suggest that the positive benefits of family control also exist in copreneurial businesses, including the synergistic effects of a shared vision for the future and shared values.

Business commitment

Participants display a high level of commitment to their businesses. This finding is in line with Belenzon *et al.* (2016:2617), who note that married owners might demonstrate strong altruistic motives, especially when they have children. They may be motivated to work hard to provide a better life for their children. One participant mentioned that it is vital for them, as leaders of the organisation, to present a united front to their employees. Another participant noted that poor management of personal issues might have detrimental effects on the business. Issues such as losing clients' confidence and ultimately losing their business, are mentioned as some potential outcomes of mixing business and personal matters in a copreneurial venture.

“It makes things easy when we meet our staff, present a united front, and speak the same language because we would have had a meeting and concluded decisions at home.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q2C)

“The loopholes you create within the business by mismanagement will take you back, and you will end up losing clients, so for that reason, you must stay focused and remember that you do not want to end up losing what you have because of personal disagreements. Even if something angers me, I have to wake up in the morning to serve my clients with what I promised them because my emotion is temporary and will pass, but if I do not please my clients, they will leave and never come back, so my commitment is to wake up in the morning, get into my truck and do what is required, same applies to her.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q2C)

The discipline required to separate work and family issues when at home is evident in some of the participants' responses. For example, one participant mentioned that when they get home, they switch their attention to the family and try not to discuss work challenges.

“But I think we try and remind ourselves that some of these things are not. This is not where we want to bring it. When we get home, we don't want to bring too many of whatever challenges or is happening in the office. But I think for us, it's just really having a structured way of engaging on business challenges.” (C4:PA7, SecB-Q2C)

In their answers to the interview questions related to managing the double dynamism of a business partnership and marriage, the couples mentioned that it is crucial to have a professional structure to guide deliberations, and to be in agreement on what is allowed in the home and the office. This is reflected in participant 7's view.

“We agreed that we need a structure to say we will discuss this in the office, not in the boardroom. We needed to decide how to do it because once you do it at home, it can be clouded by emotions.” (C4:PA7, SecB-Q2C)

It is evident that the couples make a conscious effort to separate family and business matters, and that they actively manage the two domains so that they do not affect each other.

Work ethics

The interviews reveal that participants consider work ethics important in managing the intricate mix of business and family in a copreneurial business. For example, participant 7 indicated they are not a couple at work but professionals.

“I mean, one of the things we did that helped us from the beginning was always to remember that when we're in the office, we're not a couple. So, that's why eating together is so crucial for us because that is when we come together and we're going to have lunch like you would with a friend. And then after that, he would go back to his office, and he would do what he does, and I would do what I'm doing and when it's time to leave, he would be like, oh, what time are we leaving? And let's pack and go.” (C4:PA7, SecB-Q2C)

Participant 13 further mentioned that they respect work hours in the same way they would expect of all their employees.

“We teach learners how they should conduct themselves in the workplace. We tell them about workplace relationships, like when you find a husband and wife working together; they are young, they just got married, we tell them that they should be professional at work.” (C8:PA13, SecB-Q2C)

Participants mentioned that they maintain a united front in the office to ensure that work ethics are observed. To this end, couples behave in a very professional manner, as shown in their views below.

“I think that one is easy because my husband is so strict. When we are here at work, I wears that hat. Even when he addresses me in front of them, he says this is my MD, and I also introduce him as the Operations Director, so here at work, it's work stuff. We don't have the issues. At first, when we started, it was hard for me to take some instructions from him when we had personal problems, and he sat me down, and we talked and agreed that when we are at work, we cannot focus on home issues.” (C8:PA13, SecB-Q2C)

“First of all, we don't want our subordinates to see that there's anything amiss. They must always see us in the same light, so when we come here, either he can keep his corner if he doesn't want to talk to me, and I can keep mine, but we don't want our employees to feel any instability towards us, because we are actually in some kind of way.” (C6:PA11, SecB-Q2C)

This section on work ethics highlights how copreneurs respect their businesses and how they have put systems in place to ensure that their romantic relationship does not affect employee experience. The results in this section correspond with findings by Brannon *et al.* (2013:112), which state that copreneurs are more likely to make decisions that result in greater family satisfaction and work-life satisfaction.

Separate personal- and work life

In their interviews, the couples revealed that they conduct themselves professionally, and are thus skilled in separating work-related concerns from home duties. Couple 1 went so far as to build a separate office, detached from the main house, to separate

the two roles. However, most of the couples in this study state that it is still challenging to separate the two worlds, as they are intricately intertwined.

“We try and separate it the minute we get home. For example, the way we've designed our house now, the office is separated from the house. We don't want it to be like waking up and going to work in the same space. So, it's separate from the house. But sometimes, it is challenging to try and break the whole bringing the work-to-home thing. Yeah, especially when we are on holiday.” (C1:PA2, SecB-Q2C)

“I think you never really break it, to be honest. Because it'll always be something you are talking about, I would sometimes have something in my head and be like, "ahh, you know what I thought about for that client's house?" Then suddenly, that becomes a topic. Yeah, we do. I mean, there have been little "heat buttons" where, you know, certain things that he'll do.... Yeah, it isn't easy. We always talk about work every day. Because it's always, you know, something's always work-related.” (C1:PA1, SecB-Q2C)

Participant 7 attributed their ability to separate work and personal issues to their previous professional experience. She mentions that they learned during their time in conventional employment that, as a professional, one must leave one's problems at the door when entering the work environment and deal with them again when one returns home.

“Look, there will be days when they could see that okay, maybe the bosses are not happy, or something is up, but we don't fight in the office. We don't; I don't know, maybe because we worked before? Perhaps that way helped. I don't know whether it's a secret tool or something. But I think if you've had a time where you've worked in the corporate space, and you've experienced what it is to go to work with a problem, but having to take off your hat of someone with a problem and put on your employee hat and get on with the work. Maybe that's what has helped us is that both of us have had more than ten years of corporate work experience.” (C4:PA7, SecB-Q2C)

While the couples agree that it is challenging to manage the domains of business and marriage relationships simultaneously, they overcome the challenges by being tolerant

and allowing each other the space they need. Furthermore, one couple mentioned that during board meetings, the interests of the business take precedence over emotional engagements or arguments. This explains how couples could disagree during board meetings and clash on work-related matters, but upon arriving home to a loving domestic environment, any issues at the office are put aside. These are evidenced by the following participants' views.

“They will always clash, but we build and keep building character to try and tolerate each other so that when there's a problem in the family, it does not escalate to the business and vice versa.” (C5:PA10, SecB-Q2C)

We are both in the EXCO, and we sometimes challenge each other in the boardroom and fight about work matters. She would expect me to be on her side and vice versa. I want her to be on my side, and when I get out of the boardroom, and I'm angry that why she was not on my side, and then keep quiet in the car, driving back home, but when you open the door, we got kids and family and then we put that aside.” (C5:PA10, SecB-Q2C)

“Honestly speaking, it will always be a challenge. We overcome that by tolerance or giving each other space to breathe C5:PA10, SecB-Q2C).”

According to participant 13, the discipline of separating roles applies at home. Therefore, when at home, the couple strives to switch their focus to home-related matters. However, the separation is not always simple, as noted below by participants 13 and 16.

“I also applied the same rule because I do not want us to discuss work when we are at home. We need to come to that mindset only when it's important, like when we are preparing proposals and all that and then we have to take work home, there, we don't have a choice, but we can't bring home issues to work. So, I think that also helps because we have staff around our midst. We have to have that boundary as leaders and want to practice whatever we preach.” (C8:PA13, SecB-Q2C)

“She always complains that I must introduce her as my partner, and that's my wife; it ends there. It is very difficult because we fight at work, and we come home; I want to sit like this and have a meal and then go back and make love, so she is

still stuck on her emotions. I could separate issues from work, but she struggled at first.” (C9:PA16, SecB-Q2C)

Separating work and family matters is a continuous process throughout the journey of copreneurship. The participants mentioned that it is more complex at the start of the venture or when the business partnership is new; however, most agree that it improves with time as the partners adjust to each other in the professional environment. According to Mário and Patricia (2018:8), failure to manage the separation of work and family effectively can negatively affect family life. However, El Shoubaki *et al.* (2021:133) argue that this flexibility of work-home boundaries gives copreneurs a competitive advantage in most cases.

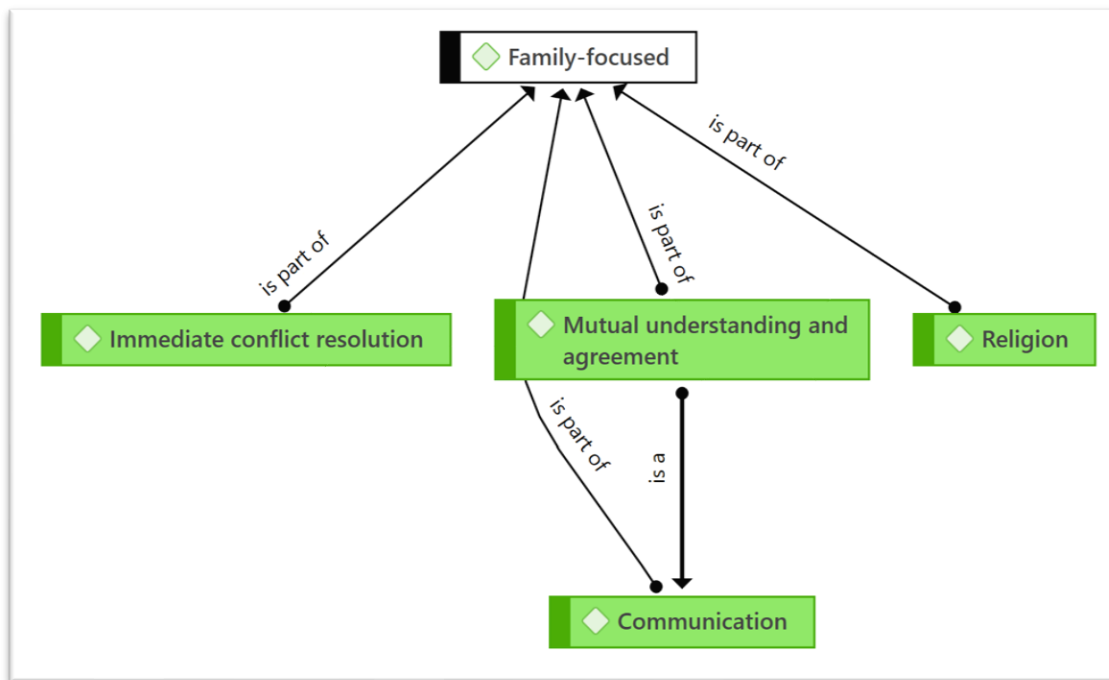
Family-focused Management

The below section on family-focused management covers four sub-themes. They are shown in Figure 3.6 as:

- Mutual understanding and agreement,
- Immediate conflict resolution,
- Communication, and
- Religion.

These are strategies used by copreneurs to manage the intertwined domains of business and family.

Figure 3.6: Family-Focused Management



Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

Mutual Understanding and Agreement

The couples mentioned the importance of mutual understanding as a critical foundation for a successful copreneurship. The findings indicate that truly listening and hearing the other person's point of view would be difficult without regard for each other. According to (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:112), couples may manage mutual understanding and agreement well because, as life partners, they voluntarily choose to be with each other based on personal, emotional, social, and psychological standards. Those standards are expected to be transferable to the copreneurship.

“How you go about learning how to operate and work once respect is established, and you listen to each other, then everything will be possible, but then if there is no respect for each other.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q2C)

Participants believe that everything emanates from a mutual understanding from the very beginning. Participant 3 expressed that the way in which things start when the business partnership is established, is of critical importance.

“I believe that everything comes from a mutual understanding, from the word go when you meet or when you get into a partnership and start working, how you go about learning how to operate and work once respect is established, and you listen to each other, then everything will be possible, but then if there is no respect for each other it is a problem.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q2C)

Participant 12 mentioned the importance of agreement and mutual understanding in a copreneurial partnership. She elaborated on how they divide responsibilities in a manner that accommodates each other.

“You see how busy I am at work; during the weekend, you will find me at the shop in Soweto, whereas during the week, I am busy training people, so there's no time. So, we complement each other, understand each other, are alright, and have no problems. The only thing we experience is fatigue because you will find that the things that couples usually do, we don't do; we will see them later. But we agree that let's push here so that we are in a stable place.” (C7:PA12, SecB-Q2C)

Participant 17 stated that mutual agreement is easier when a couple had a friendship before becoming romantically involved.

“I think we are friends more than anything. I don't even think about him as my husband when we are at work. If we're at home, yes, we are husband and wife. If things need to be done, he will say do this. If it's something that I need him to do, I also tell him to do this.” (C10:PA17, SecB-Q2C)

Establishing mutual understanding and agreement results in the development of a special bond through interacting in an additional setting, namely in the business environment. According to Helmle *et al.* (2014:112), a couple's bond can encourage communication behaviours that enhance the relationship. This can help them to manage conflict and effectively reduce tension. It can also improve positive emotions, such as joy, personal satisfaction, and autonomy.

Immediate conflict resolution

Participants identified the importance of conflict resolution as a key factor to consider in a copreneurial business venture. Participant 3 indicated that because the option to leave the business partnership is not readily available, there is an incentive to resolve conflict as soon as it arises. This is in line with findings by Madanoglu *et al.* (2020:994), stating that married couples would be incentivised to resolve conflict effectively because the family's wealth could be at stake.

“Again, we taught ourselves to address issues as they arise, so they get resolved, and maybe we have been lucky. We hardly wake up without talking to each other, so I think that makes it easy.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q2C)

Participant 7 indicated that, similar to the way conventional employees take leave of absence to handle personal problems, copreneurs should do the same if there is a problem between the couple, and come back to work when the issue is resolved.

“We've had to learn how to deal with those kinds of issues. So, by the time we were running a business together, we immediately had to learn to take off that hat of saying, okay, we've got issues and problems and come back. If not, if the problem is too big, then instead take time off and don't bring it to the office. So, take time off like anybody else who has a challenge or a problem, put in sick leave or your annual leave and take time off, don't bring it to work.” (C4:PA7, SecB-Q2C)

Although conflict is inevitable in any partnership, copreneurs in this study display the ability to manage it in a way that does not adversely affect their business and family relations.

Communication

Nearly all the participants mentioned communication as essential in a copreneurship. According to them, discussing issues as they arise is the best way to manage a healthy relationship in couple-owned businesses. Matzek *et al.* (2010:64) argue that good

communication between spouses regarding the business creates a shared meaning and a belief that the copreneurship is worthy of their efforts.

“You must learn to communicate with each other as partners, and if one of you is violent, they tend to mess things up, just like with kids, if you are used to disciplining children the old-fashioned way. When our parents thought that violence was a form of discipline, they would give us a hiding without making us understand why. Communication helps solve problems.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q2C)

Participant 5 mentioned that it is vital for them as a couple to discuss up front how they would manage challenges arising from the business partnership. She mentioned that they discuss how they would deal with the insecurities of both partners.

“So even when we went into business, we had lengthy discussions, part of them included, what would happen when we are years in business together, and there are issues of insecurities, for instance, from my side as a woman, how are you going to handle that? What will happen? We talked about that. Or if you are going to have insecurities about me working with men, for instance. So, we will talk about those things.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q2C)

According to participant 6, communication is not a problem in their relationship, but managing it well can still be a challenge. She mentioned the importance of a constructive approach when communicating about personal or business matters.

“If it is at home, like any couple would manage a disagreement, there's nothing special about not agreeing on aspects. Whether it's personal, business, whether it's... how we deal with it, is how we deal with any disagreement. How we deal with it here is no different from how we deal with it at home, where I'm going to be open. I usually send him a message if I am unhappy with something. That way, I can control my emotions and what I want to say. I find that it's easier when I'm not happy about something that I text because then I can control what I say, read it over, and hear myself say it, unlike just splurging it out, so that's how I deal with it at home.” (C6:PA11, SecB-Q2C)

The issue of communication is central to the way in which copreneurs manage business and home domains. Danes and Jang (2013:46) cite that it is vital to have continual, effective communication between the partners regarding the business vision and goals. However, Matzek *et al.* (2010:64) argue that over-communication regarding business concerns may result in conflict.

Religion

Copreneurs, being spouses, usually share the same values and a similar belief system. Participant 6 mentions the importance of their faith in the success of their partnership.

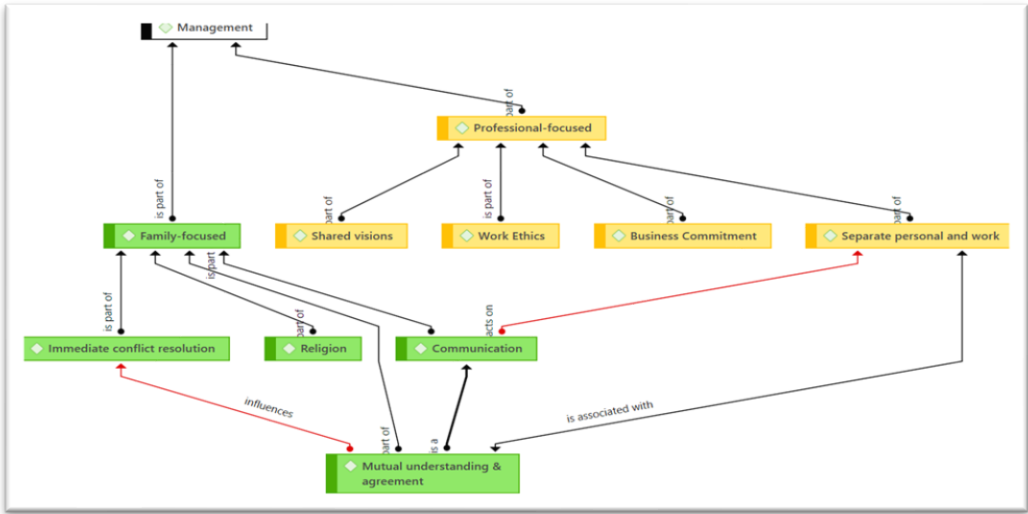
“Look, I attribute our success rate in managing that part of our lives to our Christian foundation. So, the fact that we are Christians, and I have been very passionate about being in a space where men, Christian men, come together to discuss their lives.” (C3:PA6, SecB-Q2C)

The participant noted the importance of his religious community and its critical role in shaping his character as a family man, which also guides him in his approach to career and work-related challenges.

“Advising one another on how to carry yourself as a husband and a father and how to separate work commitments from family life commitments. Not that it has been easy, you know, from the get-go. But having been exposed to that environment where I listen to these voices of other men saying this is how they experienced life over the years. Them talking about some of the issues in their families, mainly because of their careers. One listened to such people and began to introspect and say, but where could I be going wrong? In my case, therefore, what do I need to be careful of? Where do I improve? You know, it helps you because you can self-correct even before she could complain about me paying too much time to my work and not giving her enough attention before it gets there. I can say, Okay, I think I've been doing too much and perhaps even neglecting her.” (C3:PA6, SecB-Q2C)

Although most participants did not mention the importance of religion, it is a cornerstone of the success of couple 3's copreneurship.

Figure 3.7: An overview of the management of business and romantic relationship



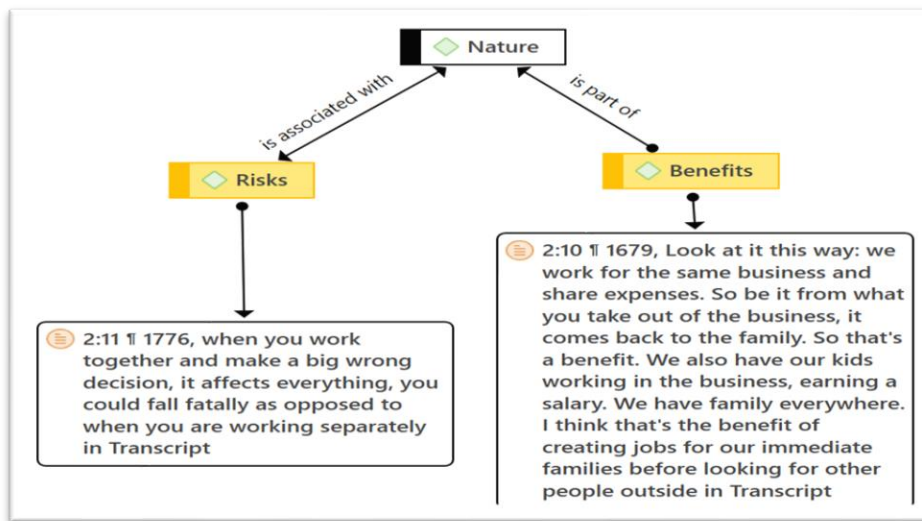
Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

The findings on strategies that couples employ to manage the domains of business and romance indicate that the process is continuous, and requires conscious effort and commitment from both partners. The next theme that emerged from the research concerns the nature of copreneurship.

3.10.2.2 Nature of Copreneurship

The researcher asked copreneurs about their view of the advantages and disadvantages of copreneurship. The question was intended to unpack the nature of copreneurship. According to findings from this study, and the reviewed literature, the nature of copreneurship comprises benefits and risks, as shown in Figure 3.8.

Figure 3.8: The Nature of Copreneurship



Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

Benefits

Participants identify the benefits and advantages of copreneurship, including:

- Mutual growth and family legacy,
- Common vision and goal,
- Enhanced closeness and communication,
- Transparency,
- Trust,
- Promotion of hard work,
- Fulfilment, and
- Discipline.

Mutual growth and family legacy

Findings indicate that copreneurship provides employment benefits for family members.

“Look at it this way: we work for the same business and share expenses. So be it from what you take out of the business, it comes back to the family. So that's a

benefit. We also have our kids working in the business, earning a salary. We have family everywhere. I think that's the benefit of creating jobs for our immediate families before looking for other people outside.” (C9:PA16, SecB-Q2D)

Participant 3 mentioned the advantage of shared financial benefits.

“Another advantage is that whatever profits that you make, you know they will benefit you as a family. Sometimes I know that our profit was R2 000, but my wife only gives me R1 000. Even though I won't get the other R1 000, I know that it didn't go missing, but it would have been used for our benefit. You will find that it was used for household decorations. It didn't go to waste.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q2D)

Another advantage that emerges is business continuity in the absence of another partner.

“And I know I can continue the projects that are running right now. So, there will always be continuation when it comes to your business.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q2D)

Copreneurship is an ideal way to build a legacy that can be passed on to the next generation.

“And it's easy even to migrate your children towards the business. You know the vision, so it's easy for us to see which child takes after who and migrate them accordingly. So, the legacy that you build is not built by one person who, when they leave, takes it with them. So, you know that when they leave, there will still be a continuation.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q2D)

“It's a legacy, an inheritance, so in some way, in your heart, you are like, why would you want to mess this up? I mean, we have children, and we need to think of them and what kind of legacy to leave them, so even if we probably said let's split in marriage, I don't know if we would break what we have done so far in the business.” (C4:PA7, SecB-Q2D)

“I think the advantage of working with your spouse is we are bringing money home. We are building a legacy together.” (C8:PA13, SecB-Q2D)

Another finding is that success in the business impacts happiness in the home. “It's not easy; it's fighting that's tiring and all that, but it gets better with time. The reward comes when deals are closed, and we are awarded contracts. It becomes a celebration at work and home.” (C8:PA13, SecB-Q2D)

Findings indicate that couples who are in business together have an incentive to work hard, as it is for the long- and short-term benefit of themselves and their loved ones. This agrees with Belenzon *et al.* (2016:2617) findings that copreneurs work harder because they are motivated to leave a lasting legacy for their children.

Common vision and goal

Findings indicate that copreneurs have an added advantage in business because they usually share the same vision. This finding agrees with El Shoubaki *et al.* (2021:5), who point out that the copreneurs' strength comes from sharing not only the company and their household but also their life goals.

“Look, for me, one of the biggest advantages is that, I did allude to this earlier on when I said to you, it's crucial that you have a vision, and both of you can buy into that vision because that's where the partnership starts in the business. You have to pull in the same direction, right? So, it's a lot easier, you know, for a couple to adopt that posture. Because they know that if we don't speak the same language, we don't have the same vision. We don't pull in the same direction. If this thing goes wrong, we are out. It's going to affect us negatively. So whatever efforts we put into it, we both know this is for our benefit. Our sacrifices have to go with that. We know that in the end. You know, the sun will shine on both of us. So that's one significant advantage of being in business together as a couple. The fact that you pursue common interests.” (C3:PA6, SecB-Q2D)

“So, I think in any business, you need to have a person that has the interests at heart as opposed to working with a person being a business partner outside the scope of husband and wife. It only works if you guys have a common goal and vision. But if we have different visions, we'll go two separate ways. So instead of converging, we will start drifting apart because we do not see things the same way. So, for example, one would feel that they are doing a lot for this thing.” (C8:PA13, SecB-Q2D)

“We see the same vision; we follow the same rules. We've got the same ethics. I know he will not treat customers like trash because I'm not around, or he will not beat people up. So, we are very much in sync in terms of our beliefs.” (C9:PA15, SecB-Q2D)

Business partnerships are challenging, and goal alignment among the owners is key to the success of a business. Participants in this study mentioned that partnering with a spouse is the best way of ensuring synergy when it comes to a vision and goals. The finding correlates with findings by Machek *et al.* (2015:351) that suggest that the positive benefits of family control also exist in copreneurial businesses, including the synergistic effects resulting from the shared values of the copreneur unit.

Enhanced closeness and communication

Findings indicate that being in a business partnership with a spouse enhances romance in the relationship.

“I think it keeps us closer, and we grow together. So, you know what's the exciting thing now that you brought up the other business he tried: if your partner, okay, like my husband, is in something else, I am the outsider, and I always have an opinion. So, I always tell him, “Don't do this”. But he's not listening to me because he and his partner are making decisions. And then things happen, and he realises that he should have listened to me, you get what I'm saying.” (C1:PA1, SecB-Q2D)

Participant 5 attributed the increased romance and bond between copreneurs to time; copreneur partners spend more time together than dual-career partners. According to Helmle *et al.* (2014:112), a couple's bond can encourage communication behaviours that enhance the relationship.

“Then, of course, the advantages of being together all the time. It might be tiring to some people, but as a couple, other people might say that you grow wary of each other, but you realise as the years..., we are 20 years married now this year. So, you recognise that as the years go by, those issues that we saw to be issues where we spend too much time together and we are going to bore each other are not the

case. But as years go by, you realise that the children grow up and being together is a treasure. We don't have to talk; we can even be in the same room. We can sit next to each other without talking; we are content with that. And this was built by the fact that we did spend a lot of time together.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q2D)

“Indeed, it does keep you together. You are bound to spend quality time together because the vision is the same, interests are the same, and we are pursuing this purpose by setting goals for yourselves. So, it is a significant advantage for a couple.” (C3:PA6, SecB-Q2D)

Findings in this section indicate that copreneurship positively impacts marriage. The finding is in alignment with previous research on copreneurship. Brannon *et al.* (2013:112) cite that, unlike other couples, copreneurs have an additional setting in which they can nurture connection, creating greater intimacy. In addition, Dyer *et al.* (2013:69) argue that copreneurs are expected to have a stronger marriage; it is strengthened by the shared vision, goals, and dreams in their family and work life.

Transparency

The results indicate that copreneurs enjoy an open and transparent working relationship. Participant 1 states that it is easy for her to provide honest feedback to her spouse about business matters.

“It's odd. But, like, we were saying, if we had to work separately with different people, I think he would always be like, you know, you've got to watch this or this. And I would always be like, why are you doing it? Because I don't understand. Weird, but it just works better. So, I think we communicate well. I don't think I could work with someone else. I could probably, but I think because we are so honest with each other. So, if you see someone doing something they shouldn't, I'm not scared to tell him he shouldn't be doing it. Or don't do it, you know, I won't do it in front of a client, but if I know I don't agree with something, I make sure I let him know. He does the same to me. He would be like; you know, that's a big mistake. Why? And I will say, I'm sorry, I didn't realise. But when you are with someone that maybe you don't have that open relationship with, that doesn't happen.” (C1:PA1, SecB-Q2D)

According to participant 3, one advantage of working with a spouse is transparency in financial matters.

“And the other one would be the issue of transparency; everything is transparent, so, especially finances, you don't get to fight about petty little things when it comes to finances. And when you have a wife who's an auditor, you are in deep trouble; she audits every cent that goes in and out. So, there will always be that transparency, so I won't have to fight him. Where did R200 go? He knows it must have passed through me. I would have long interrogated that. So, I also have access to all financial measures.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q2D)

Participant 10 mentioned that having one's spouse involved in the business alleviates the pressure that comes from unrealistic expectations. Both partners in a copreneurial venture are exposed to the performance of the business' thus, unrealistic financial expectations are well managed.

“The first advantage is that you're guaranteed not to kill yourself as a man. When you're alone in the business, you hide a lot of things from your family or your wife and end up being an alcoholic or maybe committing suicide, and the family will see that after, and the wife will realise that my husband was going through this, why didn't he tell us? So, nothing takes my ego away when I fail in the business because we fail together. It's not my failure alone, so my ego is intact.” (C5:PA10, SecB-Q2D)

Another finding shows that copreneurship gives couples peace of mind in knowing each other's whereabouts. In addition, because the couple works together, they have access to each other's work schedules and can plan around home priorities together, as noted below.

“Another thing is he always knows my whereabouts; it's not easy for him to suspect me of anything. When the nanny leaves, he understands I won't cancel my class of 24 people to rush to the child. He knows that when it's the nanny's week off, he must hurry home from work so he can stay with the baby, and I go to work and conduct my classes. He fully understands where I am, why I must do certain things, and why he can't ask me questions.” (C7:PA12, SecB-Q2D)

“Because I know that because we are both here and we have seen one client, I can't get home and say, where is the money? Because if we have seen one client and we saw that R1000 came in, where do I expect him to get the money? So, it makes our financial relationship better. So, it's transparent.” (C10:PA17, SecB-Q2D)

The findings indicate enhanced transparency in finance and time management in copreneurial partnerships. This finding correlates with findings by Brannon *et al.* (2013:112) that indicate higher levels of trust in copreneurship businesses than in traditional business partnerships. Transparency and trust are closely interlinked.

Trust

Findings in this study show that copreneurs enjoy the benefit of trust in the business. Unlike other types of business partnerships, participants said that their spouses are the best people to depend on for honesty and loyalty. Again, this is in line with the findings reported by Brannon *et al.* (2013:112).

“and we feel more at ease with the whole trust and communication thing. I tried the joint venture with the other partner, but it was difficult.” (C1:PA2, SecB-Q2D)

“Trust is the first thing when you venture into a business. If you have your wife as a business partner, it is someone that you trust. Even if you leave things carelessly, she will find them and keep them safe, and if your workers do something wrong, bear in mind when you are in business, these people are watching you. When they come asking for work, they are a different person. They will promise you that they can or will do anything and remain honest and loyal for the first few days, weeks or months. Then, after they have studied you and seen the loopholes, they start taking advantage and stealing or sabotaging you.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q2D)

Participant 11 expressed the benefit of being mutually vested in the business, and that she trusts that her spouse always has the family's best interests at heart in all his business decisions.

“Trust. Security. I know that he has as much to lose as I do, and I can trust that whatever decision he makes will be to the best of the continuation of the business. I completely trust his decisions. It isn't easy to trust a human being; I work with many people, and it's challenging. We've been screwed over a lot by people that we've worked with closely. Some have even stolen from us; cousins that have worked with us have stolen. So, trust is a big thing. But, if you know you're not alone, you can completely trust this person; it gives you peace. Your business partner can stab you in the back. So, if he stabs me in the back, we are still married in community of property; there's so much to lose. So, it's the trust, that's the one thing, I know there's one person in this company that I can trust with everything, and I don't think I can have that with a random partner.” (C6:PA11, SecB-Q2D)

The conclusion on trust is that participants in this study believe that there is no better person to trust with one's business than a spouse. Madanoglu *et al.* (2020:994) concur that copreneurship can ensure trust by reducing dependence on external agents.

Promotion of hard work

Participants in this study indicated that copreneurship accelerated their family's financial success.

“It helps you fast track your goals with hard work, unlike relying on a salary or one salary and other people in business. There will be that pressure and expectations not being met. So, I think with us working together, our expectations are managed because we both know exactly what's happening. There are no issues about one not being forthcoming about certain things. So, I think that is a big advantage. Because we know exactly where we stand, we can set our goals and put proper timelines, and we can meet those goals. If the goals are not met, we blame ourselves because we both know we didn't do the work.” (C5:PA9, SecB-Q2D)

Participant 3 mentioned that copreneurship promotes hard work in the business because the couple jointly monitors the business' performance. The participant also alluded to the benefit of minimised business losses due to the coordination between spouses.

“If your wife is amongst them, even if you are not around, you are assured that your wife is looking out for you and observing what is happening, that is what I find helpful, and it also minimises any losses because she is there. As I have mentioned, I have been in business for a long time, even before I met my wife. Success will take time if you are alone, but if she is around, it will be reached faster because she will take care of things when you are not around. She knows that everything we do is for our benefit to reach our goal. If you are alone, the only successful business will be the one that you run personally. Wherever you are not around and make others run your business, they will try to create avenues to enrich and empower themselves illegally. So, in my opinion, such things are avoided when my wife is there.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q2D)

“I know that I push on the home front when he is not there. When he briefs the staff to say, please at least make sure that you report for work on a Saturday or Sunday, even when they get the incentives, they must see it from us first. Sometimes they would leave here around 6 pm, and we would continue working until 9 or 10 pm together because we knew we were pushing the vision, and it's not only about money. That is why the company has been so successful even after 20 years.” (C8:PA13, SecB-Q2D)

The findings in this section confirm the conclusion by Belenzon et al. (2016:2617) that copreneurs work harder than ordinary business partners because they believe it will benefit them and their children.

Fulfilment

Participant 10 mentioned that fulfilment in copreneurship is based on shared success and losses.

“Number two is that it brings that; I don't know whether it's a fulfilment when you win, and when you lose, you want to check where you went wrong. There will be a blame game, but we will sort that out. So, there's a fulfilment working together all the time.” (C5:PA10)

Copreneurs also talked about fulfilment in the context of shared work and family responsibilities. Copreneurs are fulfilled by the awareness that working with one's

spouse enhances the possibility of managing home- and work-life with less difficulty because both partners share the responsibilities of both domains (Dahl *et al.*, 2014:14).

“He helps and supports me with the home responsibilities as well. He doesn't expect me to do everything. So, it's an advantage and the beauty of speaking the same language because no one can say, you know, I met a client and lost track of time.” (C10:PA17, SecB-Q2D)

Couples in copreneurship also enjoy flexibility in financial investment decisions, as stated below.

“Even when you want to make investment decisions, for example, to say we're not going to declare a dividend because we want to buy a big extra machine for making bread, we could do that. There is no red tape; there's no other person that we need to check with or confirm with. The ease of doing business is better when it's us partnering together rather than if you were to partner with someone else because it is coming to the same household.” (C9:PA15, SecB-Q2D)

This finding agrees with Madanoglu *et al.* (2020:5), who note that spouses possess a greater concentration of discretionary capacity, which can encourage flexibility in business decisions.

Discipline

Participants noted the advantages of discipline in financial management. According to the findings, copreneurs can better control their family's financial discipline, as stated by participant 13 below.

“So, when it's the peak season, you make more, but in that making more than you need to make provision to say in the next five to six months if nothing comes, the business still needs to sustain itself. So, it brings in some discipline.” (C8:PA13, SecB-Q2D)

Although mentioned as a benefit, Belenzon *et al.* (2016:2616) argue that family owners usually employ conservative business strategies that may limit business growth. This

is due to the significant priority given to generational wealth accumulation. As a result, they take calculated risks and settle for lower profits (Madanoglu *et al.*, 2020:993).

Risks

Higher Risks

Copreneurship is associated with a high risk of income loss because the couple typically has no other income, and both depend on the business to sustain their family needs. Participant 7 remarked:

“the other people will say the risk is higher. Because, you know, if the business doesn't do well, both of you are at risk. That is one of the biggest disadvantages; it is like putting all your eggs in one basket. This is it, and this is your business. This is your livelihood. This is what your children's future relies on. This is everything, your legacy, unlike if you've got the buffer of someone working.” (C4:PA7, SecB-Q2D)

“The first disadvantage is that we are eating on one plate, you know, as I said, there's a good side to making R100, and then you don't fight because you have seen it. However, it's also a disadvantage because there is no backup when things are not good in business. You know, if the salon has made so much, but at least if the other one comes in with their other income, it makes a difference.” (C10:PA17, SecB-Q2E)

Family owners have a significant share of their wealth locked up in their businesses; moreover, they personally manage business operations, which ties up their human capital as well. According to Belenzon *et al.* (2016:7), this lack of diversification in income poses a threat to family-owned businesses.

Family/child neglect

Copreneurs maintain an invisible line between business and family, which is constantly crossed; this can affect their parenting behaviour, as stated by participant 1 below.

“Imagine when we are out with our little one and still talk about work things. That's a disadvantage as well. He's small, so he doesn't understand it yet, but I mean, you don't want him to grow up, and parents are always talking about work, or, you know, an idea comes to our head, and we are like, oh, my goodness, this this this but, we got our little one with us. So, it's things that we need to change.” (C1:PA1, SecB-Q2E)

Copreneurs often experience the challenge of not always being available to care for their children's needs.

“Another thing is that, because we have children if we're stuck here, if we're both here at work, like literally, they have no one. We work Tuesday to Saturday, and Saturday, most of the time, they're at home. And we are never at home on Saturdays. So, on Saturdays, there's functions, school functions, we never there, like literally we are never there.” (C10:PA17, SecB-Q2E)

“Another disadvantage is that children suffer. The family suffers. Children suffer because running your own business requires you, unlike corporate, where you knock off. You need to be there. You cannot knock off at work at 10 pm, or 12 am, in another person's company or corporation unless you come from a party. So, in this instance, when we started opening, we were there seven days a week. My helper was the mom, and she was running my household. It was hectic.” (C9:PA15, SecB-Q2E)

This finding contradicts the argument by Brannon et al. (2013:112) who state that because copreneurs share both a household and workplace, it allows for seamless home- and work role allocation according to the demands of each domain. Mário and Patricia (2018:8) also suggest that copreneurs find more time to spend with their children compared to couples with dual-careers.

Disagreements

Financial disagreement is a disadvantage experienced in copreneurship. However, this finding does not align with Madanoglu *et al.* (2020:5), who argue that there is high flexibility in business decisions in couple-owned businesses. In their study, Brannon *et*

al. (2013:112) also note that when couples already came to an agreement on how they manage their finances in their households, it is easier for them to apply the same arrangement when managing the business' finances.

"maybe, sorry to quickly add on, one of the disadvantages will probably be our financial decisions when one has to decide on either new projects or old projects or even finances when you don't agree on that, you know." (C3:PA5, SecB-Q2E)

"The disadvantage would be when we have worked, and he suggests that we take our money and invest in something else, and I disagree." (C8:PA13, SecB-Q2E)

Copreneurs also experience conflict, especially at the beginning of the business partnership, as participant 15 noted.

"But another biggest disadvantage was the fighting. Okay, like we would fight sometimes, and I would walk. We fired each other how many times. One time he fired me the next time, I fired him. He would leave because he would get fed up with stuff. I would tell him; you know what? It's not working. He would be more stressed by a situation than I am. So, I would ask him to go because I feel he is making me crazy. I've got the energy, and I think I can fix this. And then I would run as CEO. And then he would come back again and say, this is my place, I'm back, and then I would say, okay, you are back. I am leaving. But usually, he would come back because now it's fine. It's better. But yeah, it's been quite hectic." (C9:PA15, SecB-Q2E)

This finding is contrary to findings by Brannon *et al.* (2013:112) that copreneurs have a higher quality of intimacy and bond than dual-career spouses. However, other participants note that conflict mostly occurs in the early stages of copreneurship; it subsides as the couple learns how to treat each other in the work environment.

High pressure and fatigue

Increased expectation to deliver on work responsibilities is a challenge for copreneurs.

“Look, one of the disadvantages, I would say, is sometimes not being able to knock off, especially when there's pressure, right? Yeah, that can be a bit of an issue at times.” (C3:PA6, SecB-Q2E)

“Yeah, for me, it will be I can't get away with anything, you know, I think even with our other colleagues at EXCO, you always need to be on top of your game, and you can't slack because there are certain expectations on you. But if I slack and when the next person slacks, it's like, but she also slacks. So, for me, it's the pressure. Technically, you know he's my boss, so when we are in meetings, I always need to be on top of my game regarding my reporting or presentations because I think that's how you will set the bar. So, for me, the pressure is just a lot.” (C5:PA9, SecB-Q2E)

Copreneurs can over-rely on each other for key business decisions, to the extent that the business can be dysfunctional when they are both absent. This finding is in line with Brannon *et al.* (2013:112), who note that co-dependence on the partner's advice is highly valued in copreneurship (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:112).

“Maybe also that, if you can't be present, you both can't be present. If we're going away, it's both of us. It means there are two significant positions unfilled for that period. Yes, we rely too much on each other and not so much on the team. And I find that, generally, they also behave in that manner. It's like they don't function well when we are away. We've had to be here every day, all the time. Otherwise, when you're not here when you come back, there's a crisis.” (C6:PA11, SecB-Q2E)

Participant 12 mentioned several challenges: fatigue and the expectation that a spouse must deliver on challenging business goals as well as spousal responsibilities.

“My biggest challenge is fatigue. Then my husband would say let's go somewhere, and it's the weekend, and I would say, sorry, but I am exhausted. So, maybe in terms of marriage, if we are to be intimate for four days a week, then it would be

reduced to maybe two days because I would like for him to understand that I am tired. So, I think the disadvantage would be that I am always tired.” (C7:PA12, SecB-Q2E)

The findings indicate that copreneurship puts the couple under pressure to perform due to the responsibilities required for business leadership. In addition, as noted in the earlier section on financial risk, the couple’s wealth is usually locked up in the business, and copreneurs must secure their money by running the business successfully.

Emotional imbalance

The challenge of emotional imbalance occurs when copreneurs neglect each other’s emotional needs as romantic partners - due to overly focusing on business-related matters. This is a challenge noted by several participants. This finding is supported by Helmle *et al.* (2014:111) who state that family businesses struggle to manage work-life interference with home life. They argue that this challenge stems from the couple’s multiple interdependent roles, which create potential conflict at work and home.

“The balance of the home sometimes is a disadvantage.” (C1:PA2, SecB-Q2E)

“As women, we are the typical people who need attention. We require that absolute attention. So, some of the things that come with working together are me having to understand that he has to work, you know, and I don't have any other reasons that I can find to make an excuse, to say you are neglecting me, he has a leg to stand on. You can work longer hours and end up neglecting yourself because you can even get swallowed in work.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q2E)

Participant 5 mentioned the absence of space and personal time as a challenge for copreneurs. In addition, the fact that the couple works and lives together can make a person feel overcrowded.

“again, the disadvantage is that, you know, oxymoron type of thing, that it's good you see each other all the time; sometimes you need space. And women are also built and designed differently. There's a particular period of the month when you don't need people around you, not just your husband but even your children. You

feel too crowded and want to be alone, not talk, feeling moody and don't want to be around anybody, and you can't. So, it's like you are too clustered, there's no time for yourself, you can't be on your own. So that also would cause a little friction, which is some of the disadvantages.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q2E)

Another finding shows that spouses' poor emotional management could adversely affect business continuity.

“You know the downside is when you are not okay. It gets worse because then the decision gets frustrating. So let me put it this way. Sometimes I would want to pay a supplier. But, no, she'll switch off her phone, and I would not get hold of her. So, because she is emotional and I am not sexist, I find women as partners or wives struggle with emotional balance.” (C9:PA16, SecB-Q2E)

“The emotion from business to home, from home to work, they can't separate the two. But you must also understand that when you are young in marriage, you become picky about stupid things. The same thing happens in business.” (C9:PA16, SecB-Q2E)

Anti-social lifestyle

Copreneurs experience interruptions in their social life due to the excessive time demands of the business.

“And sometimes you, as a man, feel like you can have your wife again, where it's like, why can't we have a Friday? Why can't we have a Christmas? And it's because our business is hectic. Look, on Christmas Eve, we close at 10 pm; the following day, at 7 am, the queue is already long as we walk in. So, when you enter the shop on Christmas Day, you ask yourself, will I even go have a decent lunch this afternoon or what. So, you get invited and never show up. We lost valuable time with friends, their funerals, their unveilings, and their weddings. My best friend married, and I never made it to his wedding.” (C9:PA16, SecB-Q2E)

A conclusion that can be drawn on the nature of copreneurship is that it is both rewarding and challenging, and requires hard work to ensure that the challenges

experienced in one domain do not negatively affect the other. Findings indicate that copreneurship, if conducted wisely, can have great financial and emotional benefits for the couple. However, failure to have a mutual vision and goals for the business may adversely affect the business and the family.

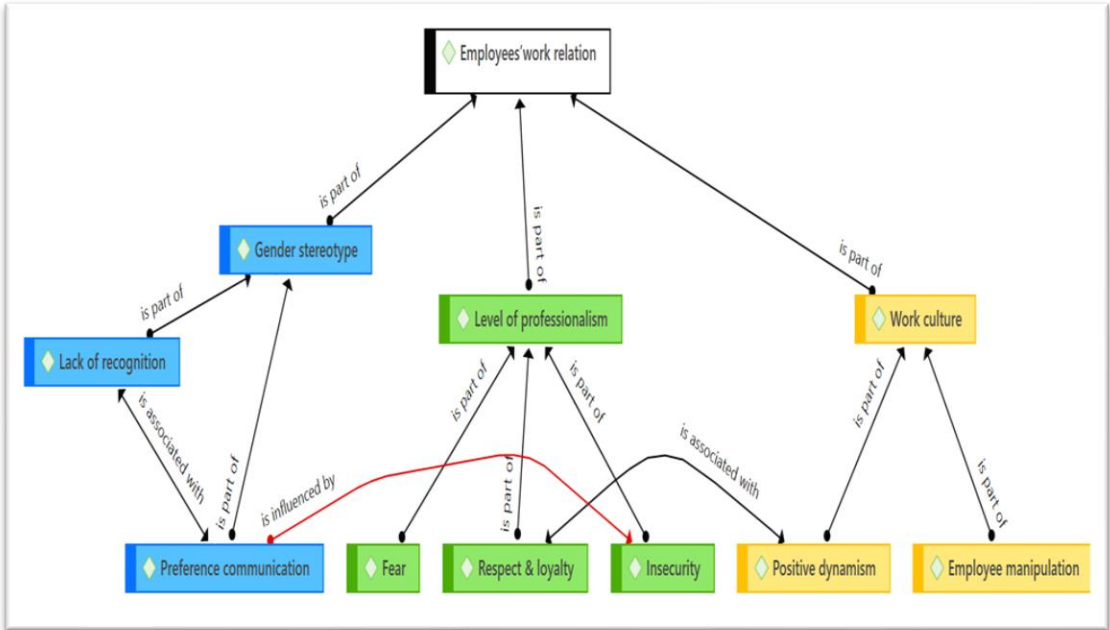
3.10.3 Employees’ work relations in copreneurship

Participants were asked how copreneurship as a business partnership affects employees. The researcher grouped the findings into three categories:

- Level of professionalism,
- Gender stereotype, and
- Work culture,

as shown in Figure 3.9.

Figure 3.9: Employees’ work relations



Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

3.10.3.1 Level of Professionalism

Fear

Findings indicate that employees may be put in a difficult situation when the couple gives opposing instructions as leaders.

“The only confusion is my husband likes throwing his weight around; you know, that ego thing men have. So, I would say something, and when he comes, he changes it; that is the only problem we've had. That would confuse employees to say, now, who do we listen to because he is the man and they fear him, and they respected me but were not afraid of me.” (C9:PA15 SecB-Q2F)

One of the participants states that employees sometimes seem uncomfortable when working in the same space as both spouses.

“I will say the negative side of it is that working with your boss is never comfortable. Because even from experience, you drop things because of nerves. Even when they know how to do something, I find they get stressed thinking we will judge them because we are always there.” (C10:PA17 SecB-Q2F)

These findings indicate that employees in a copreneurial business may struggle with determining the hierarchy of command when both owners give conflicting instructions. Furthermore, the presence of the couple at work may cause discomfort to employees. Unfortunately, these findings were not reflected in the existing literature and were thus difficult to confirm.

Respect and loyalty

Findings also indicate that employees have respect and loyalty toward copreneurs.

“I think that makes them loyal to us. They are relaxed because they can see that we are true to ourselves and we are faithful to them, so they have nothing to worry

about. For example, as I have said, I was on maternity leave, my husband was working very well with the gentleman I was working with, and my husband could relate to and treat him in a good way so that I didn't stress. So, the guy respects my husband." (C7:PA12, SecB-Q2F)

"When they see that you are married, respect comes first, and they treat you differently than other females. You will be respected, which has helped me a lot." (C7:PA12, SecB-Q2F)

Insecurity

Findings show that the issue of insecurities in couples is present in some copreneurial partnerships. Participant 7 alluded to the challenge of infidelity affecting couples working together.

"The things that we must be fair to disclose when we are in business as couples are the issues of insecurities and infidelities." (C4:PA7, SecB-Q2F)

"So even when we went into business, we had lengthy discussions, part of them included, what would happen when we are years in business together, and there are issues of insecurities, for instance, from my side as a woman, how are you going to handle that? What will happen? We talked about that. Or if you are going to have insecurities about me working with men, for instance, how are we going to handle that, so we will talk about that." (C3:PA5, SecB-Q2C)

"When we started as a couple, you know that you, as a wife, there are girls out there; husbands don't walk around with their eyes closed. And even you, as a wife, when you have to enter a full boardroom, you know that one thing we cannot shy away from, sexual harassment, flirting or whatever. So we have both experienced that. We would fight about it sometimes. I advise couples to look out for that one because it will cause a fight, whether you like it or not." (C8:PA13 SecB-Q6)

The researcher struggled to find existing literature to support this finding, suggesting that it may be unique to this study.

3.10.3.2 Gender Stereotype

The gender stereotype sub-theme emerged during the interviews. This was expected, as it is discussed in the literature as one of the critical issues that poses a challenge in family businesses and copreneurships. The two challenges mentioned by participants on this sub-theme are:

- Lack of recognition, and
- Preference communication.

Lack of Recognition

Some female participants mentioned gender stereotypes as a challenge in copreneurial ventures. For example, they noted that they are not treated as equals or respected to the same degree as their husbands.

“They won't take me seriously because they look at me like, you know, I am his wife. That's how they see me.” (C1:PA1, SecB-Q2F)

“Most challenges arose from employees who started working with me before I married. I had long-serving employees that my wife found already working for me, and they refused to take orders from my wife because they thought she didn't know anything about the business. So, they only wanted to take orders from me as the main employer.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q2F)

The finding correlates with McAdam and Marlow (2013:153), who note that men usually occupy the leadership role, and the essential contribution of the women is often overlooked. The role of women in copreneurial literature is generally invisible. They are seen as support structures for their entrepreneur husbands (Hirigoyen & Villegier, 2017:3). However, other studies argue that while women may be regarded as subordinates, in reality, they wield significant influence in the business through silently controlling policy and operations decisions (Hirigoyen & Villegier, 2017:2).

Preference communication

The study reveals employees of copreneurs usually gravitate towards the one they regard as relatable, regardless of gender.

“So, there will always be those elements where they prefer to speak to him because he is relatable, and she's not relatable and vice versa. Some feel I'm relatable, and he is not relatable, you know. So, you will always find those dynamics all the time. We've had lots of that over the years.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q2F)

“I think the beauty of it, it's like having a mother and a father. If the father is strict, you can run to the mother. So, I think they're riding on that. We believe that we don't like people keeping things inside. So, if you cannot talk to the other, you can speak to the other. So at least, I feel that they are using that accordingly because we believe that at work, that's where you spend most of your time. So, I like the fact that it's in between the two of us; depending on the topic, there's always that one person that they're able to approach.” (C10:PA17, SecB-Q2F)

This finding also seems to be unique to this study; further research may be required to investigate its prevalence in copreneurial businesses.

3.10.3.3 Work Culture

The researcher formulated the work culture theme based on participants' responses to the question regarding employees' relations in copreneurships. The two sub-themes under this theme are:

- Positive dynamism, and
- Employee manipulation.

Positive dynamism

The findings indicate that a work culture of openness is prevalent in copreneurial businesses; employees are given the freedom to develop innovative ideas for the business.

“You know what we have done; I think it's maturity. We have developed a relationship where there is no boss. We are all equal, and the difference is responsibilities. So, when it comes to working, it's work, so if we have assigned you something when we need that particular thing, we need it, and that's it. And I think my wife brought in that culture. It works very well because the openness is there; they always come up with innovative ideas to say you know what we think if we can do this based on the last project.” (C8:PA14, SecB-Q2F)

Although one only participant mentioned this finding, the researcher noted it as interesting. Unfortunately, the researcher had not found literature to support this finding at the time of analysis.

Employee manipulation

The theme of employee manipulation in copreneurships is based on the finding that employees might try to take advantage of the partner they regard as “soft.”

“Employees are like school kids; they will see and want to manipulate. They will ask something from her, and when they can't get it, they want to give me a call and maybe think that I am the softer one, then I'll approve it and then when it's approved and then she'd say, but no I declined, why are you overriding me? Meanwhile, I didn't even know that they went to her first.” (C5:PA10, SecB-Q2F)

However, participant 11 had a different experience. She mentioned that their employees usually approach both of them when they need something significant because they are aware of their equal contribution to decision-making.

“I know if it's a big thing, I find that they come to both of us because they know that this one will influence that one. If she doesn't like it, he won't make that decision. That's the only way I see them approaching it; otherwise, I don't know. I really don't know.” (C6:PA11, SecB-Q2F)

The findings on employee manipulation seemed to differ among participants and, unfortunately, could not be supported by existing research.

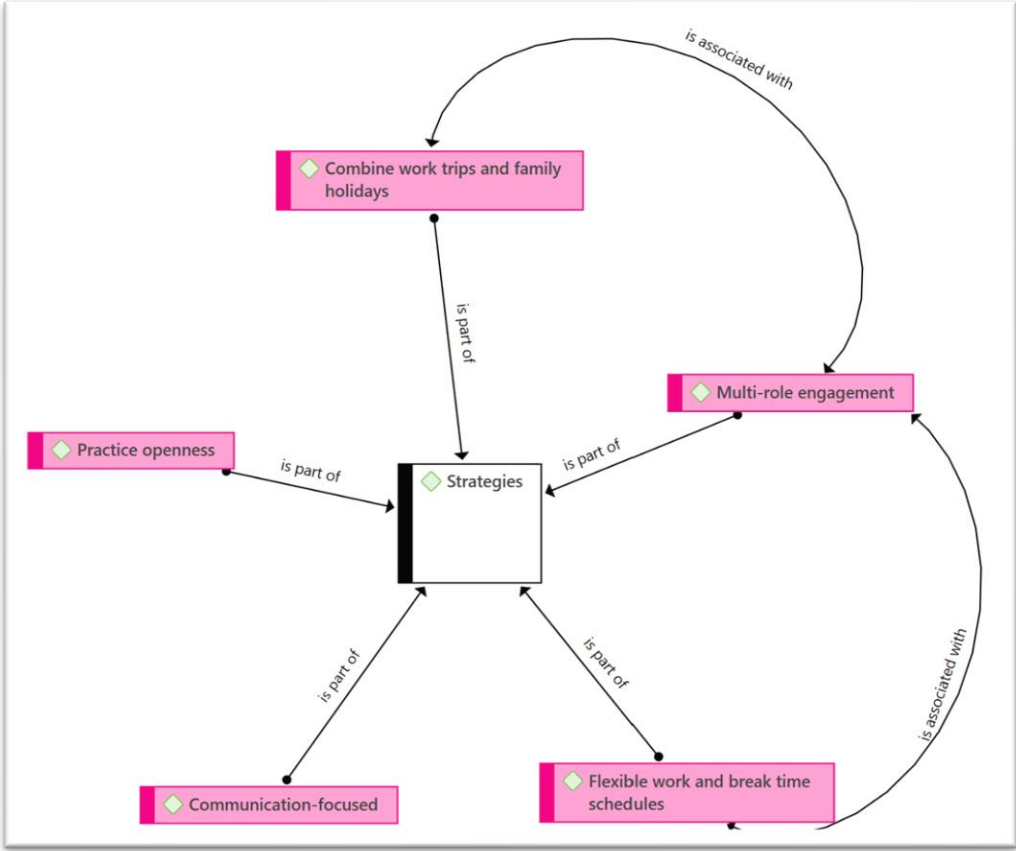
3.10.3.4 Strategies

Copreneurs' strategies for managing a good balance between business and romance comprise five categories:

- Communication-focused,
- Multi-role play engagements,
- Practice openness,
- Combine work trips and family holidays, and
- Flexible work and break time schedules,

as indicated in Figure 3.10 below.

Figure 3.10: Copreneurship strategies for business and family balance



Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

Communication-focused

Participants noted communication as fundamental to managing the intertwined domains of business and the romantic relationship.

“Communication ahead of everything. And trust. Of course, there will always be trust in marriage; you must trust your partner because you are with that person for the rest of your life. Okay, but communication is critical. When there's no communication, there's something wrong, not only because of work but even with private life. There must be communication.” (C1:PA2, SecB-Q2G)

This finding is in line with the view held by Danes and Jang (2013:46) that effective communication between the couple is critical when forming a collective entrepreneurial identity.

Multi-role engagement

According to participants, there is no single solution to balancing roles in the business and family domains so that they do not affect one another. Rather, couples continuously juggle multiple roles and allocate responsibilities according to demands and abilities in both domains.

“How do I strike a balance? You know, it's going to sound like jargon, but I have always been like, when I apply myself to something, I try and do the best in that thing to which I am devoting myself. So, if I'm going to be a mother, I get home and cook. I don't sacrifice. I must make sure that I do the best for my kids. If it's a wife's duty, then I'll try to do my best as a wife. I just try and apply myself to whatever it is at that moment, but here I'm, an accountant. I try and just push that.” (C6:PA11, SecB-Q2G)

El Shoubaki et al. (2021:5) notes that copreneurs are unique because they can flexibly perform business and household duties.

Practice openness

Honesty and openness were cited as critical in a copreneurial partnership. Participants mentioned that they trust their partners with everything of substance in their lives and depend on each other for success in the business. According to Brannon *et al.* (2013:112), there are higher levels of trust in copreneurships than in traditional business partnerships.

“When we are teenagers, it is great; it's easy, but now when you're an adult, how do you know who to trust? You know, sometimes you can deal with a friend but then is he your friend? Is he your colleague? Then it is easy for them to backstab

you. I'm not saying marriage is immune to betrayal. In some marriages, it happens like that, but with my wife, I could feel that I could be honest and have nothing to hide." (C1:PA2, SecB-Q2G)

"You know, even if it's a tiny white lie and everything, be honest. Just communicate because it's easier. It's like, I'll say, why did you do this, why did you approach that person that way, etc., and she would be like, " Oh, okay, sorry, " and we move on. So, we complement each other in a way that we understand because of good communication." (C1:PA2, SecB-Q2G)

Copreneurs usually live together and jointly own most of their personal assets, thus making it easy to be open with one another (Belenzon *et al.*, 2016:2616).

Combine work trips and family holidays

Another participant mentioned that they sometimes plan their family trips to coincide with their work trips. In this way, they spend time with their children while attending to work commitments.

"Our one child was in Matric, and we knew that that was the last time he could have a holiday with us. At some point, kids are involved because you discuss work at home. So really, one can never separate home and work. So, what we did was we combined the work trip with a family holiday. We took the kids for a week, and sometimes we would leave them at the hotel, go to work for the whole day, and come back at around 4 pm." (C8:PA13, SecB-Q2G)

Flexible work and break time schedules

Copreneurs capitalise on the fact that they share their lives with their business partners. They mentioned that they are able to start and finish work according to their business needs. This finding confirms research by Dahl *et al.* (2014:14) that indicates that copreneurs value the flexibility inherent in running a business with a spouse. This enhances the possibility of managing home- and work-life with less difficulty in

copreneurship because both partners share the responsibilities of both domains. As a result, they can better negotiate how they will manage the related tasks.

“Sometimes it happens that you miscalculate a sum, or something didn't go as planned. We bring our work back home; after taking care of the children and other household duties, we get back to work or wake up early in the morning to finish the job from yesterday. It does happen, but it is never about severe issues. It might be just small talking about the child's school schedule.” (C2:PA4, SecB-Q2G)

“Also, before people come to work early in the morning, we work on the calculations and salaries and prepare everything, including the employees' work schedules. Yes, we must make time for ourselves because, after all, as a person, you need to make time for yourself and rest. We do give ourselves a break even if there is no time.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q2G)

The findings also indicate that copreneurs have more control over when they take time off work.

“Wherever we want to go, we go. When we get there, then it's our time, we recharge and forget about all the stresses at work, when we get there it's a different environment, then Monday we start again, and it helps a lot and is very refreshing. As I said, it is a part of our daily lives, so in our daily cycle, they must be included. However, if I wasn't working with her and she was not part of the business, she wouldn't understand all these things, she was going to be irritated and tell me to sleep, but because she is part of it, she understands.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q2G)

3.10.3.5 Effect on Family Planning

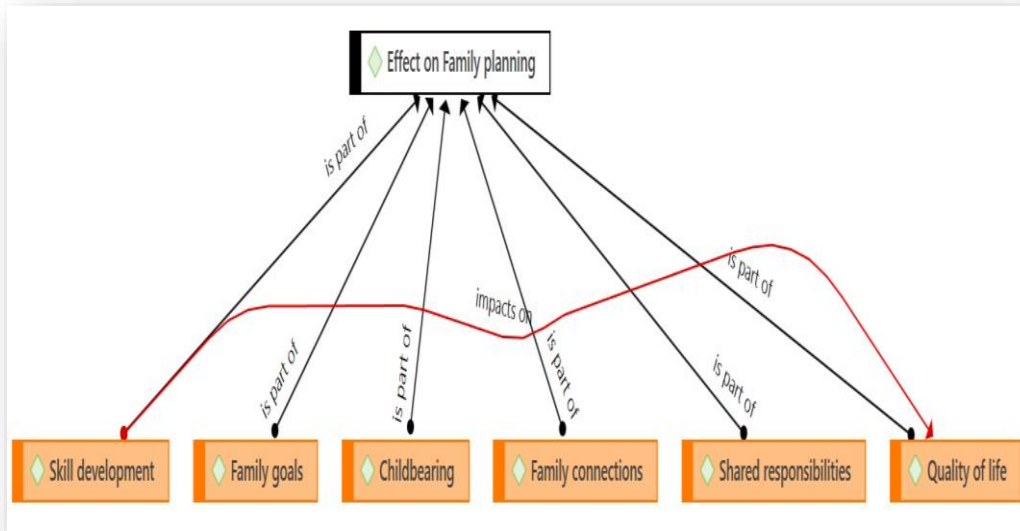
The findings of this study indicate that copreneurship has positive and negative effects on a couple's family planning. The following section will discuss the following aspects:

- Family goals,
- Skills development,
- Childbearing,
- Family connections,

- Shared responsibilities, and
- Quality of life.

Figure 3.11 shows how these factors impact copreneurs' family planning goals.

Figure 3.11: Copreneurship effects on family planning



Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

Family goals

Most of the couples who were interviewed for this study mentioned that owning a business with their spouse has positively impacted their family goals. In addition, they cited the benefit of jointly contributing to their livelihood through teamwork efforts, especially concerning financial contribution. This finding supports research by Amore *et al.* (2017:474) on marital leadership in businesses. Their results suggest that companies led by couples display higher business performance than businesses managed by an individual or multiple leaders who are not related.

“we achieved our goals because of working together. We've designed our own house together. Designing the home has me being an architect and her being an interior designer. It wasn't easy because she got her design, and I had mine. But we were able to come up with a combined design. We love the house; every time we walk in it, we are like, wow. We love the place, and we built our home. We've

got what we've wanted. And now we got our son. I've always wanted kids, and she said, "Okay", so I've got the son I wanted. We've achieved everything. And we know that we're still going to achieve more." (C1:PA2, SecB-Q2H)

"There is nothing like ah; you know the business is standing in our way, no, with the business we travelled, that's something we've always wanted to do as a couple. And with the business, it even made things easy. Because now, like, okay, we've worked hard for what we have. So now, let's have a break. Let's travel. But by travelling, we are still working again, like seeing, getting new ideas for future projects and goals. But we've achieved everything that we wanted so far." (C1:PA2, SecB-Q2H)

However, other participants noted that a negative effect of copreneurship on family planning is the financial strain it can bring to the family due to a limited in their income streams.

"Uhm, it affects family goals in many ways. First, remember that things sometimes don't go so well in businesses, and you have to make sacrifices. Sometimes you don't even earn a salary as a director because you want to ensure that every cent helps with the situation to ensure that the business is financially and, otherwise, is at the minimum level you want it to be. So, in that case, you tend to sacrifice or compromise the family's interest for the business to survive. So, it's a matter of, in all honesty, prioritising business interest at the expense of family interest, but the motivation is that it's just temporary, you know, things will be normalised at a later stage." (C3:PA6, SecB-Q2H)

"It does, Yoh, it does, and we've been through that, with our years of practising business. I think that's the biggest one where you sacrifice the family for the business, when the business is not doing well financially. All the finances are channelled towards the business, and the family is neglected. So, we learned over the years and how we learned was because one of us had to be uncomfortable about it and rescue it. He is the man, and he is the provider. He is the head. His focus is to ensure that the financial vehicle keeps moving. And you will, in hindsight, not realise that the feminist side is not okay and is being badly affected in that way. I came in, put my foot down, and said, look, we cannot afford a situation where you're stressing on both." (C3:PA5, SecB-Q2H)

Participants 9 and 17 mentioned that copreneurship accelerated the achievement of their family goals.

“So for me, I think having a business has impacted our goals because we were able to achieve a lot more quicker actually because about five years ago, we were living in a four-roomed house, but because we believed in what we wanted to do and we pushed and pushed.” (C5:PA9, SecB-Q2H)

“But I feel that it helps us in a way that we're able to do a lot of things that we need to do at that time.” (C10: PA17 SecB-Q2H)

Danes *et al.* (2016:180) note in their findings on family business performance that family businesses are affected by inefficiency issues because family members are employed in key management roles. Furthermore, Dyer *et al.* (2013:69) argue that nepotism in family businesses breeds mediocrity in management and reduces accountability.

Skill development

Copreneurship is positively associated with enhanced skills development for the couple and those working for the copreneurial businesses.

“I have found that in business, I can learn and do many more things that enhance my skills. What's quite important is that you don't run the business now for yourself. You don't have those selfish intentions of "I want to be this executive that is larger than life" I don't. We don't think about ourselves anymore. We think about who we can support. It's not about us. It's about who you can support, your nephew or your niece. It becomes about the lives you are impacting. You forget about yourself now. All we want is what's best for our people (employees) and for them to support us in return.” (C4:PA8)

Farrington *et al.* (2011:25) maintain that, although couples have unique business challenges, they still function as a team and experience team dynamics similar to other

organisational settings. Therefore, teamwork and collaboration are essential for the success of a copreneurship. Collaboration also promotes knowledge transfer and skills development in an organisation.

Childbearing

Findings indicate that copreneurship allows couples to determine their ideal family size without placing pressure on the wife to return to work immediately after giving birth.

“But if it's husband and wife, you can agree on how many kids you want and how the business can continue with only one partner while the other takes care of kids for a certain period. I don't think that's easy with non-married business partners.”
(C6:PA11, SecB-Q2H)

Findings also indicate that, despite the freedom of copreneurs to determine childbearing, the copreneurial venture may still be negatively impacted, as expressed by participant 12 below.

“Can I tell you; I lost a lot of clients when I was on maternity leave because people had a connection with me, so they wanted me and not the gentleman I had hired to stand in for me.” (C7:PA12, SecB-Q2H)

“This time it distracted me a lot because I had taken a lot of time not pushing on the family side. I was trying the fitness side of things, trying to make money. Yet, I had made money throughout the years from 2013 until 2019, when we decided that I am now over 40 years, and if we did not have another child now, we would never do it. So yes, I have made a lot of money, and it helped me a lot. However, fitness distracted me greatly because I would have never fallen pregnant, and my fitness would have dropped. Even now, I come from maternity leave, so my image and the way I look do not look like I did before. A person would go and register for the first time and say, wow, they are being trained by a plus-sized person. They do not know where I come from and that I am still recovering, except if I tell them, so just like that, people run away and say they want a slender to be their trainer, not knowing that I was also once a slender, so you see how they perceive things.”
(C7:PA12, SecB-Q2H)

Family connections

Copreneurship can impact the ability of couples to see extended family members due to the excessive time demand and attention required from the business and nuclear family.

“We have a home in Vryheid, and going home becomes challenging because we can't just decide to go home because of our routine. I must first check my schedule and see if there is no training that I need to do, and clients become attached to me.” (C7:PA12, SecB-Q2H)

“We sometimes don't go home, like it's been two months since we went home. We can't go home because we are approaching summer, and it is our peak season in the business. So, on weekends, one must be in the park.” (C7:PA12 SecB-Q2H)

This finding on family connections is interesting to note because it is linked to the research that copreneurs can over-dedicate themselves to the business, and that they may even lack time to spend with their children, as noted in section 3.5.3.2 on risks.

Shared Responsibilities

Findings indicate that, due to the flexible nature of copreneurship, whereby couples are self-employed, it becomes easy to share responsibility for roles; the roles can also be adapted as needed (Brannon et al., 2013:112). Further, copreneurs have the option of sleeping for long hours and waking up slightly later, especially when they had engaged in strategic planning over the night.

“I think because I was working before, in terms of taking care of the kids, I felt disadvantaged because I had to apply for leave and sometimes work over December holidays. That has changed since I work for myself. For example, now he went to fetch the child from school; you can't do that when employed. So, I'm staying behind and continuing with work. We share responsibilities according to our needs.” C8:PA13 SecB-Q2H)

"I would say it enhanced. Let me hear what he says. It was an issue of control for my husband. He wanted to be in control. We used to say to each other, if we are tired, we are tired. We do not want to wake up; we are tired, and maybe we slept very late. So, we would say to each other, "Baby, you know we are the bosses; we don't have to go", then we would stay at home." (C9:PA15 SecB-Q2H)

According to Hirigoyen and Villeger (2017:2), this kind of flexibility across both spheres is unique to copreneurs and is not found in other forms of business partnerships.

Quality of life

Copreneurship is positively associated with improved quality of life.

"I found that you tend to have a better quality of life when you do your own thing. I hated the corporate space badly. No, I wanted to live. If I wake up at 6 am to go to work, that's fine. But if I wake up on a hot day and want to go and play golf, I go and will go to work after. So, quality of life. I think my wife and I had good times even on the holidays. We would go on overseas holidays paid for by the Pick n Pay groups. So, we've had the best time together in the business. So, I look at it now, my parents and her parents are still alive; they get groceries. So, if I look at it, I used to do groceries for my parents, now, they've got cards, they come and do their shopping. My wife's parents get groceries as well. So that's a positive impact on me. So, if I was not working for myself, do you think I would be doing groceries for so many people with such ease?." (C9:PA16 SecB-Q2H)

"With us, this whole thing didn't affect us that much, everything went according to our wishes, and the nice part about it is that it becomes a challenge when you think about how your children's upbringing will be as well as the future you want for them. So, then everything you do now, you are putting them first and paving the way for them to follow in your footsteps and do things right. If they are interested in what we are doing, we try and simplify things for them so that it won't be difficult for them as much as it was for us." (C2:PA3 SecB-Q2H)

However, another participant noted that the initial decrease in income resulting from a couple leaving their employment to start a business could be uncomfortable.

“I’ll tell you how my husband was a director previously, that salary was huge, and although I was also employed, I was up the rank. I think I’ve only been a non-senior non-manager for two years in my career. After that, I was in management all my career. But I used to take breaks with kids; with every pregnancy, I took a break and stayed home, but our quality of life was good.” (C9:PA15 SecB-Q2H)

According to McDonald *et al.* (2017:491), improved relationship satisfaction in the family and business should result in increased business profit. The outcome of this is a good quality of life for the couple.

3.10.4 Findings on conflict management

The theme of conflict and conflict resolution resulted from copreneurs’ answers regarding how they, as a unique couple, manage and resolve conflict in both the business and home domains. The following section presents the findings.

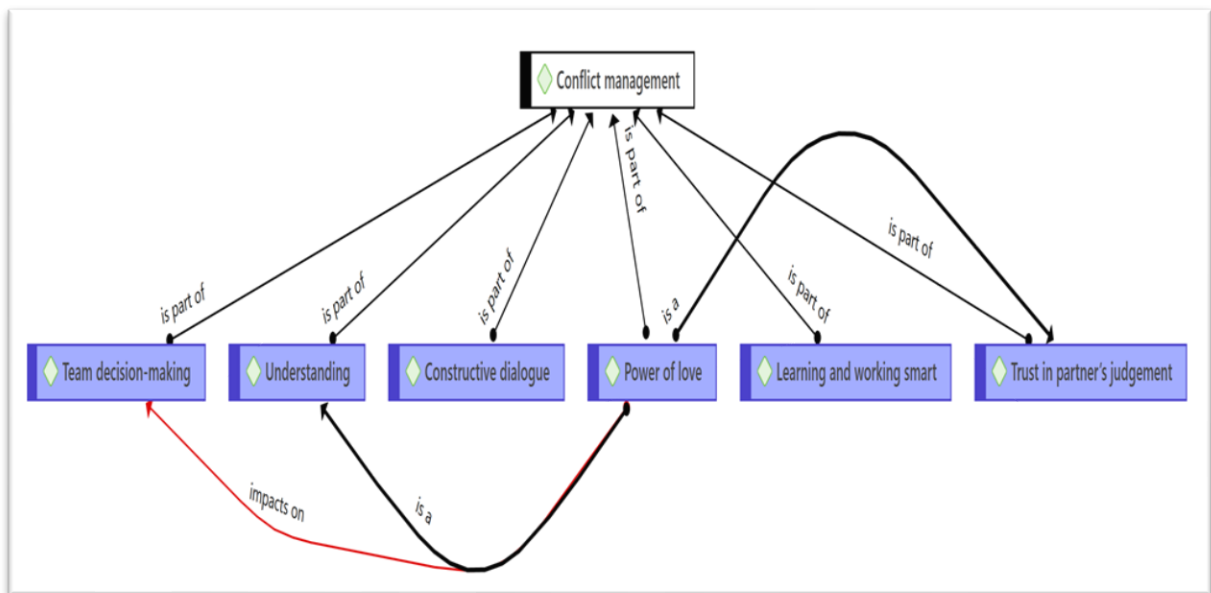
3.10.4.1 Conflict Management

Conflict management in copreneurship comprises six categories:

- Constructive dialogue,
- Team decision-making,
- Trust in partner’s judgement,
- Understanding,
- Learning and working smart, and
- Power of love,

as shown in Figure 3.12 below.

Figure 3.12: Six categories of conflict management in copreneurship



Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

Constructive dialogue

Copreneurs manage conflict through open communication and mutual understanding. Participants mentioned that they handle opposing opinions on business matters through constructive communication to reach a mutually beneficial outcome.

“Firstly, when there are conflicts, a business decision that I want to make or when a business move needs to be taken, we must be together to understand each other. We don't make decisions in front of the staff or during working hours. As I said, it all depends on how we communicate from the word go and how you clarify matters or issues that arise. It does happen that we have different views, my wife has her ideas, and I have my own, and we can't reach a mutual agreement, but we must both make each other understand where we are both coming from—all of this through communication.” (C2:PA3 SecB-Q3)

“I always go back to how we talk. We talk things through, and even if we disagree, we will keep talking and talking, even if it means we sit down and talk until the early morning hours and the sun is coming out. And we've been talking since yesterday, but we talk about things until we can find common ground, and that common

ground could even be okay, let me concede and say, go for it. I may still don't understand it and disagree with it. However, I will give it a go.” (C3:PA5 SecB-Q3)

“I think we always leave it to the other party to try and see the other's perspective, where they are coming from, because you know what makes conflict never end is that nobody comes to the table to say, let me consider what the other is saying. Can I see it from your eyes? Why are you opposed to 123? Or why are you in support of 123, and that's where the art of communication comes to play. Just really giving yourself that opportunity to be transparent to one another enough to sit at that table and say, you know, this is where I'm coming from, and usually you realise that you're actually in the same space. You were not saying it the same way.” (C5:PA10, SecB-Q3)

This finding is in line with the literature showing that constructive communication among copreneurs creates a shared meaning that may expand into the belief that investing more resources in the business is sensible (Matzek *et al.*, 2010:64).

Team decision-making

Couples mentioned the importance of working as a team if copreneurship is to be successful. Decision-making is a joint effort in a copreneurial business. When one partner does not agree with a proposed business decision, the responsibility is on the other partner to justify the decision until its benefits are clear to the other partner.

“Because we are together in this, we must make each other understand until we reach a solution. Then if we feel that it is not working, we leave it and stop it because we must not waste time on something we disagree on. Once we prolong it, it causes bigger problems, so if we feel like this one is not working.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q3)

“If she doesn't agree to something at all, it means she doesn't give it her blessings. So, for our business to succeed, I must try to motivate my views for her to understand. But we have had situations whereby she sees things in a certain way, and I see them differently. It takes time to reach a mutual decision.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q3)

“There's something that he always preaches when we are in meetings, whether it's MANCO or EXCO, that sometimes your opinion will not be popular. But you need to look at the company's best interest, and if maybe people feel this is the right way to go, you need to embrace and accept that decision and own up to it as we all decided.” (C5:PA9, SecB-Q3)

Teams are effective when they have highly skilled and competent individuals who bring diverse but complementary skills and experiences to the organisation (Körner *et al.*, 2015:2). Copreneurs function as a team and similarly experience team dynamics (Farrington *et al.*, 2011:25).

Trust in partner's judgement

Faith in each other's decisions was mentioned as key in a copreneurial partnership. It was noted that couples must allow each other to make executive decisions when they cannot reach a mutual agreement. See the comment by participant 5 below.

“So basically, we have cases where we never agree about anything. Even when we go for it, we still don't agree about it. But we compromise. We compromise and say I beg to differ, but I will give it a chance. We have to, at some point, trust each other just to say, look, has he ever led me to the ditch? No. What's the worst that can happen? Can I trust him with my life? Because those decisions mean my life and my children's lives.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q3)

According to Farrington *et al.* (2011:28), leadership that embraces flexibility, a win-win attitude, quality over quantity, vigour, and forethought is vital for copreneurship success.

Understanding

Copreneurs have a high level of understanding for each other. They manage conflict by continuously empathising and compromising.

“I was never a patient person when we met. I'm a very impulsive person. Let's do this, let's do that. I learned that when I got married. So, I've had to grow into patience and compromise for our married and business life. So yeah, trust each other, compromise, and expect conflicts.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q3)

“Another cause of conflict is not understanding why certain things cannot happen at that time, for example, the issue we were talking about earlier (why we cannot go home). If my husband insists that we go home because his leave allows him to and his time at the permanent job allows him to take sick leave; however, my time doesn't allow me is another cause of conflict. When you make such decisions alone, I don't think you are right. So, we will talk about it, and eventually, we will be on the same page and reach an agreement.” (C7:PA12, SecB-Q3)

“As I mentioned earlier, my husband and I hardly fight. So, I will say when we started the business, I had to understand that he has a very powerful personality. So, he will say something not to cause malicious harm, but I will have a problem with it. So, at first, I would keep quiet and not say anything. But, I later realised that keeping quiet does not help me. Then I learned that he did not even remember or did not intend to offend me. But over the years, I learned that this is how he speaks.” (C10:PA17, SecB-Q3)

This finding closely correlates to findings in other research on copreneurs, which show that the majority consider themselves equal partners and exhibit considerable mutual trust (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:112).

Learning and working smart

Findings indicate that copreneurs learn from their own and others' business experience over time. Therefore, the copreneurial journey is continuous, and requires open-minded people who are always willing to learn.

“Sometimes you need to check how people do their things, especially successful people. You check people who have been in the field for a long time, like Indians. Indian businesses are always run successfully; they don't work very hard but are

smart, right? They use their intelligence to run their things properly.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q3)

“It's a matter of trust. Also, it's a matter of returning to our experiences; what happened when we had a conflict and trusted each other? Can we do it again, or what happened when we had a conflict and did not trust each other? So drawn from past experiences, but learn to trust each other, and learn to compromise, something that I had to grow into, compromise and patience.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q3)

“You see, it's easy for us to reflect on the past and check when we were in this situation or similar situation; how did our decision-making go? So, we can use our experience and past experiences to inform us about the present, especially when it comes to not necessarily agreeing on some of the issues.” (C3:PA6, SecB-Q3)

This is another finding that appears to be unique to this study, and that could not be backed up by existing research. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note.

Power of love

Participant 7 mentioned that, as romantic partners, love is the foundation for overcoming conflict in a copreneurship.

“You know, what's important is knowing that the other person means well. And I guess it comes back to the principle that we're not just doing business, that we're not just partners, but we love one another, and that comes in, and it is important how you feel about each other. Because love trusts, love is honest. Love is kind. It's all those things that we have. We understand love. To be in love means you believe in the best for each other. Love doesn't judge. It corrects with calmness. So, there are always those things that you need to bring in. We can't separate it because we are in the business. So, it's important to remember those things.” (C4:PA7, SecB-Q3)

According to Helmle et al. (2014:112), a couple's bond can encourage communication behaviours that enhance the relationship. This can help them manage conflict and effectively reduce tension. It can also improve positive emotions such as joy, personal

satisfaction, and autonomy - resulting from working with and being in charge alongside someone you love. This can result in a better connection with, understanding of, and commitment to the family and the business.

3.10.5 Findings on business growth

The research question for this theme aims to understand how copreneurs measure business and personal success. The following section discusses the findings and discussion, as noted in the study.

3.10.5.1 Growth Measurement

The participants' growth measurement findings comprise:

- Business success,
- Personal success, and
- Social investment.

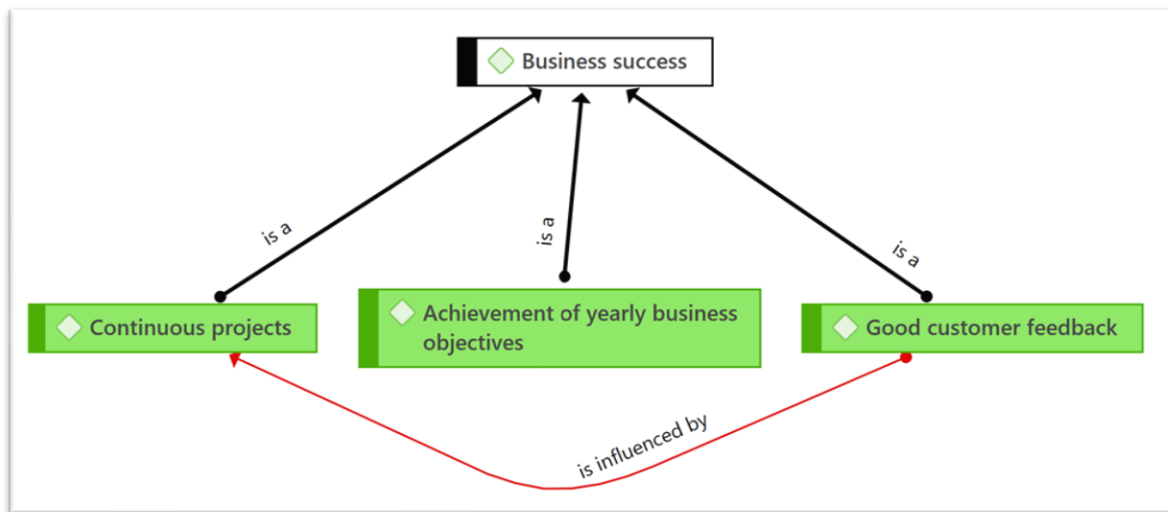
Business success

Business success metrics include:

- Continuous projects,
- Achievement of yearly business objectives, and
- Good customer feedback,

as represented in Figure 3.13 below.

Figure 3.13: Measurements of Business Success



Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

Continuous projects

Participant 1 mentioned that they measure business success by the number of referrals they get from their clients.

“When we know we're doing well, it is the good referrals we get and the continuous work and projects that keep flowing in that we don't need to advertise. I feel like that's success on its own. It shows that we have happy clients that are always interested in us.” (C1:PA1, SecB-Q4)

Another participant mentioned that they measure success by the sustainable jobs they have created over the years through their business.

“When we talk about business success, we talk about the impact and the kind of value and difference we make. If we can be trusted as a stable business, with what we have in our hands, we are not a fly-by-night company and are responsible for the company's finances. We may not have a board we report to, but our employees are indirectly our board and look at how we do life. They look at the things we invest in, are they healthy and benefit the company. And do they get to be on the next level in life?” (C4:PA7, SecB-Q4)

“Imagine their prayers for the business to succeed. It's not about now, that extra money, but it's about the actual running of the business continuously until we are at a point where we say now it's a legacy.” (C4:PA8, SecB-Q4)

Literature on copreneurship performance indicates that resilience and improved communication among copreneurs may positively impact performance, particularly during times of business stress (Machek & Hnilica, 2015:154). Furthermore, positive business performance is linked to continued business.

Good customer feedback

Positive customer feedback is another measurement of success for copreneurs.

“Because with all our clients, we have such good relationships. I mean, we still get them phoning us today, people that we've done projects for, so I feel that that on its own feels like success. They're happy they trust us with their family member or friend for referrals. And yeah, that's one of the big things for us.” (C1:PA1, SecB-Q4)

“Another thing is good customer feedback. We think we are successful as a company when we don't have customer issues during and after projects. So, it makes us very happy when we get positive feedback from satisfied clients.” (C8:PA13, SecB-Q4)

“But we are also passionate about customer service and have many customer queries. So fewer customer queries for me show success.” (C9:PA15, SecB-Q4)

According to Machek and Hnilica (2015:154), committed copreneurs may cooperate to achieve their goals. Positive customer feedback results from good service, which is only possible in a well-managed business.

Achievement of yearly business objectives

Another participant mentioned that they measured business success by assessing their ability to meet annual business objectives.

“So, as we achieve each objective that is taking us towards that goal, we are good to go. If we sit this year and realise that our turnover is lesser than the previous year, we have not been doing something right, and we need to do something better. We have not achieved the goal for the year because the goal is to grow our turnover every year. So, if we didn't attain that turnover we wanted to attain, if we're sitting on 50 million, we want to go on 100 million, and we still find ourselves on 50 million, we did not achieve our goal, so we did not grow in that way. We need to be able to assess our financial goals, and we need to be able to assess where our balance sheet is sitting. Where are our assets now? Did we have an objective that included acquiring certain assets within a certain period? And when that period ends, we want to assess did we achieve that. Okay, so if we have not achieved that, our growth is trembling.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q4)

According to Amore *et al.* (2017:474), companies led by couples display higher business performance compared to businesses managed by an individual or multiple non-family leaders, as well as compared to companies with one or multiple family leaders. However, their findings contradict McDonald *et al.* (2017:1), who note that copreneurial ventures yield smaller profits on average than their non-copreneurial counterparts. Although these studies are focused on financial performance, the assumption can be made that financial success results from the achievement of other yearly objectives.

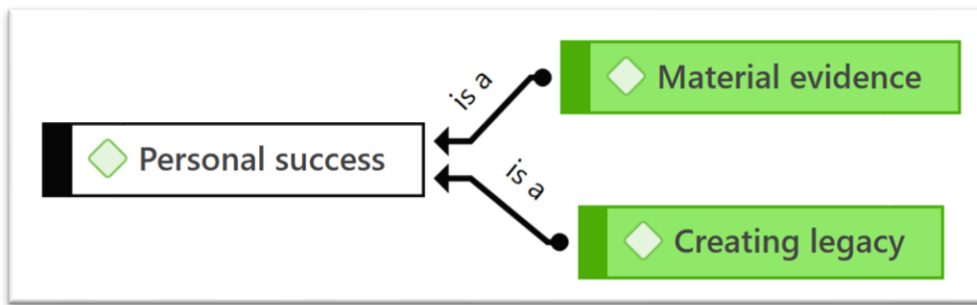
Personal success

Personal success in this report includes:

- Material evidence, and
- Creating a legacy

as depicted in Figure 3.14 below.

Figure 3.14: Measurement of Personal Success



Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

Material evidence

Participants stated that they need material evidence of success in their own lives before they can affect change in others' lives.

“So, I feel that for me, when I am successful, it is when I can empower my people. Even if they decide to go and open their businesses, I'll be, I'll be so happy. I believe in planting seeds in people.” (C10:PA1, SecB-Q4)

Participant 3 mentioned the importance of accumulating physical assets, such as property and other investments, that can sustain their family in the future.

“You know we measure our success differently from other people. Our happiness comes before everything else, and being able to afford what we couldn't afford is another way we measure our success. If we couldn't get something before, but now we can, then we can keep our family happy; that's our success, and that's what we strive for. We don't measure it with money, you might have money today, and tomorrow it's gone. But then, when you build your happiness, you must look at material things that you have, things that you know you have invested in. Items you have the assurance that they will maintain you for a lifetime. Sometimes it's properties and stuff like that.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q4)

Another participant said that her measurement of success entails a comfortable, debt-free life (car or mortgage), and the ability to pay the school fees for all their children in cash.

“So, for me, I realise that we can't afford to fail. Right now, we are in the process where we want to buy property for the business. I feel that will be a big step for us. Because honestly speaking, when you start a business, you start a business because you want to live comfortably. However, we have not reached that stage. I'm just grateful that at least I can pay one of the school fees in cash, which has always been my prayer. So maybe until I get to a point where all school fees are fully paid at the beginning of the year. If the car I drive is not under the bank, the house that I own, you know, things like that and more so for people working under us.” (C10:PA17, SecB-Q4)

This finding is related to research by Amore et al. (2017:462); they note that copreneurs are usually the sole owners and managers of the business, and the family depends on the business as a primary source of income. In addition, copreneurial businesses are SMMEs and typically employ a small number of employees; some of their employees may also be family members. These factors contribute to the copreneurship's ability to decrease operational costs, thus resulting in increased profits for the business and enabling the couple to attain personal assets faster than other couples do.

Creating a legacy

Findings show that copreneurs measure their success by the lasting legacy they build for their children. Belenzon *et al.* (2016:2616) argue that copreneurs typically adopt conservative financial management strategies compared to non-married owners, which has implications of slower growth for copreneurial ventures. This is because copreneurs perceive the business as a legacy for their children; therefore, they tend to be sceptical toward making risky financial decisions, even if it is associated with higher growth.

“and as being in business together, we are also very clear that this is a family business. So, we want also to create a lasting legacy for ourselves and our children. So that when we are gone from this world, our children have this legacy we have built that created wealth for them. By wealth, we're not referring only to money; we're talking about wealth acquisition of assets is crucial in our lives, so we will measure our goals because we will have set our objectives, as he also mentioned.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q4)

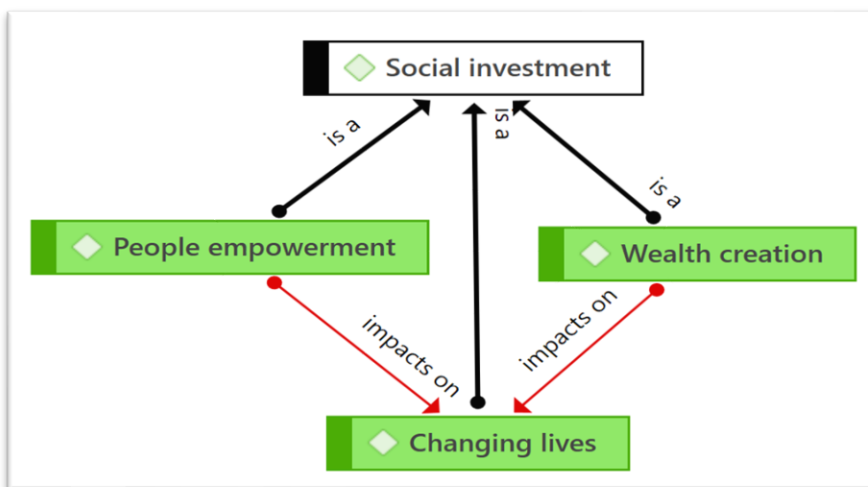
Social investment

Social investment as a measure of business success for copreneurs includes:

- Wealth creation,
- People empowerment, and
- Changing lives,

as shown in figure 3.15 below.

Figure 3.15: Measurement of Social Investment



Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

Wealth creation

Copreneurs, like any other business people, are in business to generate personal wealth. This study reveals that financial success is a critical measure of business success.

“And, of course, finances are essential in business as you know, money is like, you know, your blood in your body. That’s, that’s what keeps the company alive, that can never be compromised. It has to be assessed continually. From time to time, you sit down and check, are we still making money? So, those are some factors we look at when we want to review our success.” (C2:PA3, SecB-Q4)

“A portion of our dreams or our major goal of being in business is to create wealth. It's as simple as that. We can't be superficial about it. You can't be in a profit-making business and be reserved about making profits. So, our goal is to make profits and make monies. But more than just money is to create wealth.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q4)

This finding aligns with most research on copreneurship that indicates that couples are motivated to get into business to generate wealth for their families. Research indicates that couple-run companies are generally profitable based on various observations, including financial profitability. There are multiple reasons for superior profitability, including the synergy resulting from shared values, namely trust, teamwork, superior communication, and a shared vision (Machek & Hnilica, 2015:162). In addition, couples can better monitor and efficiently allocate business resources; in non-family management, this usually entails the challenge of agency costs (Amore *et al.*, 2017:462).

People empowerment

Findings indicate that copreneurs measure business growth and success by the number of people that they empower through their business; this is done by teaching them professional and life skills. This finding corresponds with the literature that indicates that copreneur owners normally display altruistic behaviour (Madanoglu *et al.*, 2020:993). The socio-economic impact on people who work for their organisation is essential in their evaluation of success (Kuschel & Lepeley, 2016:184).

“For me, success is seeing myself changing people's lives. It's all about changing people's lives, especially the disadvantaged ones, like where we live, people can't get to Virgin Active. Some are sick; some can't have children, and some have chronic illnesses such as high blood that have caused them to have painful legs. You also find that sometimes a person has issues at home; their life is not well.” (C7:PA12, SecB-Q4)

“We prioritise empowerment as a critical metric to measure our success. We have trained people who have gone on to have great work opportunities elsewhere because of the experience they got from our business. We have also helped people

with business advice; today, they run well-established businesses. The impact we make in people's lives is essential.” (C8:PA13, SecB-Q4)

Changing lives

Copreneurs also mentioned that they view success as the ability to positively impact and assist people in need. They also noted the importance of changing lives through economic empowerment by providing employment opportunities.

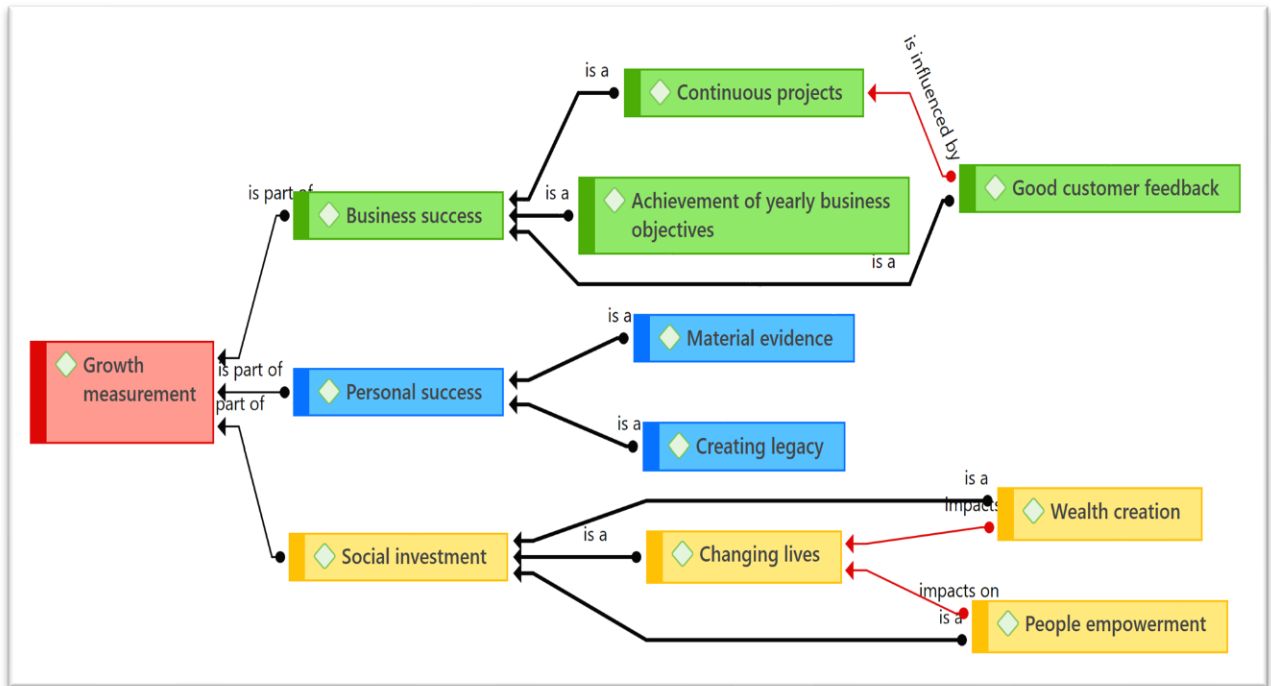
“I mean, pick our eight permanent employees; almost seven of them have been with us for more than ten years. Yeah. And for us, that is important. Being able to be a trusted employer by our employees, them knowing that they don't, they won't find themselves looking for work tomorrow. It's crucial for us.” (C3:PA6, SecB-Q4)

“But I was telling him the other day that we didn't realise that the people we pay monthly salaries are twelve people. For me, it was a big thing. Because I was saying to him, we always think about him and me, but we don't realise that other people working for us are also feeding their families.” (C10:PA17, SecB-Q4)

The finding confirms the research that shows that copreneurs are typically concerned with providing a secure source of income for their family members and their employees (Belenzon *et al.*, 2016:2612). However, other research indicates that copreneurships are known for human resource policies that involve lower salary costs but higher productivity; this demonstrates their ability to enforce implicit employment contracts. Furthermore, research indicates that employee compensation at all levels in family businesses is usually lower, and non-family employees are often less happy with the compensation and benefits than is the case in non-family businesses (Farrington *et al.*, 2014:67).

Although conservative financial management tendencies in copreneurships are associated with sustainable employment, they can harm employees' financial position. Figure 3.16 summarises all the themes discussed on copreneurship growth measurements.

Figure 3.16: The overview of Growth Measurements



Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

3.10.6 Findings on other family member' management

The theme of family members' management resulted from the discussion regarding copreneurs' views on employing family members. The findings were mixed, with some dismissing the idea completely, and others believing it is the right thing to do. Participants' perceptions on the management of family relations in the business, including parents, siblings, in-laws, and other family members, are presented in Figure 3.17 below.

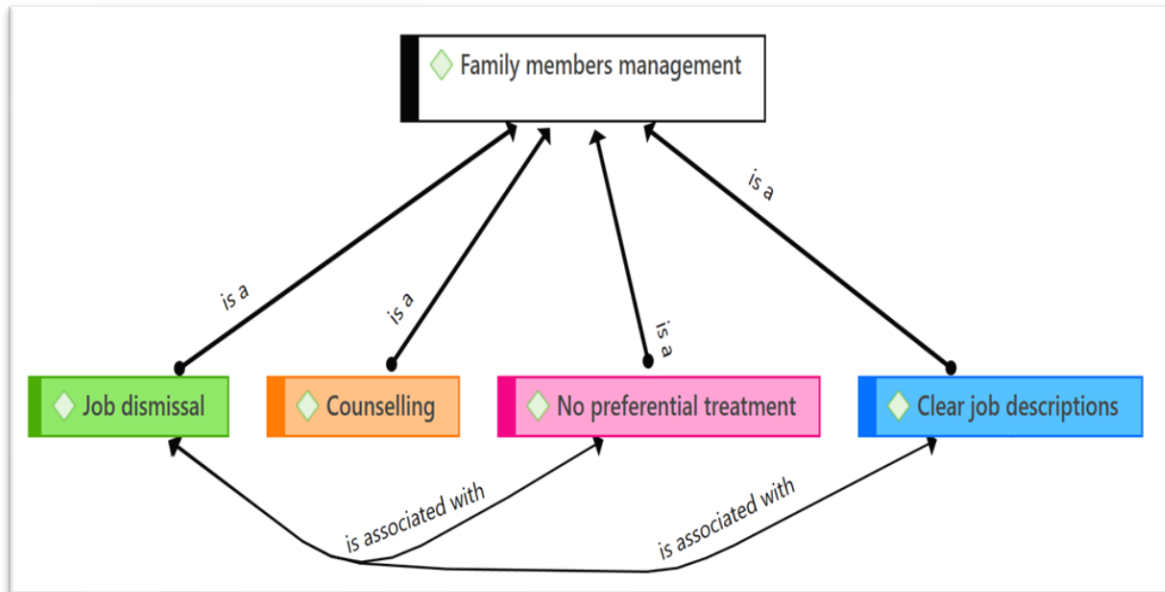
3.10.6.1 Family members management

In managing family members who are the employees of copreneurial businesses, participants mentioned:

- Clear job descriptions,
- Counselling,
- No preferential treatment, and

- Job dismissal.

Figure 3.17: Family members management



Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

Clear job descriptions

Findings indicate that family members employed in a copreneurial business must be managed through clearly defined role expectations. Unfortunately, research suggests that there is a general perception among non-family employees that family members will always get preferential treatment in family businesses (Farrington *et al.*, 2014:67).

Participants mentioned that they are not involved in managing family members in their businesses, but use company policies, performance agreements, and HR personnel (where available) to manage all employees, including family members.

“As he said, if you have the skill and we can accommodate you, by all means, we make sure that the reporting lines are clear and there are no additional expectations or anything like that. So, you deal with your line manager, and that's it.” (C5:PA9, SecB-Q5)

"My husband is very strict; a pen is a pen; you can't change it. If it's yellow, it's yellow for him. So, he would say, "No, you tell him, "and then I have to step in and say, but he is the uncle, and he will say, "No, there is no uncle; we are at work here." (C8:PA13, SecB-Q5)

Counselling

Copreneurs, at times, assume the role of counsellors to family member employees regarding various work ethic matters. For example, participant 17 mentioned that she had to assume the role of a counsellor to her daughter.

"Having your mother as your boss or a child for an employee is not easy. When she feels otherwise, and she's at home, there are certain things that she will call me about, and I will already be thinking this one doesn't want to come to work. But I still say, you know, God will give me the wisdom to say something that will not, that will still make her come to work, but without me putting pressure on her." (C10:PA17, SecB-Q5)

"I had a nephew; I took him in because he had completed his Matric and was not working. While he was studying, I said to let him work with us. He never showed interest when he was here, which impacted the workers. When he is given work to do, he is not doing it correctly. His work needed to be reworked, and employees started complaining to us. That is the disadvantage of employing a family member. But with that being said, we spoke about it. We called him and had a meeting where I told him that he could not expect to be treated differently when we were at work. When we are at work, we are at work; when we go outside, then I am his sister, and my husband is his brother." (C8:PA13, SecB-Q5)

The finding on this counselling role assumed by copreneurs is not explicit in existing research; nevertheless, it correlates with the altruistic values and traits usually recorded in family businesses.

No preferential treatment

Participants noted that, although they employ family members, they do not make themselves guilty of nepotism. Merwe *et al.* (2012:19), in their study on extrinsic rewards in family businesses, noted the importance of performance management systems in ensuring fair performance and compensation of all employees, including family members.

“Our HR will deal with the family, labour will deal with the family, and even the KPIs will talk to the family, so when they are with us, they are not family, they are employees, and we do not give favours.” (C5:PA10, SecB-Q5)

Participant 15 mentioned that the copreneurs might expect family members to model good work ethics because of their relationship.

“I think my husband also means that he's very corporate in that sense. He doesn't care. Yes, you got preferential employment, but once you are inside, you are like anyone else; that's what he means. Whereas for me, lines would be blurred a bit. Anyone who is struggling, we bring them in. My husband is hard on family more than he is on other employees. He is specifically harder if customers complain about a family member. His view is that the family should be building this company; you can't be causing problems with customers.” (C9:PA15, SecB-Q5)

Family businesses generally employ mostly non-family employees and must prioritise managing their job satisfaction and organisational commitment levels to ensure business success. According to Farrington *et al.* (2014:67), if non-family employees perceive unfairness in processes and decisions, they will not give the business their total commitment and support.

Job dismissal

Like other kinds of businesses, non-performing or misbehaving employees, including family members, are dealt with through HR processes in most copreneurial ventures.

Participants mentioned that if the offence committed by a family member warrants a dismissal, they would not hesitate to fire them.

“Some of us can make tough decisions; we would have to make decisions, fire the people because they're disrupting your operations, and they are setting us back, and they may disturb even your progress and growth in the business. So, we have had to make those decisions.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q5)

“Let me tell you, I employed family and fired them. Because I'm ruthless in business, even with my kids, it is black and white with me. You don't deliver; you mess up... Everyone works for us, right? My wife's sisters, cousins, brothers, and nieces. Even the children come and work during school holidays; others come for internships.” (C9:PA16, SecB-Q5)

Research states that family business values exclude family dismissal, but the findings of this study contradict this. Merwe *et al.* (2012:18) maintain that harmony among family members is critical to the continuity of family businesses. Dismissing a family member may cause undue strain on the family.

This study reveals that it is challenging to manage family members in a copreneurial business, and those who decide to do it must be prepared to support and guide the family members to behave in line with the work ethics the business subscribes to. In addition, copreneurs who believe in hiring family members need to assess the risk to family relations associated with the decision.

3.10.7 Findings on recommendation

Participants were asked to recommend strategies for successful copreneurship to current and future couples who want to run copreneurial ventures successfully. The following section on recommendations captures findings, as noted by the researcher.

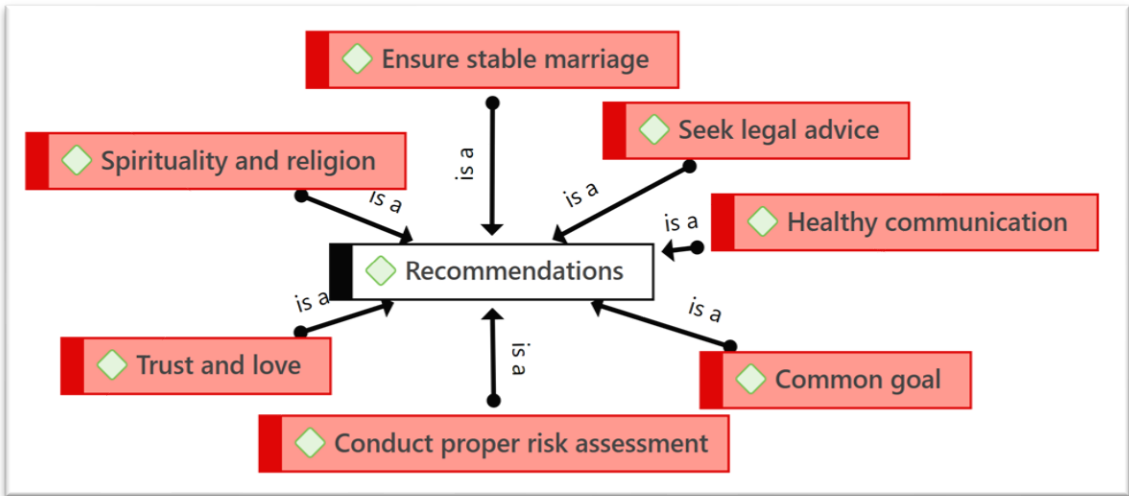
3.10.7.1 Recommendations

Participants recommended that before couples consider going into business together, they must:

- conduct a risk assessment on copreneurship,
- seek legal advice,
- ensure that the marriage is stable,
- incorporate spiritual and religious principles in the running of the business,
- have a healthy communication base in the romantic relationship,
- have a common goal for the future of the business, and
- ensure that trust and love are foundations in their marriage.

Figure 3.18 below depicts the recommendations.

Figure 3.18: Recommendations for successful Copreneurship



Source: Created by the researcher in ATLAS.ti

Conduct proper risk assessment

Potential copreneurs must thoroughly analyse all necessary areas that may be impacted by the copreneurial partnership. Participant 6 advocated seeking counsel from professionals or others who have experience with this type of business.

“I would say do a proper risk assessment because these are some things we tend to ignore. Like she said, in the family, we'd not necessarily have people who did this before us such that we will say, these are our mentors; they walked the path before us. So, it was quite a risk that we were not really well orientated around, and when things got tough, we realised that we should have made better decisions when we went into business.” (C3:PA6, SecB-Q6).

“So, my strongest advice would be to consult, you know, have a mentor. If you have a healthy financier investing in your business, they would probably be more experienced than you. They've been in the game much longer than you; get them to make an input into this thing that you're starting because it's not as easy as you might think it is. It might look exciting because it's a beautiful, you know, business idea, but I can guarantee you, there's, there are risks in the business. So proper consultation, proper risk assessment, should be the starting point, so that, at least, you know, caution yourselves against anything that might go south.” (C3:PA6, SecB-Q6)

Although the finding on conducting a risk assessment before entering into a copreneurial partnership seems logical and vital, it is not explicitly articulated in the literature on copreneurship.

Seek legal advice

Couple 3, participants 5 and 6, emphasised the importance of proper legal advice in the inception of a copreneurial venture. The findings indicate that it is prudent for couples to understand the legalities of copreneurship to enable them to make informed decisions based on the terms of their marital contract.

“Another lesson that we learned in the process, something that I would strongly advise aspiring entrepreneurs in marriage to consider, is to seek legal advice. Somebody with a legal background will come to advise you. For example, if you look into things like your type of marriage, are you married in community of property, if things got bad in business, how will this affect you? Honestly, these are some things we didn't apply our minds to when we started. But the benefit of hindsight is this is where any couple has to start when they decide to go into

business because you don't want when things go bad in the business; your family setup and arrangement are affected the same way. After all, it can make life very, very difficult. And it might make things even more impossible. So even if you were to try to rekindle your business, at least you have to have one portion: your business; going through rough times. But try and protect your family against such. These are some of the lessons that we learned.” (C3:PA6, SecB-Q6)

The literature does not capture the recommendation for couples to seek legal advice before entering into a copreneurial venture. However, researchers perhaps assume that couples conduct due diligence before entering into business, and that this process would address the legalities of their partnership.

Ensure stable marriage

Findings in this study indicates the importance of establishing a solid, stable, and healthy family and romantic relationship between the spouses before entering into a copreneurial partnership.

“If we had not waited for some time to make sure that our marriage was solid and stable before we could go into business together because if your marriage is not stable, I don't think we would have made it. You need a solid, firm marriage to be in that kind of space. Because you're going to spend a lot of time together, you're going to have to compromise, and you're going to have to trust each other in decision-making. So, if that foundation is not built from the marriage before the business partnership, you will never succeed. And that's where I think the failure of most businesses that are run by couples comes from: at home, things were still not yet solid. Suppose I can't trust you at home, I can't rely on you at home, and I cannot compromise. So, the same home principles must be applied at work because the challenges that come from you running the business together can rattle everything.” (C3:PA5, SecB-Q6)

“However, if you don't have a good relationship, I'd say don't go there because it's going to get worse half the time. I mean, we've seen relationships that are not healthy. There are some people I would advise not to go into business together or invest any further in anything unless they fix their problems. So, it depends on the

relationship. If you're in an unhealthy relationship, you're not going to have a healthy business relationship. If you can't stand each other at home, you're not going to stand each other at the office, and it might be a different dynamic. So, he might be worse in a work environment, you know. And I'm saying that based on family members that I've seen going to business with partners, and it's been a huge disaster.” (C6:PA11, SecB-Q6)

Literature notes that copreneurship can enhance the marriage life, and that blending work and family roles can spill over and possibly enrich family life (Helmle *et al.*, 2014:112). However, this study's findings indicate that a stable marriage foundation is essential, even before the creation of a copreneurship. Furthermore, the literature argues that couples are expected to transfer the same values and principles adopted at home to the business (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:112). Therefore, if the values are negative, they will adversely affect the business.

Spirituality and religion

Participants noted spiritual and religious principles such as prayer and charity in dealing with the daily challenges copreneurships face.

“The money we spend on small things like takeaway food can go towards savings. Also, learn to bless people and plant seeds by giving. It always comes back to you.” (C10:PA17, SecB-Q6)

“You are bringing everything into your storehouse. I believe it is godly. You have to put God in the centre.” (C9:PA15, SecB-Q6)

“So, I think that spirit of discernment is important. We introduced a culture of holding a short prayer every morning, although employees are not forced to attend. It is good for us to pray together before we start working at 8 am every day. It helps because, at some point, your employees can be your destructors.” (C8:PA13, SecB-Q6).

“Prayer and asking God to help you pull through are important as a couple. Even your associates, I pray for them. Once my husband says he is going to meet so

and so, I always say let's pray about it. Even if you don't get the answers today, because you prevented what could have happened, it will reveal itself." (C8:PA13, SecB-Q6)

This is another unique theme that appears to be first noted by this research study. The reason could be that spirituality and religion are sensitive and highly individualised subjects. The geographical context of participants also influences the significance of this theme, and it is, therefore, difficult to generalise in research.

Healthy communication

Research indicates that for copreneurship success, couples must first solidify their communication (Danes & Jang, 2013:46). According to the findings, when the romantic relationship has healthy communication habits, copreneurs can quickly transfer it to the business partnership.

"So, communicate and trust each other." (C1:PA2, SecB-Q6)

"I would encourage them to do it, bearing in mind what I had stated earlier about your relationship at home. I think that's the key to everything. Once you don't have an understanding or you don't respect each other, there is nothing you can achieve together. But once you have a healthy and respectful relationship, not to say as a man, you must demand respect all the time, but you also need to listen to your wife's point of view, it must work both ways, and you must love your work, in that way everything will work out." (C2:PA3, SecB-Q6)

"However, if you don't have a good relationship, I'd say don't go there because it's going to get worse half the time. I mean, we've seen relationships that are not healthy. There are some people I would advise not to go into business together or invest any further in anything unless they fix their problems. So, it depends on the relationship. If you're in an unhealthy relationship, you're not going to have a healthy business relationship. If you can't stand each other at home, you're not going to stand at the office, which might be a different dynamic. So, he might be worse in a work environment, you know. And I'm saying that based on family

members that I've seen going to business with partners, and it's been a huge disaster.” (C6:PA11, SecB-Q6)

Trust and love

According to the research findings, successful copreneurships are founded on mutual love and trust.

“You must trust each other. That's what love is. And the good thing is that you come from a foundation of love. Love comes with trust, comes honesty, love is kind, and love is patient. Love does not hold wrongs. Love, correct, and get connected. All those things that matter.” (C4:PA7, SecB-Q6)

The finding corresponds with existing research on family businesses and copreneurship. Trust is a vital governance tool in family-owned businesses; it can create a competitive advantage and decrease transactional costs (Madanoglu et al., 2020:993). According to Brannon *et al.* (2013:112), there are higher levels of trust in copreneurship businesses than in traditional business partnerships. In addition, because married couples usually live together and jointly own the majority of their personal assets, they may be better able to monitor one another, monitor market information, and implement tacit contracts compared to other types of owners (Belenzon *et al.*, 2016:2616).

Common goal

Participants noted the importance of sharing a common vision and goal regarding the business as a recommendation for successful a copreneurship. This finding correlates with most copreneurship research. A partnership between two people with similar goals and aspirations, who share a living space and personal resources outside the company, may result in a competitive business advantage according to Michael and Peter (2015:427).

“I agree with everything my husband has said. There must be respect and support for one another and a common goal.” (C2:PA4, SecB-Q6)

“And you need to be clear in terms of what your objective is. Yes, everyone goes into business because they want to make profits. But you need to have a clear vision to say this is where we are and where we want to be.” (C5:PA9, SecB-Q6)

“So, first of all, they need to have the same vision. Because if you don't have the same vision, you will pull into another direction and one to the other direction.” (C10:PA17, SecB-Q6)

Farrington *et al.* (2011:29) suggest that failure to align dreams in a copreneurial venture may result in feelings of resentment, ultimately leading to marital discord.

3.11 CONCLUSION

The results and discussion section covers participants' opinions on copreneurship based on their lived experience. These views are mapped against existing literature on copreneurship. There are many similarities between the findings of this empirical research study and other studies in different parts of the world. However, there are also new findings that could not be correlated with the existing literature on copreneurship.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4, the final chapter, will conclude the empirical study's findings. The researcher summarises the different themes' results and discussions found in Chapter 3. Chapter, the literature review, discusses how the findings compare to the findings in the existing body of literature.

In addition, Chapter 4 discusses the underlying theories of copreneurship and how they influenced the empirical study. This chapter also discusses practical recommendations for a successful copreneurship, and the researcher assesses the achievement of the study's primary and secondary objectives. Furthermore, this chapter discusses the study's limitations and provides suggestions for future research. Finally, a summary of the study concludes this chapter.

4.2 CONCLUSIONS ON THE KEY FINDINGS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

4.2.1 The results of role allocation in copreneurship

The findings on role allocation in copreneurship consist of:

- Copreneurship roles, and
- Role determination.

Participants indicated that they occupy different roles in the business, and their daily responsibilities are closely related to their titles in the business. The roles include:

- Management and Administration,
- Human Resources and Finance,

- Operations,
- Sales, and
- Marketing.

In addition, the findings indicate that couples are collaborating to make the company successful. Finally, role determination findings show that, in copreneurial businesses, masculine and feminine characteristics, skills and knowledge, work passion, and personality type greatly influence how roles are allocated. When considering underlying theories on copreneurship, the influence of social identity was evident in the copreneurial businesses involved in this study. The theory also declares that an individual's concept of themselves originates from membership in a particular social group and the value of that membership (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:109; Guan & So, 2016:4). It further argues that people behave in ways that meet behavioural expectations correlated with a salient role identity (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:110). The researcher identified the influence of the social identity theory in the way masculine and feminine characteristics largely determine how couples allocate responsibilities in their businesses. Men, predominantly considered leaders in their families and society, automatically assumed a leadership role in business.

4.2.2 How copreneurs manage the business partnership and romantic relationship

Findings indicate that copreneurs apply two strategies in managing the intertwined domains of business and romantic relationship to ensure that one does not affect the other. They are:

- Professional-focused management, and
- Family-focused management.

Professional-Focused Management includes the role of shared visions, which emphasises the importance of the couple having an aligned vision to succeed in copreneurship, and to separate personal life and work. This also involves the different tactics they use to create a mental and physical boundary between work and home

issues. These tactics include keeping work-related activities and issues away from home and vice versa. Other strategies contained under Professional-focused management include the importance of business commitment and work ethics. Family-focused management strategies include:

- Mutual understanding and agreement,
- Immediate conflict resolution,
- Communication, and
- Religion.

Following the discussion with participants on the advantages and disadvantages of copreneurship based on their experiences, the researcher formulated findings that describe the nature of copreneurship. The key findings are the risks and benefits that the participants associate with copreneurship. The benefits include mutual growth and family legacy, common vision and goal, enhanced closeness and communication, transparency, trust, fulfilment, hard work, and discipline. The risks involved the financial insecurity associated with the lack of diversity in income in copreneurial families; family/child neglect, as a result of both parents being tied to business demands; disagreements on decisions clouded by personal reasons; high pressure and fatigue due to high expectations of the couple; emotional imbalances, such as neglecting to show care and affection to the spouse due to work issues; sabotaging work decisions due to personal matters and an anti-social lifestyle due to over-commitment to the business.

When discussing the impact of copreneurship on employees, the findings indicate three key factors:

- Gender stereotypes,
- Level of professionalism, and
- Work culture.

Participants indicated that gender stereotypes held by employees are challenging, particularly towards female directors/owners. Employees tend to regard the male partner as superior and the wife as his supporter, rather than an equal business partner. However, other couples indicated that they receive equal respect in the

business. Building a positive work culture that promotes openness and a low tolerance for employee manipulation was essential in a copreneurial business.

The participants identified strategies they apply in their day-to-day operations in the copreneurship to balance their work and family relationships. They include communication-focused, multi-role engagement, openness, combined work trips and family holidays, and flexible work and break schedules. Participants noted that these strategies assist in ensuring further balance of their unique and tricky partnerships.

When discussing the impact of copreneurship on family planning, participants indicate that the effects are both positive and negative. Participants alluded to the challenge of home financial strain, especially at the beginning of a copreneurial business, due to money being allocated towards building the business. However, participants indicated that when the business prospers, they realise a positive impact over time. Many participants mentioned that copreneurship accelerated the achievement of their family goals and promoted skills development through knowledge transfer between spouses. Furthermore, when discussing the impact of copreneurship on childbearing, participants indicated that working with their spouses enabled flexibility in deciding how and when they wanted to have children, compared to when they were employed. On the other hand, one participant mentioned that copreneurship was a challenge in childbearing due to their copreneurial venture requiring her to be physically fit. Other positive impacts on family that result from a copreneurship include shared responsibilities and improved quality of life. Another negative factor noted in the findings was the impact on family connections, which involve the couple's inability to attend to extended family commitments due to business commitments.

Overall, the findings in the discussion on balancing the domains of work and family indicate that, in the beginning, couples struggle with balance; however, with time, they find strategies that promote success in both domains.

The influence of the embeddedness theory was evident in this study. As mentioned in the literature review, the theory argues that people choose to stay at their jobs and careers primarily due to positive factors, such as organisational commitment or job satisfaction. The theory further states that individuals are entangled in their current job

by various physical and psychological ties and connections (Lee *et al.*, 2014:201). In this study, it is evident that the couples are highly committed to their business success due to various ties, including financial and social factors.

4.2.3 Conflict management

Findings on how copreneurs manage conflict indicate six strategies couples employ:

- Team decision-making,
- Constructive dialogue,
- Understanding,
- Power of love,
- Learning and working smart, and
- Trust in the partner's judgement.

4.2.4 The results on how copreneurs measure business success

Findings on how copreneurs measure business success indicate that they regard continuous projects, the achievement of yearly business objectives, and good customer feedback as essential. Furthermore, copreneurs mentioned that they measure personal success based on material evidence, such as the physical assets they accumulate as a couple. They also mentioned the creation of a legacy for their children as another form of personal success. Finally, social investment was noted as an essential measure of success for copreneurs, including the positive social impact the copreneurship has on the community.

4.2.5 Family members management in copreneurship

Participants in this study were divided on their views concerning family member employment. Some cited that they are entirely against employing family members due to the complexities involved in managing them. Others mentioned that they embrace family involvement in their businesses; however, they have systems to manage the dynamics associated with employing family. Those participants with family as

employees mentioned using organisational policies that include clear job descriptions, no preferential treatment, counselling, and dismissals (where necessary).

4.2.6 Recommendations by copreneurs

When asked to give recommendations to aspiring copreneurs for running a successful copreneurship, participants mentioned the importance of conducting a risk assessment and seeking legal advice on how to structure the business partnership, based on the terms of their marriage contract. In addition, they recommended the importance of a stable marriage/relationship before a couple could consider forming a business partnership; this would ensure that it can withstand the challenges that working together can pose. Participants also mentioned spirituality and religion as essential in a copreneurship. According to some participants, these principles will assist the couple in knowing how to treat each other and others. They further recommended that couples have healthy communication habits, as it is necessary for business success. In addition, participants suggested that couples ensure that their goal for the business is aligned. When assessing existing literature, this recommendation is influenced by the social identity theory. The theory is premised on the idea that an individual's concept of themselves originates from membership in a particular social group and the value of that membership (Brannon *et al.*, 2013:109; Guan & So, 2016:4).

According to the theory, when a couple has shared goals regarding family and business, it gives them a sense of belonging in the union, and it should encourage them to ensure that they succeed in attaining those goals. Finally, they mentioned love and trust for one another as fundamental to a copreneurial partnership. Another theory that applies to these recommendations is the work-life balance theory. The recommendations concern couples ensuring a healthy balance of work and family demands for success. The following section summarises the managerial implications of this research study, as noted by the researcher.

4.3 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.3.1 Role allocation in copreneurship

The challenge around role allocation in copreneurship is often due to societal norms that are rooted in gender stereotypes. In addition, couples already occupy specific roles in the family structure and usually transfer those to the business. Therefore, the researcher recommends the following approach in allocating roles in copreneurial ventures:

- Couples should allocate roles according to the skills, talents, educational qualifications, and social capital of each partner. An individual's position in the household should not automatically relegate them to a particular position in the business. They need to have demonstrated, perhaps in their career history or other activities, that they can occupy those positions.
- The founding spouse will probably have more passion for the business, and would usually assume a leadership role. However, the researcher recommends that couples be open-minded about each other's unique abilities and not allow ego to cloud the decision about who should lead.
- The researcher also recommends that couples seek advice on strategically allocating roles to give the business a competitive advantage. Similar to other types of businesses, external market demands and government regulations must be considered when allocating business resources.

4.3.2 Managing the business partnership and romantic relationship in copreneurship

The researcher recommends that:

- Current and aspiring copreneurs should equip themselves with literature on copreneurship to get scientific guidance on forming a successful copreneurial business. They should also seek advice from couples who are already in

copreneurial businesses and get all the necessary coaching and training on interpersonal skills and how to co-exist in a healthy relationship.

- Aspiring copreneurs should be realistic about the nature of their romantic relationship and whether they can overcome the potential challenges that accompany running a business.
- Copreneurs design and allocate home responsibilities to both partners' satisfaction. Where possible, the researcher recommends that the couple get additional support structures, such as a domestic helper or extended family to assist with children and home responsibilities.

4.3.3 Conflict management

The researcher further recommends that:

- Copreneurs should get to know each other's conflict handling style and learn how to navigate around it for positive outcomes.
- Copreneurs should have business and marriage mentors to assist with mediation and guidance on rational decision-making (when required).
- Couples learn to communicate and listen to each other with understanding before coming to any conclusions.

4.3.4 Measuring business growth in copreneurial businesses

Literature and empirical research have indicated that copreneurs measure business success by various metrics, such as financial growth, continuous business, accumulation of assets, and the social impact on communities. All of these measures are important and can be achieved simultaneously. The researcher recommends that existing and future copreneurs determine for themselves the best strategies to achieve business and personal growth according to their goals.

4.3.5 Family members management in copreneurship

Families are made up of unique people with different characters and values and should be treated as such. The findings on involving family members vary based on the individual family experiences of participants. The researcher recommends that copreneurs should make decisions regarding employing family based on their experiences with each family member as relates to their own value system as a business and as individuals.

The researcher recommends that the key requirement for employing family should be based on the presence of required skills and talents that will take the business forward.

For those copreneurs who want to employ family, the researcher encourages the use of organisational policies to manage the behaviour of all employees. Adherence to policies, and the consequences of failing to do so, should not differ where family is concerned.

A further recommendation is for non-family personnel to handle employee-related matters to ensure objectivity in applying organisational policies. This will also assist in distancing the copreneurs from the responsibility of dismissing family members from the business when required.

Table 4.1: Summary of recommendations

| FINDING | CHALLENGE | ACTION | RESPONSIBLE PERSON | OUTCOME | TIMELINE |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| Role determination and allocation in copreneurship. | Role allocation is affected by societal norms and gender stereotypes. | Allocate roles by individual educational qualifications, skills, and talents. | Both partners must have an honest discussion about their abilities. | A competitive business with strong leadership and management. | The role allocation discussion must occur at the beginning of the copreneurship. However, a continuous evaluation is necessary. |
| | | Copreneurs need to consider local policies and regulations when allocating roles for competitive advantage (B-BBEE, EE, Woman Empowerment, etc.) | Both partners. | | |
| Copreneurs struggle to separate business and family issues. | Copreneurs allow issues from one domain to affect the other domain, | Copreneurs should be realistic about the ability of their family/romantic relationship to | Both partners. | An honest evaluation at the beginning will give aspiring copreneurs an indication of | Before the formation of copreneurship. |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|-----------------------|--|---|
| | <p>resulting in a strained relationship.</p> | <p>withstand additional challenges expected in business partnerships.</p> | | <p>prospects for future success, and this will enable them to make an informed decision up front.</p> | |
| | | <p>Aspiring copreneurs, and those who are already copreneurs but are challenged, should study scientific research on the nature of copreneurship to understand the benefits and challenges. This knowledge will assist in preparing them for the journey ahead and equip them with possible solutions.</p> | <p>Both partners.</p> | <p>Enhanced marriage life and a successful business. Research indicates that the couple's relationship is positively impacted once a healthy balance of the two domains is achieved.</p> | <p>At the formation of the copreneurship.</p> |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|---|----------------|---|--|
| | | Copreneurs should consult and get advice from other copreneurs on harmoniously managing the two intertwined domains. | Both partners. | | At the formation of copreneurship, and continuously as challenges arise. |
| | | Copreneurs must agree on a fair allocation of home responsibilities to avoid overburdening a single partner. Where necessary, they should employ additional support structures, such as a domestic helper to assist with family responsibilities. | Both partners. | A fair distribution of home- and work responsibilities. | At the formation of copreneurship, and continuously as circumstances change. |
| Copreneurs experience conflict. | Business decisions can be affected by family reasons and | Copreneurs must learn conflict management skills. | Both partners. | Empowered individuals who can | When faced with a conflict that can |

| | | | | | |
|--|---|--|----------------|--|--|
| | vice versa, resulting in conflict. | Various free online materials or formal training institutions offer training in conflict management. In addition, copreneurs must use their prior knowledge of each other to navigate conflict in both domains. | | withstand challenges in various situations. | affect the business and the marriage. |
| Measuring business success in copreneurship. | Copreneurs use various metrics to measure business success. | Copreneurs must align their business goals, and business success measurements must align with them. Depending on the nature and size of the business, copreneurs can use the Companies Act, 2008 and the KING IV | Both partners. | A sustainable business that can bring financial rewards to the couple. | At the formation of copreneurship, and continuously as the business grows. |

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|---|----------------|--|--|
| | | report as a guide on setting business goals (Triple-bottom line principle). | | | |
| Family member management. | Family members can be challenging to manage in a copreneurial business, resulting in strained business and family relations. | Copreneurs must study the pros and cons of employing families in their businesses. Scientific studies on the matter and advice from existing copreneurs can assist copreneurs. | Both partners. | A well-managed organisation and fewer family issues. | When considering hiring a family member. |
| | | Copreneurs must employ family based on qualifications and skills rather than relation. Furthermore, each family member's attitudes and values must be assessed before employment to | Both partners. | | When considering hiring a family member. |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|---------------|
| | | mitigate the risk of future discontent. | | | |
| | | Copreneurs need organisational policies, HR personnel, and line managers to handle all employee relations issues. This will assist the copreneurs in distancing themselves from decisions involving hiring, managing, and dismissing employees, including family members. | Both partners, HR, and line managers. | | Continuously. |

Source: Researcher

4.4 ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES

It is crucial to assess whether the researcher achieved the research objectives. Therefore, the primary aim of this research study, as stated in Chapter 1, Section 1.4, is to explore the perception of copreneurship in the Vaal Triangle. The researcher could gather empirical data from copreneurs who have businesses in the Vaal Triangle, or copreneurs who live there but whose business operations are located elsewhere. Guided by the semi-structured interview guide, these copreneurs gave the researcher rich insight into their daily experiences on all the sub-topics discussed during the interviews. The findings were documented and discussed in Chapter 3. Most of the findings correlated to the existing literature on copreneurship based on the literature review in Chapter 2. However, the researcher also discovered new findings based on the context and experiences of the sample. Based on the reasons mentioned above, the researcher can conclude that the primary research objective was achieved.

The study had three secondary methodological objectives. The following section will reiterate the objectives as stated in Chapter 1 and assess whether the researcher achieved them.

To conduct comprehensive literature research on the perception of copreneurship and business success.

The researcher consulted multiple literature sources, including online journals, books, and the internet on the subject of copreneurship. The findings were documented in the literature review, Chapter 2, of this research study. The researcher used this literature as a foundation for formulating the research interview discussion guide. Furthermore, the researcher used the underlying theories found in the literature to make sense of the empirical research results.

To gather primary data from a representative sample of copreneurs in the Vaal Triangle and thematically analyse the data. Then, to formulate insights that add value to the field of entrepreneurship.

The researcher interviewed representatives of 10 copreneurial businesses from the Vaal Triangle. In most cases, both partners were interviewed (7 couples), and they each gave their views on the various issues discussed in the interview. In the remaining three copreneurial businesses, only one partner was available for the interview due to business commitments. In total, the researcher interviewed 17 participants, who provided a rich narrative of their experience of copreneurships. Through coding and thematic analysis, the researcher gave an account of the empirical findings and formulated insights, guided by the existing literature covered in Chapter 3 of this document. The researcher also attached the interview transcripts as an annexure to this research document to validate the findings.

To provide recommendations for successful copreneurship, guided by research findings, to assist current and future entrepreneurs.

Based on the literature review and the findings from the empirical study, the researcher formulated recommendations to guide current and future copreneurs on strategies to run a successful copreneurship. The recommendations addressed critical issues, including role allocation, strategies for balancing the business and romantic partnership to ensure harmony in the two domains, conflict management, business growth measurements, the involvement of family members in the business, and recommendations for success from the interviewed sample of copreneurs.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher achieved the primary and secondary objectives of the research study. The following discussion is on the contribution of this research study at theoretical, practical and industry levels.

4.5 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

4.5.1 Theoretical contribution

This study contributes to the existing literature on copreneurship, entrepreneurship, and family-owned businesses; it highlighted critical opportunities and challenges faced

by existing copreneurs, specifically in the Vaal Triangle. Although most of the findings in this study confirm what is already stated in the existing literature on copreneurship, there are also unique findings. This could be due to the geographic context of the participants; therefore, these new findings will contribute to the body of literature on the topic.

4.5.2 Practical contribution

As noted in the recommendations in section 4.3.2 of this chapter, current and aspiring copreneurs should equip themselves with knowledge on the subject to get scientific guidance on how to formulate a copreneurial business venture successfully. Therefore, this study will assist those copreneurs in gathering scientific knowledge.

4.5.3 Industry contribution

This study may encourage more local entrepreneurs to consider copreneurship. Spouses/romantic partners with complementary skill sets and expertise may collaborate and develop new business ideas, creating employment opportunities through sustainable business ventures. The value will be significant, considering the current economic challenges in South Africa, magnified by the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in a high unemployment rate. Next, the researcher notes the limitations of this research study.

4.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- Geographically, this study is restricted to the Vaal Triangle and may not be generalisable.
- The sample size in this study (ten copreneurial businesses) is a limitation and cannot be assumed to represent the entire Vaal Triangle population accurately. Although this study will contribute to the literature on entrepreneurship, there may be a need to conduct the same research with a larger sample.

- The limited time frame allocated for completing the research study may have restricted the number of participants and, thus, the insights gathered in this study.

This research study has exposed new findings on the nature of copreneurship, indicating that there is still much more that can be investigated on this unique business partnership. The following section notes potential future research on copreneurship.

4.7 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The subject of copreneurship is complex, and can be explored from various angles in different parts of the world based on the geographic context. Based on the knowledge gained in compiling this research study, the researcher suggests the following as potential future research topics for exploration:

- Investigate the influence of the country's entrepreneurial ecosystems on the formation rate of copreneurial ventures.
- Investigate the impact of copreneurial parents on the children's future entrepreneurial interest.
- Investigate the perception of copreneurial business ventures as clients/service providers from a customer perspective.
- Investigate the contribution of copreneurial conflict on divorce/separation rate.

4.8 SUMMARY

Chapter 4 concludes this research study exploring the perception of copreneurship in the Vaal Triangle. Chapter 1 discusses the nature of the study, and included a high-level definition of critical terms used in this study, the problem statement, primary and secondary research objectives, the scope of the study, and the research methodology adopted by the researcher. The chapter also covered the trustworthiness of the study and the ethical considerations.

Chapter 2 of this research study comprises the literature review exploring the existing scientific findings on copreneurship. In addition, the chapter covered a detailed definition of critical terms in this study, the exploration of family businesses as a foundation of copreneurship, the conceptualisation of copreneurship, and motivations for copreneurship. The chapter also covered the underlying theories of copreneurship, characteristics of copreneurship, the requirement for a successful copreneurship, role allocation, and the benefits and challenges of copreneurship. Finally, Chapter 2 concludes with a review of the literature on how copreneurs measure business success.

Chapter 3 of this study reports on the study's empirical findings and the discussion of the results.

Finally, Chapter 4 concludes the study with a summary of the findings, applies the underlying theories of copreneurship to the findings, and provides the researcher's practical recommendations. Furthermore, the final chapter assesses the achievement of the study's primary and secondary objectives, outlines the study's limitations and contribution, and concludes with suggestions for future research.

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APPENDIX A

RESEARCH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Hello, and thank you for agreeing to have a discussion with me regarding a very significant part of your life/lives, which is your business. I would like us to have a relaxed conversation, and please don't take this as a job interview but give me your honest thoughts on the questions I will be asking. I will be asking the questions in a specific order for guidance, but please feel free to expand on any questions when necessary. I would like us to talk about your business structure, role allocation between the two of you, the intertwined worlds of marriage/romantic relationship and business, conflict, business growth and the extended family's involvement in the business.

Before we start with the interview, **I would like to get your demographic information as this will assist me in creating a profile of the participants.**

Please state the following:

- Your marital status
- Your age during the last birthday
- Your highest level of academic education
- The kind of work experience before engaging in entrepreneurship
- How old is the business?
- Location of the business
- In which industry does your business (s) operate?
- How many permanent employees does your business employ?

1. Thank you for the background, now can you tell me about your business ownership design.

Probe: What is the shareholder split? And what are/were the reasons behind it?

Probe: Are you the only shareholders in the business, or do you have other partners?

2. Ok, and now, I would like us to talk about role allocations, but first, I would like to know if both of you are actively involved in the day-to-day runnings of your business? Explain the involvement further, please?

Probe: Do you have specific roles that each focuses on in the business, and how did you determine the allocations?

3. While thinking about role expectations, I would like to discuss how you manage the boundaries of a business partnership and a romantic relationship. But first, may I ask, which one came first, the business partnership or the romantic partnership?

Probe: In reflection, what is your view on combining these two intricate worlds of business and romance?

Probe: In your view, what do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of this kind of business partnership?

Probe: Talk to me about how your employees manage the fact that the bosses are also romantic partners? Do you think it has any effect on them?

Probe: If someone was to ask how do you manage and strike a good balance of the two worlds, what would be your response?

Probe: According to you, has this merging of both worlds affected how you plan your family goals? I.e. Family planning? Do you mind elaborating?

4. Can we discuss the inevitable conflict issue and how you resolve it as partners? Do you experience it, and how do you manage it? Please explain.

Probe: In your view, do you think business conflict sometimes affects your romantic relationship and vice versa? Please explain?

5. In your view, do you think co-owning the business has impacted your business growth? Please explain

Probe: How do you measure growth?

Probe: How do you measure your personal and business success?

6. Before we close, I would like to know if you have other family members working in your business

Probe: How do you manage the family relations in the business? (refer to parents, siblings, in-laws and other family members).

7. Finally, What advice would you give couples considering getting into business together?

8. Thank you so much. Do you have any further comments you would like to discuss regarding this discussion?

Thank you, and I truly appreciate your time and openness throughout the discussion.

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM



North-West University
Private Bag x6001
Potchefstroom, 2520
<http://commerce.nwu.ac.za/business-school>

27 November 2022

To whom it may concern

INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERVIEW

Date: _____

Participant code: _____

Dear Participant,

My name is Cindy Nhlapo, and I am a final year MBA candidate at the North-West University (NWU) Business School. This study explores the perception of copreneurship in the Vaal Triangle, South Africa. It is intended to get insights from romantically involved couples who are also business partners and the different dynamics they have to manage for a successful experience in the two intertwined worlds of business and romance.

The outcome of this study will be a mini-dissertation that will be submitted to the university as a partial requirement to obtain a degree of Masters in Business Administration. The NWU is a reputable and internationally accredited institution with high ethical standards expectations throughout conducting a research study.

Please take note that your participation is voluntary, and you have the right to discontinue if you wish so. Participants are also allowed not to answer questions they are not comfortable answering. There will be no compensation paid for participation.



The interview duration will be approximately 1 hour. The interview will be voice-recorded. However, your name will not be recorded. The recording will be available to you upon request,

The interviewer will take notes. This is done for data analysis. The interviewer will transcribe the recording and kept confidential on a password-protected computer. The transcripts and recordings will be destroyed after three years.

Furthermore, all individual identification will be removed from the hard copy of the transcript, and participant identity and confidentiality will be concealed using coding procedures. Please note that excerpts from the interview may be included in the final dissertation report or other later publications. However, under no circumstances will your name or identifying characteristics appear in these writings. Also, the interviewer may ask for limited demographic information for profiling interview participants, and no further statistical analysis will be performed.

This study is approved by the General Management Scientific Committee of the NWU Business School. Prof Christoff Botha is the Research Manager. His contact number is 018 299 1672, and his email address is christoff.botha@nwu.ac.za.

The Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences Ethics Committee (EMS-REC) has given this study an ethical clearance. The ethical clearance number is NWU-00629-22-A4. Mark Rathbone is the chair of the Ethical Committee. His contact number is 018 299 1356, and his email address is mark.rathbone@nwu.ac.za.

My supervisor for this MBA research study is Professor Stephan Van der Merwe. His contact details are as follows: Tell: 018 299 1414; Email: stephan.vandermerwe@nwu.ac.za

Please feel free to contact him regarding my credentials and concerns about the study.

Thank you once more for your participation. Your honest contribution to this study is highly valued.

Kind regards

Cindy Nhlapo

MBA Candidate (North-West University)

APPENDIX C

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222
Fax: 018 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Senate Committee for Research Ethics
Tel: 018 299-4849
Email: nkosinathi.machine@nwu.ac.za

2 June 2022

ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EMS-REC)** on 22/04/2022, Round Robin, the Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-RERC) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------|--------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------------|------------|----------|----------|----------|--|
| Study title: Exploring the perception of copreneurship in the Vaal Triangle, South Africa | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Prof S P van der Merwe - MBA | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Student: Nhlapo, CN (40497283) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ethics number: | N | W | U | - | 0 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 9 | - | 2 | 2 | - | A | 4 | |
| | Institution | | Study Number | | | | | Year | | | | | | Status | | |
| | Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Application Type: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Commencement date: 02/06/2022 | | | | | | | | | | | Risk: | Low | | | | |
| Expiry date: 02/06/2023 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

•

| |
|---|
| <p>General conditions:</p> <p><i>While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the EMS-REC:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and- without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.• The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the EMS-REC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.• Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.• The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started. <p><i>n the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and EMS-REC reserves the right to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study;- to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process; |
|---|

- *withdraw or postpone approval if:*
- *any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;*
 - *it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the EMS-REC or that information has been false or misrepresented;*
 - *submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or*
 - *new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.*
- *Please note that the ethics approval of this application is subject to the Covid-19 protocols.*

The EMS-REC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the EMS-REC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely,

**Mark
Rathbone**

Digitally signed by Mark Rathbone
DN: cn=Mark Rathbone, o=North-
West University, ou=Business
management,
email=mark.rathbone@nwu.ac.za,
c=ZA
Date: 2022.06.03 09:31:00 +02'00'

Prof Mark Rathbone
Chairperson: NWU Economic and Management Sciences Research Ethics Committee

APPENDIX D

CERTIFICATE OF PROOFREADING



KRÜGER LANGUAGE PRACTITIONERS

Certificate of Proofreading

391 Walter Sisulu Street
Miederpark
Potchefstroom
2531
24 November 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, Mirrycke Krüger, hereby confirm that Krüger Language Practitioners has proofread the mini-dissertation of CN Nhlapo (student number 40497283), titled:

Exploring the perception of copreneurship in the Vaal Triangle, South Africa

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree Masters in Business Administration at the North-West University.

Primary proofreader: Mirrycke Krüger

Secondary proofreaders: Henriëtte Krüger

The primary proofreader works on the entire text and gives the final approval. The secondary proofreader provides support and revises track changes.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mirrycke Krüger'.

Mirrycke Krüger

SATI member number: 1000377

Qualified Language Practitioner: BPHIL Ethics, Philosophy, and Languages (with distinction/ GoldenKey)

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