Assessing coping strategies of female street traders during COVID-19 in the City of UMhlathuze, Kwa-Zulu Natal

BY

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DEDICATION

To my late dad (Mbongeni Sithole), you have always encouraged me to pursue my dreams and work hard. I am here today because of your encouragement.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

FES	Formal Economic Sector
FST	Female Street Traders
ILO	International Labour Organization
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
UEI	Urban Economic Informality
UI	Urban Informality
UIE	Urban Informal Economy
ULM	UMhlathuze Local Municipality
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

ABSTRACT

The informal economy is an essential part of the Global South. Over the years it has provided an opportunity for many to become essential economic and social actors, a majority of these being women. Street traders are susceptible to, among others, socio-economic shocks, crime, and income irregularity. This means in the case of a disturbance to normal operations; street traders must adapt to ensure that they retain their livelihoods. Against this backdrop, this study assesses the coping strategies of female street traders during the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of UMhlathuze, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The specific objectives of the study are to, a) analyse street trading operations of female informal economic operators in the City of UMhlathuze, b) examine the capital, infrastructural and political challenges experienced by female street traders as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in the city of UMhlathuze, c) analyse the coping strategies used by female street traders during the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of UMhlathuze, and d) assess the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on female street traders in the study area. This research uses Feminist Marxism and Feminist Intersectionality as the theoretical lenses to critically analyse the coping strategies of FSTs in the City of UMhlathuze during the COVID-19 pandemic. In terms of methodology, the study employed a qualitative approach with 43 purposively sampled Female Street Traders (FSTs) interviewed at KwaDlangezwa, Empangeni CBD, and Alkantstrand Beach. The study found that in the City of UMhlathuze the nature of street trading operations for FSTs includes trading in second-hand clothes, cooked food, fruit, and vegetables.

The findings of this study also show that within the City of UMhlathuze, FSTs faced capital, operational and political challenges which impacted their operations during the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges included increased procurement prices, inadequate infrastructure, and the lack of street trading permits. In response to these challenges, FSTs had to modify their operations by becoming mobile, altering the nature of their trade or in some instances working together. This study proposes that FSTs should form networks that can be beneficial to them in times of crisis. The research also recommends that government departments should consider the needs of FSTs in disaster management so that future policies and responses do not marginalize FSTs.

Key words: Informal economy, COVID-19, female street trading, City of UMhlathuze

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces and positions the whole study. It does so by discussing the scope of the research in terms of the problem statement, the aim and objectives and research questions, as well as giving an outline of the significance of this study.

1.2. Background of the Study

The definition of urban informality is often contested as the concept permeates all aspects of the urban system, including housing, employment, and public services (Kamete, 2013). Donaghy (2002) asserts that urban informality refers to all activities and practices defined as illegitimate by the state. This study accepts the definition of urban informality by Chen (2005) as unregistered business activities that evade tax and other formal requirements and lack legal and social protection. These business activities include, among others, street traders, contract workers, and domestic workers. This study focuses on street trading as a form of urban economic informality.

Street traders are an integral part of the urban economy as they provide employment, goods and services to the public. According to Godswill et al., (2016), street trading is an effective form of livelihood within the urban economy, and for the most vulnerable people in cities, such as the poor, migrants as well as women. Street vending is considered one of the most visible activities within the informal economy in cities all over the world. According to Saha (2009), street traders often provide cheaper goods such as clothing, accessories, and other household necessities than traditional retail stores. Cupers (2015) states that street trading is a ubiquitous part of the city's sidewalks, highways and even mall plazas in Los Angeles. In Asia, street trading represents a substantial portion of economic activity (Sekhani et al., 2019). Street trading is on the rise in cities worldwide, including in highly developed or urbanized nations such as the United States of America and China, as well as within African cities. In Africa, street traders provide an assortment of services such as shoe polishing, pay phone services, barbering, garments, and transport (Galmieldien & van Niekerk, 2017).

Numerous research on the urban informal economy has highlighted the vulnerability of street traders (Esayas & Mulugetam, 2020; Brata, 2010; Douglas et al., 2008). Douglas et al., (2008) carried out a study in Alajo, Ghana, on the impact of floods on

street vendors. The results suggest that in Alajo, street vendors have developed ways to cope with the challenges presented by floods. These included using blocks and stones to elevate their merchandise or placing goods in small spaces between roofs and ceilings (Douglas et al., 2008). According to Cohen et al., (2000), informal street trading lacks the necessary social protection to enable street vendors to cope with challenges, however, evidence suggests that street vendors often develop ways to respond to and circumvent the circumstances that they face.

Female street traders face intersectional vulnerabilities linked to the precarious nature of street trading and their gender, amongst other identity categories. These impact the way they are affected as well as how they cope with challenges in street trading. Therefore, there is a need to assess how female street traders in uMhlathuze have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. This study aims to assess the coping strategies utilized by female street traders during the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of UMhlathuze, KwaZulu-Natal.

1.3. Problem Statement

The informal economy has, over the years, provided an opportunity for more people to participate in employment and become essential economic and social actors. As an essential part of the informal economy, street trading sustains the livelihoods of the urban poor in the Global South (Skinner, 2014). It also provides a livelihood for the most vulnerable people in cities, such as the poor, migrants, and women (Godswill et al., 2016). According to Jimu (2004), street traders are susceptible to socio-economic shocks, crime, and income irregularity. This means that in the case of a disturbance in normal operations, street traders need to adapt to ensure that their livelihood is retained. For instance, when the Philippines was devastated by a typhoon in 2013, the tikog weaving industry was impacted. Street traders who weave and sell tikog baskets had to find alternate suppliers and materials to weave with (Cuaton, 2009). Hlahla and Hill (2018) also found that due to floods in Durban, South Africa, street traders risk losing their stock and produce. In response to this they move their valuables to higher ground or community halls (Hlahla & Hill, 2018).

When the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) a pandemic in 2019, many countries implemented containment and mitigation measures. These included restrictions on movement and public gatherings. This seriously impacted street trading as street traders were unable to access suppliers or

markets to sell their wares. Some research has been done on the impacts of COVID-19 on street trading and how street traders respond to the changes presented by the pandemic. In Zimbabwe, markets in Mbare Musika and Kibuye were closed, and because of this, street traders had to resort to door-to-door selling, night trading or selling from their car boots (Kiaka et al., 2021). In a study conducted by WIEGO (2020) in Durban, street traders borrowed money or sold their assets to cope with the challenges presented by the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the vulnerability of street traders to shocks and disturbances. In addition, intervening factors such as age, race, education, and nationality affect how female street traders are impacted as well as respond to these shocks. However, there is a paucity of knowledge on how female street traders in UMhlathuze have responded to the pandemic. Hence, this study aims to assess coping strategies utilized by female street traders during the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of uMhlathuze, Kwa-Zulu-Natal.

1.4. Aim and Objectives of the Study

1.4.1. Aim

This research aims to:

Assess the coping strategies utilised by female street traders during the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of uMhlathuze, KwaZulu-Natal.

1.4.2. Objectives

The specific objectives of this study were to:

a) Analyse the street trading operations of female informal economic operators in the City of uMhlathuze.
b) Examine the capital, infrastructural and political challenges experienced by female street traders as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in the City uMhlathuze.
c) Analyse the coping strategies of female street traders used during the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of uMhlathuze.
d) Assess the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on female street traders in the study area.

1.4.3. Research Questions

a) What street trading operations are female informal economic operators involved in, in the City of uMhlathuze?

b) What are the capital, infrastructural and political challenges female street traders experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of uMhlathuze?
c) What are coping strategies used by female street traders in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of uMhlathuze?
d) How has the government responded to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on female street traders in the study area?

1.5. Intended contribution to the body of knowledge

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) (2008) states that the informal sector is dominated mainly by women who look to it as a source of supplementary income or a primary survival strategy. The informal economy has, as a result, become highly feminized. This means that women are disproportionately represented at varying scales regionally within the informal sector. Using the case of the City of UMhlathuze, this study identifies and assesses the coping strategies used by female street traders to comprehend the challenges faced in their activities during the pandemic and strategies used to overcome the challenges.

The study's findings bring to light the voices of female street traders to better understand their responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. A significant body of research focuses on female street traders' challenges, but little is written on how they respond to them. Furthermore, there is a scarcity of research focusing exclusively on female street traders' experiences. The researcher intends that the findings derived from the data and the recommendations would transcend sectors and be of use to academics and local economic development practitioners. It is also envisaged that this study would yield important information that can be useful in LED planning, and disaster management in addressing concerns identified by female street traders. Post-study workshops will also be organized to give stakeholders feedback on the study's findings and recommendations on how operations can be improved.

1.6. Outline of the Study

This thesis is composed of six chapters as follows.

Chapter 1 is the introduction to the whole study. It discusses the background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, and significance.

Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framework and conceptual framework underpinning the study. It provides a discourse on Feminist Marxist and Feminist Intersectionality theories that inform the study.

Chapter 3, the literature review, will provide an overview of the literature addressing urban economic informality, street trading and women. This also includes discussions on challenges and coping strategies in street trading.

Chapter 4 outlines the setting of the study. This includes a brief history and description of the study area based on climate, vegetation, geomorphology, hydrology, and socio-economic characteristics. The chapter also outlines the research design and methodology. It discusses the research paradigm and methods that are to be used in this study.

Chapter 5 describes and analyses the data collected concerning the study's objective to assess the coping strategies of female street traders in the study area.

Chapter 6 provides the conclusion based on the study's findings and answers the study's research questions. Recommendations will also be provided in this chapter.

1.7. Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided the study's background. It highlighted the significance of the study in the background, rationalised the need for it in the problem statement, aim and objectives, intended contribution to the body of knowledge, and noted the research questions that frame the study. Finally, the chapter concluded with an outline of the chapters for the rest of the thesis. The subsequent chapter discusses the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of this study.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1. Introduction

Creswell (1998) states that a study is situated within a specific context through a set of theories known as the theoretical framework. However, Hlengwa (2016) states that a research study does not begin with a theory and then proceed with proving or disproving that theory; instead, concepts relevant to that study must be first identified through a conceptual framework. Therefore, this chapter discusses conceptual and theoretical frameworks that will inform this research.

2.2. Conceptual Framework

This section defines urban informality, street trading, female street traders, COVID-19, as well as coping strategies as crucial concepts in understanding the research problem.

2.2.1. Urban Informality:

Urban informality is a very multifaceted concept; as such, there are contesting definitions of what it is. The term “informality” is often used to describe a range of activities and behaviours that are not regulated or controlled by the state (Roy,2005; Chen et al., 2016). Donaghy (2002) concurs and posits that urban informality refers to all activities and practices defined as illegitimate by the state. However, Roy (2005) asserts that urban informality is a generalized mode of urbanization with components that include income generation, settlements, and service provision. The concept of urban informality permeates all aspects of the urban system and encompasses housing, employment, and public services (Kamete, 2013). This suggests that within urban areas, there is a disparity between the urban population and the provision of services, employment, and housing; this leads to many generating incomes and providing housing informally. This study focuses on urban economic informality, which according to Chen (2005), includes unregistered business activities which evade tax and other formal requirements and lack both legal and social protection. These business activities include, among others, street traders, contract workers and domestic workers. They are discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis and are also referred to as “underground”, “shadow”, or “hidden” (Webb et al., 2013; Greenidge et al., 2009). Based on these definitions, Benjamin et al., (2014) suggest that the urban informal economy is characterised by vulnerability and instability. However, Hart (1973) contends that this sector is characterised by efficiency, resilience, and

creativity. This resilience and creativity is the focus of this study as it shapes and determines the response of female street traders to challenges within the informal sector. The focus of this study is street trading.

2.2.1. Street trading:

Street trading is considered a physical manifestation of urban informality as it is highly visible and forms a large portion of urban economies globally, from which a significant part of the urban population makes a livelihood (Lincoln, 2008). Street trading is a lifeline for the poor in cities. According to Cohen et al., (2008), street trading is an essential means of survival for lower-income groups with little access to other forms of livelihood. This conceptualization of street trading can be seen as reductionist in its presentation of street trading as a survival activity; in so doing, it overlooks the fact that street trading is a form of grassroots economic development (Lincoln, 2008). Although Lincoln (2008) states that street trading is key to economic development, this form of livelihood is often unwanted in cities. This approach presents street trading as a nuisance that needs to be restricted, controlled, or eliminated outright (ILO, 2020); however, in this study, street trading is not seen as a nuisance but as a significant form of livelihood for the most vulnerable in cities, such as the poor, migrants, and women (Cohen et al., 2008).

Further, the focus is not on street trading in general but on female street trading, which are street trading activities involving women from various socio-economic backgrounds who look to it as a source of supplementary income or as the primary survival strategy. These conceptualisations of street trading are pertinent to this study because they highlight the diverse nature and reasons for street trading and also put forward the role of government in regulating it. These are all relevant to the study's objectives of analysing the street trading operations of female street traders as well as the government's response to the impact of the pandemic on these operations in the City of UMhlathuze.

2.2.3. COVID-19:

The Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is caused by a novel coronavirus, known officially as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2; also known as 2019-nCoV), was discovered after an epidemic of respiratory sickness cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. Covid-19 has been declared a global

pandemic by the World Health Organization since March 2020. In response to COVID-19, many countries have implemented containment and mitigation measures to delay a surge in coronavirus cases. These include restrictions on movement and public gatherings. This study draws not only on the definition of COVID-19 as a disease but also considers the experiences of female street traders due to infrastructural, political, and capital challenges they may have experienced during the pandemic. As such, COVID-19 in this study is not an ethereal concept; instead, it also manifested itself in mitigation measures that impacted street trading activities in cities worldwide. The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2020) states that the implementation of lockdowns, social distancing measures, and travel bans sharply reduced economic opportunities within the informal economy, which relies heavily on personal contact with customers when trading. In some countries, street trading in its entirety was banned. The ILO (2020) suggests that the banning of street trading led to the disruption of livelihoods and a decline in the earnings of informal traders. These impacts are suggested to have perpetuated the precarious position of female street traders (ILO, 2020). Given this postulated precarity, this study examines the challenges female street traders encountered during the pandemic in the City of uMhlathuze, KwaZulu-Natal; this includes an assessment of the government's responses to these perceived challenges.

2.2.4. Coping strategy:

According to Davies (1993), coping strategies or mechanisms are activities that households or individuals engage in to ensure food and income security when normal means of livelihood have been disrupted. Coping strategies in the study refer to acts or efforts by groups of female street traders responding to challenges during the pandemic. For example, Eriksen et al., (2005) suggest that these activities may be aimed at obtaining food or income through informal or formal exchanges and claims. Coping strategies are varied and include those that focus on mobilizing and making better use of monetary and non-monetary resources provided by the government and various other social networks (friends, relatives, and the community). This study includes an analysis of the efforts of female street traders to maintain their livelihood or ensure income security in the study area during the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.3. Theoretical Frameworks

According to Connelly et al., (2000), a theoretical framework consists of assumptions and ideas that help us to see and understand the nature of the social world. The theoretical frameworks for the study are composed of two feminist theories which are Feminist Marxism and Feminist Intersectionality. Feminism is the view that women, simply because they are women, are treated unfairly in a society that is organized by men to prioritize men. This thinking results in women confronting barriers that limit their progression in society. Chukwuma (1994) draws from the African context and posits that Feminism is the rejection of the ideas of inferiority by women who strive for recognition. Ezeigbo (1996) acknowledges this notion and states that Feminism emerged as a response to oppressive attitudes and laws which sought to keep women in subservient and dependent positions. Feminism seeks to not only liberate women from oppression and poverty but also protest against negative perceptions of women. Therefore, feminist theories are used in this study to help focus on the street-trading women's response to challenges threatening their autonomy during the pandemic.

This study utilised theoretical frameworks consisting of Feminist Marxism and Feminist Intersectionality to assess the coping strategies of female street traders in the City of UMhlathuze. This is because decisions that female street traders make as coping or survival strategies show an intersection of Marxist and feminist intersectionality theories where the combination of both these perspectives presents a view of how mal-distribution and derivatives of power result in the perpetuation of social inequalities across multiple categories.

2.3.1. Feminist Marxism

Commensurate with Feminist Marxism in this study, it is essential to provide a brief background on the legacy of apartheid and capitalism in South Africa because explanations of women's oppression can be found in capitalism and the capitalist society. According to Yuval-Davis (2006), the current social subjugation of women who live outside the privileged class is inseparably tied to historical capitalism. This can be understood as the triple tragedy faced by poor, black women in South Africa since, according to Seekings (2007), under apartheid racist and dualist policies perpetuated income poverty and inequality. Seekings and Nattrass (2005) posit that it was because of apartheid that the capitalist society flourished in South Africa as African people were dispossessed of their land and faced restrictions in movement and employment. Under

apartheid, the black majority was physically and economically confined to the impoverished parts of the country, these being Bantustans and townships. This meant that poverty and affluence existed parallel to each other. This manifestation of capitalist manipulation continues through the division of the working class and the isolated/low-paid labour (Bozzoli,1983).

Where the Marxist theory describes capitalism or class society as the control of means of production by one class (Armstrong, 2020), the Marxist Feminist theory uses class, wealth, and capitalism as the best explanations for the oppression of women because the oppression of women originated from the introduction of private property (Armstrong,2020; Engels,1884). In South Africa, women have historically been denied access to the means of production, where, under apartheid rule, the role of black women in South Africa was to care for the young and old household members whilst men were drawn into cities to work. South African cities during this time had a racial character where the interests of a racist and capitalist system coalesced to develop unequal power relations between the black working class and the white capitalist ruling class. Ogura (1996) states that through taxation and the expropriation of land, the apartheid state created a system in which wage labour was provided by the male African population whilst most women remained in Bantustans providing productive and social reproductive labour. This is in line with the assertion by Fangunwa (2020) that under capitalism, the role of women is to bear and rear the following generation of labourers. The dependence of women on remittances from male relatives who worked in the city also perpetuated this dependence and subordination of women. This history of the stratification of employment and labour provides a prime example of capitalism.

According to the Marxist feminist perspective, the oppression and subordination of women are a result of class relations that enforce gender hierarchies (Armstrong, 2020). Feminist Marxism suggests that the gendered access to resources for women limits their opportunities and as such women need to find means to challenge these oppressive gender norms. Feminist Marxism is grounded on materialist theories of patriarchy and considers capitalism and its class relations as enforcers of gender hierarchies (Bozzoli,1983). In a capitalist society, gender is seen as a legitimate way to delineate differences and organize resources (Gottfried, 2013) therefore, these need to be removed to do away with the subordination of women. Feminist Marxism,

therefore, focuses on how women resist as well as respond to capitalism (Bozzoli, 1983). This provides women with an independent economic base outside of capitalist relations of production. According to Rogerson (2000), historically racist policies have relegated the previously disadvantaged population, especially women, to the informal economy.

However, the neoliberal and capitalist nature of present-day labour dynamics has also resulted in increased unemployment or informal forms of employment for women. Women continue to face persistent gender-discriminatory property practices as well as a lack of marketable skills. This limits their employment in the formal economic sector, and as such, they are unable to compete within the capitalist labour market (Mabilo, 2018). Feminist Marxism in this case presents a structuralist understanding of informality in its observations of capitalism. According to Carr and Chen (2002), gender inequalities within cities are reinforced by capitalism, as such there are links between capitalism, gender, and informality. The exploitative nature of capitalist growth drives informality and, in the context of female street traders, factors such as education, nationality and race act as barriers for women into the formal economy. Therefore, street trading, as a form of informality, absorbs the labour of women who have been excluded.

Urban informality is therefore a constant feature of capitalist development, especially in cities of the South as it constitutes the primary source of income and shows how exclusionary practices serve to exclude the urban poor. Urban informality in the study is conceptualized as unregistered business activities which evade tax and other formal requirements and lack legal and social protection (Chen, 2005). When related to feminist Marxism in this study, this evasion of tax and formal requirements can be understood as efforts by female street traders to avoid neoliberal regulations by entering street trading. In the context of the study, street trading as a form of urban informality acts as a coping strategy for the disenfranchised who have been rejected by corporate capitalism within cities (Kamete, 2013). According to Armstrong (2020), Feminist Marxism in this way highlights the resistance strategies of women in the quest to reach economic empowerment and resilience. This aspect of Feminist Marxism relates to the study's objective to analyse the street trading operations of female street traders. This analysis provides an image of the varying levels of street trading operations undertaken by female street traders in the City of uMhlathuze.

From the perspective of Feminist Marxism, female street traders must also employ alternative skills to compensate for their lack of marketable skills or in response to challenges that threaten their income. These can be understood as coping strategies. Neves and du Toit (2012) highlight the social embeddedness of the informal economy by suggesting that social adeptness is an essential skill to the success of the informal sector. Social adeptness in the context of urban informality refers to social networks as well as interpersonal relations that informal traders construct in the absence of formal forms of social protection. Mabilo (2018) states that as a result of this social embeddedness the informal economy is more accessible to women, who having been marginalized from formal economic participation, have created various forms of social networks and strategies to support themselves. In the face of economic vulnerability, women can rely on social associations and relations as a source of resilience, this also puts forward the perspective of social relations on urban informality which is discussed in the literature review (Chapter 3). Studies by (Mitullah, 2003; Neves & du Toit, 2012) highlight the formation of women's groups, rotating service clubs and the payment of protection fees as some of the strategies that female street traders utilise. Feminist Marxism shows the resilience of women, by emphasising the agency of women and their self-sufficiency despite conditions that threaten their economic autonomy. In this study, Feminist Marxism will therefore provide a lens to examine challenges faced by female street traders during COVID-19 and their strategies to circumvent challenges that could have otherwise threatened their incomes.

However, Marxist Feminism has been criticised for relying solely on the Marxist analysis of capitalism and classism, thereby missing the multiple, intersecting forms of oppression that women face. Although gendered systems of inequality are deeply rooted in patriarchal relations and are responsible for the resulting constrictions on women's economic autonomy and the denial of women's needs (Gottfried, 2013), other social inequalities intersect and mediate class inequality. Class, although an important identity, is mediated by other factors including ethnicity, gender, nationality, and sexuality (Kihato, 2009). These all shape the experiences of women; therefore, it is necessary to incorporate feminist intersectionality into this study.

2.3.2. Feminist Intersectionality

Woolard and Leibbrandt (1999) cited in Magidimisha and Gordon (2015) states that in South Africa gender, race and class biases remain as women continue to be divided according to employment, urban/rural and household roles. Therefore, this study seeks to incorporate and capture the intersecting categories that shape responses by female street traders to COVID-19 in the City of uMhlathuze. According to Hooks (2000), the incorporation of feminist intersectionality into feminism came at a time when the understanding of feminism was based on utopian visions that did not consider other forms of domination that women encountered. It was at this time that feminists began to argue that analysis of gender alone is not enough. Intersectionality was first coined by Crenshaw (1989) to explicitly examine how structures of race and class marginalized black women. Feminist intersectionality is the view that because sexism, classism, racism, and homophobia are intersecting systems of oppression, therefore, solutions that seek to dismantle these systems need to be interwoven (Schwartz, 2019). Muirhead et.al., (2020) posits that intersectionality shows a convergence of more than one social element and acting on another. Therefore, from this perspective elements such as race, gender, socio-economic status and ethnicity result in unique identities and views of the world (Muirhead et.al, 2020). Intersectional research focuses on the experience as well as the meaning of simultaneously belonging to multiple intertwined social categories as there is a dimension of diversity within the category of women. In the context of the research, feminist intersectionality is relevant as female street traders may have faced distinct and varying oppressions that interlocked and as such, impacted their experiences and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 2.1.).

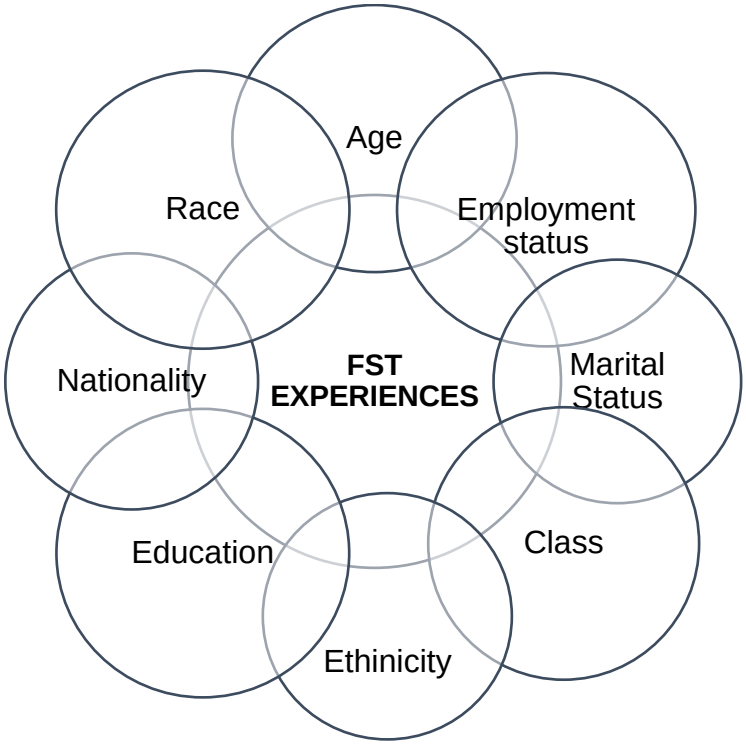

Figure 2.1.: Relationship between identities and experiences of Female Street Traders (FST)

Feminist intersectionality considers women as a heterogeneous group with intersecting identities. The category of female street traders is therefore a single identity that incorporates multiple identities. These identities position women in a certain way within the informal economy. According to Chant and Pedwell (2008), an understanding of how age, class, education, and nationality position women within the informal economy highlight how each of these can be of benefit or detriment to the success of female informal economic operators. The black African population occupies a substantial portion of the informal economy (Mabilo 2018). Rogerson (2000) espouses this assertion by stating that the racist policies of the apartheid government denied the black population access to employment as well as education. This aspect is important to consider in intersectional research within the South African context as regressive legislation resulted in the oppression of the black population, especially women, across various social categories. The study aims to examine how these social categories of age, racial identity, education, and nationality impacted their response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The inability to invest in education and skills prevents not only women from enhancing their employability but also informs their response to challenges in street trading, as such, level of education as a category has been included in this study. It is understood that women with higher levels of education are

better empowered and equipped to deal with any threats to their income (Mabilo, 2018). The post-apartheid era as well as increasing globalisation has resulted in the internationalisation of the informal economy with intensified involvement of other races and nationalities (Mbilo, 2018; Rogerson, 2000). From an intersectional perspective, the social categories of race and nationality suggest that the low socio-economic position of immigrants and black people make them vulnerable within the informal economy, and as such, are marginalised (De Oliveira & Roberts,1994; Rogerson, 2000). Moyo et. al (2018) provides examples of how African migrant trader often face harassment and intimidation from officials, and in some instances other street traders due to their nationality. From the perspective of feminist intersectionality, the identity of being a migrant shape their street trading operations as they often have to adapt and modify their street trading activities in order to retain their livelihoods (Moyo et.al, 2018). Therefore, intersectionality is not just the depiction of the weakness or marginalization of women within categories, they simply serve as different forms of identification that women can adopt and transcend concerning their lived experiences.

Women are not passive victims of these variables even when they are viewed simultaneously. According to Samuels (2008), women are not rendered powerless even though they face multiple forms of oppression. Intersectionality allows for the illustration of the multiple identities of women as well as their subjective capacity to survive and cope despite oppressive conditions. The study aims to assess coping strategies used by female street traders in the City of uMhlathuze. Intersectionality views the experiences of a phenomenon as well as responses to the said phenomenon to be influenced by the interactions of multi-level oppressions that produce distinct experiences (Samuels, 2008). The combination of Feminist Marxism and Intersectionality in the study will provide a framework to highlight how different factors such as age, race, nationality, class, and form of street trade amongst others, intersect and inform the different ways in which female street traders responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.4. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the conceptual and theoretical frameworks of this study. The conceptual framework was discussed first. The concepts considered important in responding to the research problem are urban informality, street trading, COVID-19, and coping strategies. Thereafter, the theoretical framework of this study was also

critically analysed. Theories were drawn from feminist perspectives of Feminist Marxism and Feminist Intersectionality, which brought to light how South Africa's history and the persistence of capitalism have been influential to the prevalence of women in the informal economy. This theoretical framework also presented the idea of multiple linkages and interactions of identities that exist and impact women in the informal economy. The subsequent chapter provides an overview of the literature addressing the research problem.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Introduction

The purpose of a literature review is to collect and present secondary data on the theories and concepts that underpin a study. Considering this, this chapter presents a review of the literature based on the objectives of this study. As a point of departure, this chapter begins by highlighting the understanding of the urban informal economy across various Asian and African countries, including South Africa. The second section of this chapter focuses on women and street trading and explores challenges that are experienced in street trade as well as coping strategies in response to these. The chapter concludes with a discussion on regulations and responses by the government to street trading in South Africa including those passed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.2. Understanding the notion of the Urban Informal Economy

Birch (2019) states that urban informality is a way of life for a large proportion of urban citizens globally who try to attain shelter, jobs, and public services outside of legal institutes. Urban informality is a way for urban residents to negotiate life in the city and procure necessities (Watson,2009). The explosion of informal or squatter settlements, as well as street traders, are the physical manifestations of informality in cities all over the world (Birch,2019). The study focuses on street trading as a form of urban economic informality.

The existence of economic informality was first highlighted by Hart (1973) who noted informal income opportunities in urban Ghana. Based on his observations, he argued that petty entrepreneurs were contributors to the global economy even though they had been described as marginal (Hart,1973). Definitions of the informal economy stem from Hart's observations and highlight the diverse nature of this economy. According to Nyatanga et al., (2000), the informal sector is characterised by activities that have an air of illegality. Akinboade (2005) concurs and further suggests that these activities are often self-employment or informal cross-border trade. This study accepts the definition of urban informality by Chen (2005) as unregistered business activities which evade tax and other formal requirements and lack legal and social protection. These business activities include, among others, street traders, contract workers and domestic workers.

The Urban Informal Economy (UIE) is very complex, as such factors that contribute to its existence are diverse and occur across a variety of contexts. Scholars attribute the occurrence of the informal economy or the informalization of urban livelihoods to market, political, spatial, or socio-economic elements (Turner, 2009; Aggregard, 2010). Four main perspectives attempt to account for the existence of urban economic informality (UEI), these perspectives are dualism, structuralism, legalism, and social relations.

According to Chen (2009), the dualist perspective sees UEI activities as being marginal, traditional, and operating outside of the formal economic sector (FES). Dualism, therefore, depicts the dichotomous relationship between the formal and the informal economic sector, it presents these two as binary and distinctive against each other. By constructing a dichotomy, the informal sector is seen as archaic and a precursor to a more modern, capitalist, and formal economy. Dualism fuels many governments' responses to informality, such that the approach to street traders during the pandemic appears to reflect this (Valodia & Devey, 2012). In addition, South Africa's previous apartheid system has played a significant role in the cementing of the formal/informal binary through lack of access to finance, education and training and insufficient government support for the informal sector (Neves & Du Toit, 2013). This appears to have contributed to the growth of the informal economy whilst simultaneously positioning informal economic operators in a vulnerable position. These historical and present-day dualistic models may have a bearing on the way that groups of female street traders were positioned, impacted as well as responded to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Where dualism focuses on the formality or informality of these economic activities, legalism focuses on the formal regulatory environment that leads to these activities, and structuralism accounts for the linkage that exists between the formal and the informal. Chen (2009) states that the legalist perspective of UEI attributes the rise in UEI activities to stringent regulatory frameworks in the FES which push entrepreneurs to voluntarily enter informality to avoid taxation and registration. According to legalism, the presence of strict laws in the FES creates a barrier for informal entrepreneurs to enter whilst also providing an incentive for formal entrepreneurs to exit. Alternatively, structuralism also views UEI as an absorber of labour that has been otherwise been excluded from the FES by these stringent laws (Chen, 2005). From a feminist

perspective, these laws can be seen as creating “patriarchal social closure”, where capitalist growth drives informality (Jaramillo, 2015). In considering female street traders, factors such as education, nationality, and race act as barriers for women to enter the formal economy, thus driving them into informality.

The fourth view on UEI focuses on the social embeddedness and social networks within UEI. The social relations perspective on UEI highlights the agency and the resilience of informal economic operators that was identified by Harvey (1973). Lincoln (2008) states that when trying to contextualise the informal sector these social networks and relationships are important. In the context of the study, these networks allow for the inclusion of the intersectional identities of class, nationality, race, and education. Turner (2009) addresses this view by suggesting that variables of identity are how people mobilize resources through social networks. Therefore, the position of female street traders within these networks may determine their resilience as they can draw support from them in times of need. Biles (2009) states that the first 3 perspectives on UEI portray informal entrepreneurs as unfortunate pawns in the economy. They fail to consider agency in informal entrepreneurship, however, the perspective of social relations states that UEI activities are made up of social transactions and not just economic transactions (Assaad,1996). Assaad (1996) argues that transactions in UEI are constructed by a social context that emphasizes kinship, ethnicity, networks, and regional origin. When considering the marginal position of female street traders, social capital and social adeptness’ seem to be important within street trading.

3.3. A global overview of the Urban Informal Economy:

Globally, the existence of the informal economy is diverse, with factors that give rise to it being linked to socio-demographic, economic and governance reasons amongst others. In this study, these reasons form the basis for categories that can provide a lens to not only view but also understand the informal economy from a global perspective. The sections below analyse the experience of UEI in Asian and African countries based on a selection of factors that are pertinent to this study.

3.3.1. Globalisation and the UIE

Globalisation is a process that includes capital flows, migration flows, foreign direct investment and the flow of technology which can stimulate productivity in countries thus resulting in job creation, incomes, and the alleviation of poverty (Verick,2011).

Globalisation has contributed to the proliferation of the informal economy as a result, it is criticised for driving poverty all over the world, especially in emergent countries, where it is referred to as “global capitalism” (Davids & Maphunye, 2005). Harris and Todaro (1970, as cited in Falco et al., 2011) state that this “global capitalism” often leads to increases in unemployment or informal forms of employment, such as subcontracting, with lower wage rates and no social protection.

From a structuralist perspective, the link between the formal and the informal sometimes manifests in exploitative labour practices. In these instances, the informalization of the economy is often used by capitalists to cut costs and compete in the global economy or the informalisation of the formal. When looking at UEI in Asia, subcontracting in China has emerged to reduce costs in production. According to Huang et al., (2020), China is known as the “world’s factory”, and to satisfy the increased demand, there have been many informal “factories” or workshops developed. These are often called sweatshops. These factories often flout labour laws resulting in deplorable working conditions for the employees (Huang et al., 2020). Moreover, due to market liberalisation, import competition results in a decrease in the demand for goods that are often produced in the formal sector (Verrick, 2011). Because of these forces, many formal businesses are forced to retrench workers and cut benefits to remain competitive. Carr and Chen (2002) provide evidence of how globalisation results in these shifts in employment, where workers are shifted from secure forms of formal employment to more insecure informal employment. This push also provides a structuralist understanding of urban informality in that the UIE is the absorber of labour that has been excluded from the FES (Chen, 2005). According to Moyo and Gumbo (2021), the retrenchments in African countries resulting from Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) in some African countries led to many in these countries joining the informal economy. Potts (2008) notes that due to reduced government expenditure and trade liberalisation, as stipulated by SAPs, Zimbabwe de-industrialised and those employees in the manufacturing sector faced retrenchments and thus they joined the informal economy. In Kenya, Carr and Chen (2002) show that increased global competition due to cheaper imitations of sisal bags has resulted in women who traditionally produce these bags informally, losing their incomes.

Globalisation provides examples of how structural links between the formal and the informal economy can be beneficial and detrimental for those employed in both sectors. In consideration of this study, globalisation presents an understanding of how the interconnectedness of the global economy is marred by shocks and crises. Held and McGrew (2005) posit that because of the integration between the economies of countries, economic shocks can easily be transmitted between countries and across regions. This study focuses on the coping strategies of street-trading women in the City of uMhlathuze during the COVID-19 pandemic. As such COVID-19 is conceptualised as the regulations and lockdown measures taken by countries to curb the spread of the virus. These regulations included the barring of imports and exports of goods and the banning of international travel. The extent to which this impacted street trading women in the City of uMhlathuze is examined in this study and this relates to the study's objective to examine the challenges of groups of female street traders.

3.3.2. Migration and UEI

Akintola and Akintola (2015) state that the informal economy and migration are global phenomena through which people seek to improve their livelihoods and quality of life. There are a variety of factors that push people to leave their places of origin and migrate to new cities, provinces, or countries. Included in these are a lack of job and employment opportunities, poverty, political instability, and a lack of infrastructure (Becker, 2004; ILO, 2016; Verick, 2011). Literature suggests that migration is a driver of urban informality. According to Verrick (2011), the growth of the informal economy and migration are structurally linked to economic difficulties, political instability, conflict and sometimes unemployment or poverty. Verrick (2011) presents a post-colonial understanding of the growth of the UIE by asserting that migrants leave their places of origin to seek employment elsewhere, this is often so they can send remittances back home. On arrival migrants often struggle to get employment in the formal economy of the host country due to stringent laws. Moyo et al., (2016) suggest that stringent laws and the need for survival act as factors that push migrant traders to join the informal economy. Furthermore, remittances that migrants send back to their places of origin are sometimes used by family members to start up businesses, often in the informal sector (Verick,2011).

When looking at the UIE in China, high instances of rural-urban migration result in some rural-urban migrants struggling to find employment in the FES (Huang et al., 2020). From a structuralist perspective, the UEI acts as an engine of job creation in Chinese cities as migrants can find informal job opportunities even when the formal job market seems inefficient. However, due to the presence of the *hukou* system which controls where people are entitled to live, their access to services and their civic rights (Acoca et al., 2014), rural migrants with a rural *hukou* are unable to access the full benefits of living in the city once they move there. *Hukou* shows a combination of dualistic, legalistic, and structuralist factors in that it is a system that results in a segmented labour market system where rural *hukou* holders are considered second-class, illegal citizens and face employment discrimination, forcing them to enter the UIE (Huang et al., 2020). Crush and McCordic (2017) suggest that migrants in the informal economy often take advantage of the bureaucratic red tape that prevents them from being business owners, however, these migrant informal enterprises not only address the issue of unemployment but also support the formal economy. This supports the existence of a structural relationship between the formal and informal economy in which the formal economy benefits from purchases and indirect tax from informal economic activities.

Chirau (2012) states that the exodus of millions of Zimbabweans to seek livelihoods elsewhere has resulted in an increase in the informal economy in the country. When looking at cross-border traders in Zimbabwe, in an attempt to respond to the crisis and product scarcity in Zimbabwe, many people began transporting goods from neighbouring countries into Zimbabwean markets. Chirau (2012) suggests that the existence of this type of cross-border trade has contributed to the growth of South Africa's retail shops. Furthermore, Mukwedeya (2011) demonstrates that remittances from Zimbabweans in the diaspora are significant to household sustenance.

From an intersectional perspective, the social categories of race and nationality suggest that the low socio-economic position of immigrants and black people make them vulnerable within the informal economy and as such are marginalised (De Oliveira & Riberts,1994; Rogerson, 2000). This study aims to point out the agency of female economic operators, some of whom may include migrants, by assessing their coping strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

3.3.3. Regulatory Regimes and the UIE

There appears to be agreement that government regulations have an impact on the size of the informal economy (De Soto, 1989; Schneider & Enste, 2000; Schneider et al., 2010). The informal economy is often perceived as a nuisance and as such, it is rarely prioritised within cities globally. Regulation of informality is often fuelled by hopes of attaining a “desirable city” or a “modern city and dualism in that the informal economy is seen as a marginal sector that needs to be controlled and repressed” (Kamete, 2013).

The case studies of Kenya, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Zimbabwe, and Uganda by Mitullah (2003) show that these countries share a colonial background in which colonial laws were aimed at controlling informal economic operations in their cities. Based on the evidence from these case studies, African cities are faced with the challenge of dealing with informal street trading while simultaneously attempting to overcome colonial regulations and establish viable spaces for informal traders (Mitullah,2003). This must be considered in the context of the UIE being viewed in the past as being made of subterranean activities that threaten the healthy functioning of the FES, often resulting in clashes with municipal authorities over licensing, taxation, site operation, hygiene, and labour conditions (Mitullah, 2003). Potts (2008) argues the policies and regulations passed by these governments tend to be disproving of the informal economy and are of the view that UEI is unplanned and in defiance of municipal regulations. According to Turner (2009), the informal economy then emerges from this excessive regulation by the state. In this view, the UIE is a reaction to these constrictive structures. It is affirmed that local governments prove to be a significant impediment to the development of informal sector activities, as many of them continue to use stringent regulations, by-laws, and regulations that were originally intended to control and regulate the growth of informal enterprises (Mitullah, 2003).

Lincoln (2008) believes there is a relationship between economic inequality and economic policy in Vietnam. According to Kien and Heo (2008), the *Doi Moi* reforms were passed in the late 1970s in Vietnam to improve the living standards of people. However, these reforms may have had the opposite effect as they involved land reforms, and market liberalization and encouraged the development of the private sector in Vietnam at the expense of the poor (Kien & Heo, 2008; Lincoln, 2008). Lincoln (2008) posits that the *Doi Moi* reforms have resulted in increased levels of

inequality. This postulation is congruent with the suggestion by Bayat (2000) in Kamete (2013) that regulation of urban informality results in the emergence of the urban disenfranchised. Within cities policies often prioritise the needs of the affluent at the expense of the poor, as a result, inequality emerges. Some city residents find it difficult to live and find work, and often resort to informal economic activities. In African cities, this is especially true. Mitullah (2003) notes that policies that relate to the UIE in African cities are inappropriate as they include expensive permits that poor residents cannot afford, poor locations and insecure working locations.

Regulations serve to constrict activities within the informal economy (Kamete, 2013). This constriction is relevant to this study as it results in challenges for informal entrepreneurs. The tendency to see informality as a murky sector often overlooks the fact that the UIE is a source of livelihood for many in cities. In the context of the pandemic, legalism appears to highlight the role of the government in regulating and providing relief funding for businesses by presenting an issue of legality versus illegality in its use of permits and registration to classify UEI activities as those that are unlawful and unregistered. These may have had an impact on the street trading activities of female street traders during the pandemic in the City of uMhlathuze. This study seeks to uncover the responses of these street-trading women to these perceived impacts.

3.4. Urban Economic Informality in the South African context

The idea of the informal economy is not novel to South Africa's urban areas. Historically, under apartheid, the government was against the informal economy, in particular, the black informal economy. According to Rogerson (2000), despite severe repressive laws regarding informal entrepreneurship under apartheid, the economy steadily grew in urban areas. Racist policies of the apartheid regime generally denied black South Africans access to various employment opportunities. However, many black South Africans participated in the UIE as street traders, taxi drivers, spaza shops and tavern owners. These apartheid, racist policies introduced patterns of stratification within the labour market and resulted in the racial composition of South Africa's informal economy as seen presently (Rogerson, 2000). This racial composition of the informal economy in South Africa is significant as it is linked to the intersectional theories that frame this study.

Historical imbalances along racial lines meant that the black population was neglected. According to Becker (2004), the failure of formal institutions to provide incentives for structural reform has been a contributing factor to the growth of the informal economy in the country. Cassim et al., (2016) state that in South Africa, employment in the informal economy is more common in black and coloured South Africans, women, the less educated, and the youth. With the repeal of apartheid laws and the democratization of South African cities, there is still an overwhelming involvement of black South Africans in the informal economy. However, with internationalization and globalisation, there has been a considerable flow of international migration (Rogerson,2000). As a result of this, the informal economy in the country began to reflect this “internationalization”. Studies indicate that migrants play a critical role in the growth of the informal economy in South Africa (Jiyane et al., 2013; Willemse, 2013).

In 2003, the country’s former president Thabo Mbeki declared that South Africa’s economy is characterised by a dualism (Valodia & Devey, 2012). This suggests that the economy is made of a first and a second economy. The first economy is characterised by development and modernity, in contrast, the second economy is less developed and is dominated by unemployed people with poor educational levels (Mbeki, 2003 as cited in Ligthelm, 2006). Despite the dualistic conceptualisation of South Africa’s economy, it is acknowledged that the informal economy, although still minor in comparison to the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, is worth R164 billion and accounts for over 30% of food expenditure (Ingle, 2014; Fourie, 2018). In South Africa, one out of every six workers is an informal economic operator, with an estimated 880 000 persons working in the informal sector in 2013 (Fourie, 2018). The overall number of persons working in the informal economy in 2018 was 2.9 million (Fourie, 2018). This means that in South Africa the informal economy is considered by many as a route to reducing unemployment and sustaining livelihoods due to its economic development potential. According to Callaghan and Venter (2011), the informal economy in major cities in South Africa reflects its vibrancy. Although some of the enterprises in the informal economy are authorized, many of the operations in the sector are seen as unlawful since they are tax non-compliant (Charman et al., 2014).

It is widely agreed that the informal economy is characterized by a high degree of heterogeneity, in that different activities have different productivity, employment

relations, and economic potential (Lund & Skinner 2003; Skinner, 2008). In South Africa, like in other countries, the informal sector is comprised of a wide range of economic activities (Lalthapersad-Pillay, 2004). The heterogeneity of these activities reveals some sort of connection to the formal economy (Valodia & Devey, 2012). These activities vary from service enterprises, such as taxi operators and door attendants for taxis and buses, car guards at shopping centres to street traders in food, clothing, and airtime amongst others (Ligthelm & van Wyk, 2004; Devey et al., 2006; Jiyane et al., 2013). These characteristics are relevant in painting a picture of the informal economic activities carried out by female street traders in this study.

Msomi (2018) states that in South Africa, men typically enter the informal market with some talents or formal skills that they can utilize to their advantage over female traders. This can be because, during the apartheid era, men were pushed to attain low-level education to enable them to access low-skilled occupations in metropolitan areas (Msomi, 2018, Seeking & Nattrass, 2005). Women, on the other hand, were left in the homelands to raise children and perform domestic duties. Although some women worked as domestic workers or in textile factories, these positions provided fewer possibilities for advancement and self-sufficiency. As the textile sector declined in value during the dawn of democracy, the majority of women were left unemployed (Msomi, 2018). Subsequently, many people entered the informal sector, particularly street trading. Despite all this, gender has been a relatively neglected subject of study in South Africa's informal economy, owing to informal economy research not using gender as a variable. Instead, the focus has frequently been on the family, although women are found to be more prevalent in South Africa's informal economy (Portes & Sassen-Koob, 1987; Carr et al., 2000). This study, therefore, seeks to address this by looking specifically at women and their experiences as street traders during the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of uMhlathuze.

3.5. Women's street trading operations

According to Brown et al., (2010), street traders are the heart of UEI. In emergent countries such as South Africa, the largest sub-category of the informal economy is informal street trade (Sassen et al., 2011). Bhowmik (2005) defines street trading as involving the sale of goods or services in public or within restricted areas. Street trading is, therefore, characterised by mobility as traders sell goods at busy intersections or on streets where there is high foot traffic. Chen and Skinner (2014) suggest that street

trading can be considered a survival strategy as it sustains the livelihoods of the urban poor in the Global South.

Migration and rapid urbanisation have also led to an increase in the number of street traders within African cities (Galmieldien & van Niekerk, 2017). People engage in street trading out of necessity as low levels of education limit their opportunities in the formal economy. In the case of migrants, strict immigration policies also prevent their access to formal employment. Street traders in Africa provide an assortment of services such as shoe polishing, payphone services, barbering, garment making as well as transport. However, street traders in African cities often have no authorised sites for operation. According to Mitullah (2003) in Nairobi, Kenyan street traders are allocated trading sites that are outside the CBD and are inaccessible to customers.

The increased participation of women in the informal economy is connected to their disadvantaged position in the formal labour market as well as patriarchal societal norms which force them into both economically and socially subservient roles. Chen (2001:5) notes that "a bigger percentage of those working in the informal sector than in the formal sector are poor". Women, in particular, are affected by poverty more severely than men, resulting in the feminization of poverty and women's lack of access to food, education, and healthcare. Furthermore, "gender discrepancies in rights, entitlements, and capabilities, the gender differential implications of neoliberal restructuring, informalisation and feminisation of labour" influence livelihood strategies particularly in the informal economy (Deaton & Dreze, 2002; Chant 2003:1).

Women are sometimes forced to enter the informal economy due to their limited life choices (Becker, 2004; Ngundu, 2010). Cohen et al., (2000) support this notion by suggesting that women in many cities all over the world are more likely to engage in street trading due to the low cost of entry and flexibility associated with this form of informal trade. The dominance of women in the informal economy can be understood through a variety of socio-economic elements, including poverty, education, and lack of skills (Carr et al., 2000; Skinner & Valodia, 2003; Tsikata, 2009). Although this research identifies the characteristics pertinent to all women street traders, it however also acknowledges that there are differences in experiences and backgrounds amongst the street traders in the study. This refers to the study's objective to analyse

the street trading operations of groups of women street traders in the City of uMhlathuze.

In addition, due to the patriarchal division of family labour, women perform household chores, which means they typically find themselves trading in areas closer to their homes. This restriction in movement combines both their reproductive and productive obligations (Mitullah, 2003; Ngomane & Sebola, 2016). This is an important aspect of informality as women often have to juggle between work and family responsibilities. A study by Mitullah (2003), suggests that street trading in Kenya and Uganda is dominated by women due to limited economic opportunities and because it is compatible with other household duties such as childcare. Skinner and Watson (2020) state women traders experienced hurdles in trading because of childcare duties owing to school closures. Chirau (2012) conducted a study in Magaba, Zimbabwe and provides the reasons for the involvement of women in street trading. According to Chirau (2012), married street-trading women enter street trading as a way to supplement their husband's income. Findings by Mitullah (2003) clarify the dominance of women in street trading based on a variety of reasons, including assisting their husbands, who are breadwinners, in raising the family, however, some street traders are single and have no dependents to support.

Women within the informal economy are often depicted as being in a disadvantaged position and victims of circumstance compared to their male counterparts. By understanding street trading as a deliberate choice that women make, based on the recognition that the FES on its own is not sufficient, street trading becomes a livelihood venture for women (Chirau, 2012). While most studies on the informal economy often seek to establish commonalities and differences between men and women in the informal economy, this often does not highlight how women resist and overcome challenges despite their disadvantaged positions. Concerning women in street trading, a few aspects are of particular interest in this study, including the genuine flexibility and resilience of street-trading women in the City of uMhlathuze during the pandemic.

In terms of scale, frequency, location, income, labour, and the type of goods sold, and services supplied, street trading is diverse (Bromley, 2000). It might be a full-time job, a part-time job, or a seasonal or occasional job, and it can be done by a single person or a family. When looking at the location and logistics of street trading, Njaya (2014)

suggests that street traders can be found in almost any public or private setting, including industrial and construction sites, hospitals, schools, sporting arenas, bus terminals, church buildings, shopping and commercial centres, pavements, sidewalks, alleyways, and open areas. Street trading women in most instances erect various structures to position themselves to conduct business including tables, chairs, mats or even on their heads as they move around displaying their goods.

Trading in food such as vegetables, and other foodstuffs is also an economic choice. Trading in foodstuffs requires low capital investments, provides consistent income, and has a quick turnover. Chirau (2012) states that this is to meet the consumption needs of households and to secure food. Women trading in food may be a norm in some patriarchal societies since women are more likely to conduct agrarian labour (Muriuri, 2010). Women, for example, dominate street trade in public markets and on the street in Ibadan, Nigeria, where they sell snacks and firewood (Jaiyebo, 2003). Some of these goods are considered to be very perishable, and due to the absence of cold storage facilities; they are sold at lower prices to avoid stock loss (Ngomane & Sebola, 2016). According to Njaya and Murangwa (2016), the nature and category of street trading can affect the income female street traders generate. In Zimbabwe, street trading women can move between activities, this is because of the seasonality of certain commodities (Chirau,2012). This heterogeneity in activities sometimes relies on linkages between the formal and the informal. According to Chirau (2012), women are often inventive in their street-trading activities and often sell both perishable food and apparel which are purchased from formal businesses.

Women encounter gender-specific barriers in their participation in street trading which in turn impacts their choice of the types of products and services they trade (Ngomane & Sebola, 2016; Njaya & Murangwa, 2016; Mabilo, 2018). In the study, an analysis of the trading operations of female street traders in the study area is done. This is essential in bringing forth the various reasons women enter the informal economy, the kind of trade they are involved in as well as the nature of their trading operations.

3.6. Challenges experienced by street traders

Motala (2003) states that street traders often experience exacerbated challenges compared to any other form of enterprise. Challenges or constraints are any factors that may prevent street traders from reaching their full potential and street traders face capital, adverse political conditions, and operational challenges (Willemse (2011).

3.6.1. Capital Challenges

According to Willemse (2011), lack of capital is the first challenge that street traders face. This is often exacerbated by the fact that street traders often do not own assets, and as such, have restricted access to credit facilities (Chilwalo,2015). Traders in cities often rely on informal credit providers, unregulated lenders or other informal sources of credit to procure their wares (ILO, 2010). Consequently, their enterprises scarcely grow beyond being survivalists because they are always having to pay excessive interest rates on their debts. Madichie and Nkamnebe (2010) identified three barriers to women's access to finance in Nigeria, including socio-cultural practices where men have complete control over household finances. Willemse (2011) identified a lack of finance to maintain stocks as a challenge in a study of informal traders in the central business districts (CBDs) of four South African cities. Jamela (2013) suggests that female informal traders prefer getting capital from friends, kin, or their informal savings clubs or stokvels. Muzvidzwa (2006) states that because most street traders do not have access to formal credit facilities, stokvels or credit unions step in to empower women traders economically.

During intense COVID-19 lockdowns, street traders faced challenges with capital. According to Chigudu (2020), there is a critical need for social protection measures such as cash grants to replace incomes for street traders. In South Africa and India, street trader organisations urged governments to distribute cash and food to street traders (Chigudu,2020). However, where state welfare and aid are not available, strong social networks are needed to buttress against economic strain (Muzvidziwa, 2006). Considering these assertions, the study examines the challenge that street trading women faced concerning their profits and capital as well as identifies how they responded to the shocks in income and profit during the pandemic.

3.6.2. Political Challenges

Another set of challenges that informal traders face is adverse political conditions and policies (Willemse, 2011). These are external barriers that are beyond the control of informal traders (Tshuma & Jari, 2013). Examples of challenges in this category are trade restrictions (Tshuma & Jari, 2013) and regulatory barriers. These result in the regulatory environment in African cities being hostile to informal economic activities (Muller, 2015). Most of the trading sites used by street traders are regarded as illegal as they were not intended for trading. Furthermore, the sites have little or no tenure

and are neither assigned nor authorized by municipal officials (Barnet & Froze, 2007). Rigg (2007) suggests if street traders are authorized to operate, the sites are generally temporary, and evictions occur at the discretion of municipal officials. According to a study of towns in South Africa, an insecure environment causes the loss of customers, and cripples' informal enterprises, decreasing earnings and interfering with trade (Motala, 2007). Barnet and Froze (2007) state that officials occasionally exploit street insecurity as a justification to evict street traders, such as in the city of Durban, where traders were evicted before the 2010 FIFA World Cup as they were seen as compromising the city's image.

According to Motala (2003), street traders are the most regulated but the least protected and as a result, often must identify trading sites on their own. Rigg (2007), records that this eviction is based on an exclusionary framework in which the CBD is reserved only for large-scale formal businesses. Chigudu (2020) notes that the Zimbabwean government took advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic and passed the Statutory Instrument 77 of 2020 to empower local authorities to demolish vending stalls in the country thus leaving street traders without a means of livelihood. In this study, an assessment of local government responses within the study area will show how political conditions and policies possibly impacted the ability of female street traders to cope during the pandemic, as well as the responses of the government to these.

3.6.3. Operational Challenges

One of the most difficult issues for informal street traders is finding a place to trade and acquiring a trading space (Rigg, 2007). Willemse (2011) discovered operational challenges in his study of informal traders in four South African cities' central business districts (CBDs), which included a lack of transport, insufficient services from suppliers, insufficient services from local authorities, and a lack of shelter and infrastructure. Traders face daily operational challenges, such as a lack of access to market information, insufficient business knowledge, a shortage of goods, and a lack of transport and storage (Madichie & Nkamnebe, 2010; Tshofuti, 2016).

One of the major challenges for informal traders according to Ngundu (2010) is a lack of access to infrastructure. Trading areas are typically exposed to the elements and provide minimal cover. This exposes traders to extreme environmental conditions, where natural phenomena such as rainfall may harm traders operating under weak

shelters (Khumalo, 2015; Ngundu, 2010). Street traders of fruits, vegetables, and clothing, are badly impacted by harsh environments, resulting in a loss of income for them (Barnet & Froze,2007). In addition, Motala (2003) notes that street traders find it difficult to transport their goods and often must carry them on their backs or hire transport from their residences to the marketplace. This presents an additional cost to them. A majority of traders find it laborious to transport their wares from their residences to their trading locations (Motala, 2003). Barnet and Froze (2007) assert that the transportation system seldom serves the neighbourhoods where street traders reside, and even if it does, the traders cannot afford it. Research suggests that in other circumstances, there are limits on what people may transport, forcing traders to carry their wares on their backs or pay someone to take these things to their houses (Motala, 2003). The challenge of transportation is often exacerbated by a shortage of storage facilities, which forces traders to bring unsold items to their houses. Transportation issues may force informal traders to sleep on the streets or erect illegal squatter settlements near their trading sites for convenience, which might land them in trouble with authorities (Khumalo, 2015).

Willemse (2011) states that often, street traders use water and sanitation services from neighbouring markets or hotels, often illegally. An examination of infrastructural challenges experienced by female street traders in the study will determine how the lack of or inadequate infrastructure impacted them during the pandemic and their responses to the said challenges.

Assaad (1996) notes that when threatened with marginalization and expulsion, street traders always find a way to resist or respond. The COVID-19 pandemic presented street traders with additional challenges and exacerbated the ones they already were experiencing. The ILO (2020) suggests that the banning of street trading led to a disruption of the livelihoods of informal traders and an estimated 81% decline in their earnings. However, there is a paucity of knowledge on how female street traders have responded to these disruptions. Using the case of the City of uMhlathuze, the study assesses coping strategies used by female street traders during the pandemic in response to operational, capital, and political challenges.

3.7. Coping Strategies of street traders

Coping strategies are generally regarded as methods that people adopt to get through periods of instability or when presented with a challenge to their livelihood. Coping

strategies are intended to reduce the likelihood of disaster and maximize available resources (Narayan & Nyamwaya, 1995; Eriksen et al., 2005). Street traders also have to devise a variety of tactics to deal with any challenges that threaten their incomes.

Street trading women have devised coping strategies to deal with market competition and low-profit issues. They may choose to obtain supplies directly from the source, such as rural locations (Allen & Truman, 1993). Other coping strategies for dealing with competition in the market and low earnings include operating longer hours, dividing larger units of a product into smaller ones (for example, opening cartons of cigarettes and selling singles) (Alonzo, 1991; Allen & Truman, 1993; Mogobe, 2020). Borrowing money from relatives or creditors allows women to cope with the lack of formal credit. Women often group and provide each other with funds whenever it is necessary. To address credit and capital challenges, women, form rotating credit associations and community loan funds (Snyder & Tadesse, 1995; Ngomane, 2020). This is because borrowing from friends does not necessitate the use of collateral, which most women do not have, and the traders are not charged service fees or interest rates. Borrowing from moneylenders is non-bureaucratic and thus quick. To address operational challenges, women sometimes resort to constructing makeshift markets (Sullivan, 1987; Salahdine, 1991; Ngundu, 2010), and travelling long distances on foot instead of waiting for scarce transportation (Ndwanga, 1994; Palmer, 1995; Motala, 2003).

Street traders are vulnerable to shocks and disasters but often they attempt to respond to these. One example is the floods that occurred in Mumbai, India in 2005, which damaged the trading stalls of street traders. In response to the damage caused by flooding, Mumbai's street traders began to use low-cost and recyclable materials to rebuild their stalls (Parthasarathy, 2015). Douglas et al., (2008) carried out a study in Alajo, Ghana on the impact of floods on street traders and the results suggest that street traders have developed ways of coping with the challenges presented by floods. These include using blocks and stones to elevate their merchandise or placing goods in small spaces between roofs and ceilings (Douglas et al., 2008).

According to Chigudu (2020), street traders during COVID-19 operate under harsh conditions with, often, no water supplies. Akuko et al., (2020), noted that street traders in Ghana disregarded lockdown regulations and continued trading. Asiye eTafuleni, a

Durban-based NGO, with the help of street traders designed Geza Izandla wash stations to ensure that street traders maintained handwashing practices during COVID-19, even with limited access to running water in Warwick Junction, Durban (WIEGO,2021). Previous research has also identified social characteristics associated with vulnerability when looking at coping strategies, such as gender, age, wealth status, and education, and has distinguished vulnerable groups in society (Mbithi & Wisner 1973; Cutter 1996). However, there is a paucity of literature on how these social characteristics inform coping strategies of street trading women. This study analyses coping strategies used by groups of female street traders in response to challenges during the pandemic. The study's emphasis on coping strategies will highlight street trader diversity, agency, and tactics. This allows for a better assessment of responses to challenges that arose as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of uMhlathuze, KwaZulu-Natal.

3.8. Government's regulations and responses to street trading in South Africa

Regulation is a significant issue in informal trading since it suggests legality and some semblance of formality, however, any action done is likely to harm rather than help the informal economy. This often comprises by-law creation, planning and development control, trading permit issuing, local taxation, and public health and safety control (Jason, 2008). Regulation is often accompanied by negative repercussions, such as the loss or damage of assets as well as evictions. Mitullah (2003) suggests that not all regulation of street trading is negative, he notes that regulations provide chances for local governments to generate revenue by charging for services such as waste collection, and further regulation of street trading helps establish controls that ensure cities remain clean and safe.

Mitullah (2004) suggests that South African street trade laws and regulations are in transition, and the government provides an enabling environment favourable to the growth of the informal economy. This is due to the decentralisation of government offices and departments. This has benefited the informal sector significantly as local authorities can address concerns connected to informal trading that are location specific. This enables cities to devise development strategies tailored to their specific situations or scenarios. It is important also, given the vast income inequalities and poverty in South Africa and allows for the enacting of policies that are tolerant and supportive of growth in street trading (Harrison et al., 2008). The local government has

both legal and constitutional obligations to play in the regulation of the informal sector, including the enforcement of municipal bylaws (Mabasa, 2018). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) and the Business Act of 1991 regulate the informal economy by defining informal traders' rights and obligations, as well as the roles of law enforcement and local government in enacting municipal by-laws (Hodgson & Clark, 2018). The sections that follow firstly summarise the systems that guide the South African government on how to regulate and manage street trading, thereafter, it looks at systems that guided street trading in the context of the pandemic.

3.8.1. Policies that influence street trading in South Africa

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996) is considered the supreme law in South Africa, as such all policies should emanate from it, and they need to be consistent with the rights enshrined in it. Human rights and human dignity are enshrined in the Constitution. These protect the rights of informal traders and delegate authority to the local government to facilitate its legal obligations at the municipal level without jeopardizing the livelihoods of informal traders (Hodgson & Clark, 2018). Sections 9 and 10 of the Constitution (RSA, 1996) provide for basic human rights and dignity. These sections are linked to the ability of informal traders to freely trade and participate in informal activities as determined by South African courts (Hogson & Clark, 2018). Furthermore, Section 7 of the Constitution requires the state to "respect, defend, promote, and fulfil" the rights enshrined in the Bill of Rights (RSA,1996). The need to "respect" requires the state not to infringe on the existing rights of informal traders. This suggests that the state must refrain from interfering with the rights that street traders have established for themselves. If the state passes laws that reduce the rights that street traders currently have, it will fail to meet this commitment (Liebenberg,2010). The commitment to "protect" compels the state to take steps to prevent others from interfering with the rights of informal traders, including people, groups, and businesses (Mabasa, 2018).

According to van Heerden (2011), the pre-and post-apartheid enactment of the Business Act of 1991 has led to the rise of urban economic informality and the growth of small businesses. This is because the Business Act's provisions which were changed after apartheid, resulted in the deregulation of street trading and the emergence of enterprises in the inner cities (Pieterse, 2017). The Business Act of 1991

is considered "a framework that recognizes informal street trade as a crucial sector that stimulates the economy and people's ability to support themselves " (Hodgson & Clark, 2018:11). The enactment of the Business Act of 1991, as well as the amendments made to it, are testament to the government's commitment to promoting small business development in South Africa. This legislation was a critical form of policy that ensured the removal of restrictions to the operation of informal activities, thus, viewing informal street traders as legitimate business owners. Mbatha (2020) states that this Act is a guideline for municipalities when creating by-laws that manage, regulate, and restrict informal street trading whilst still being within constitutional rights. The loosening of street trading restrictions has resulted in a growth in informal economic activity in the country's major cities and towns (Fundie et al., 2015). According to Skinner (2016), the Act plays an essential part in supporting the livelihoods of informal traders, particularly when municipal by-laws and policies that affect traders' livelihoods are adopted.

The role of local governments to provide an environment conducive to human growth is also emphasized in Section 152 of the Constitution (RSA,1996). The notion of fostering and providing for local economic development has a direct impact on street traders since it indicates that local governments should foster the unique local economic setting of the area under their authority. According to Mabasa (2018), despite this many traders have had their livelihoods disrupted numerous times due to police brutality and unfair policies. In the context of this study, this disruption refers to policies and regulations adopted to curb the spread of COVID-19. Many of these can be considered unconstitutional as they were seen to infringe on human rights and the ability of street traders to freely trade and participate in informal activities. The enactment of these has had a visible impact on street traders' livelihoods. This suggests that even with these constitutional rights in place, there is discord between the policies enacted. Globally, challenges experienced by street traders have been identified in numerous studies, but very few have looked at the South African context. Furthermore, there is a paucity of knowledge on the strategies that informal economic operators adopted to address threats posed by COVID-19 to their livelihoods. This study, therefore, seeks to identify challenges that street traders experienced, some arising from the government's responses to the pandemic, and thereafter assess the

response of female street traders to these challenges in the City of uMhlathuze, KwaZulu-Natal.

3.8.2. Government's response to street trading during the COVID-19 pandemic

The Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is caused by a novel coronavirus known officially as severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2; or 2019-nCoV), which was discovered after an epidemic of respiratory sickness cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. Covid-19 has been declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization since March 2020. The increasing incidences of COVID-19 infections have compelled governments to take drastic action, namely the closure of social and economic activities. These are responses taken to decrease the risk of the spread of the virus.

The President of South Africa declared a national lockdown on March 23, 2020, with effect from midnight on March 26, 2020. Everyone except critical service employees, such as those in the food supply, was ordered to stay at home, and the police and security troops were sent in to enforce this. A state of emergency was declared a week later, and informal traders were permitted to operate under the laws enacted under the Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002), but had to get permits.

Skinner and Watson (2020), contend that although the need for a permit is not new for informal trading, the government took this opportunity to further its long-term goals of formalizing the informal economy. The issuance of permits further presented challenges for street traders. Additionally, traders experienced issues obtaining permits, as well as a lack of information about where to obtain them (Skinner & Watson, 2020). Those traders who were able to obtain stock reported transportation challenges, with products being impounded owing to a lack of transportation permits (Skinner & Watson,2020). These can be seen as infringing on the constitutional rights of street traders as they jeopardized their livelihoods. Seeing as it is the responsibility of the local government to foster a welcoming street trading environment for street traders, this study will also assess the response of the government to some of the challenges identified by female street traders in the study.

This is pertinent, given the emergence and spread of COVID-19 that has resulted in a growing body of literature seeking to understand how the pandemic has affected vulnerable populations of cities in the Global South, particularly those working in the

informal economy (Grundy-Warr & Lin, 2020; Omobowale et al., 2020; Webb et al., 2020; Azeez et al., 2021). However, there is a paucity of studies that focus on street traders in the City of uMhlathuze. Research also reveals that street traders have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. This is due to the lack of social protection in the informal economy in addition to economic stability and the effects of government-enforced lockdowns and movement restrictions (Komin et al., 2020; Unni, 2020; Bassier et al., 2021). Nonetheless, some street traders have found ways to continue earning a living, albeit, under increasingly difficult circumstances, while others have had their livelihoods completely halted or banned (Omobowale et al., 2020). This study focuses on the responses of street traders to challenges to their livelihoods in the City of uMhlathuze, some of which may have arisen because of restrictions implemented during the pandemic.

3.9. Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a discussion and review of the literature as well as debates on the research question. The informal economy is presented as a phenomenon made up of diverse economic activities globally. The prominent perspectives of the informal economy are also discussed in line with the emergence of the informal economy all over the world. A review of the literature in this chapter also shows that street traders experience various challenges across various spectrums, however, they often develop ways to respond to these. There is a lack of literature that looks specifically at the experiences of women in street trading. This study aims to address this gap by assessing the coping strategies of female street traders during the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of uMhlathuze, KwaZulu-Natal. The next chapter outlines the setting and methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 4: STUDY SETTING AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the setting of the study area and the research methodology. It begins by briefly discussing the history of the City of UMhlathuze before highlighting, amongst others, the location of the study area, its spatial characteristics and demographic characteristics. Thereafter the methodology of the study is discussed, such as the study's research paradigm, research design, sampling, data collection and analysis methods. The chapter concludes by providing ethical considerations for this study.

4.2. The Setting of the Study: The history of UMhlathuze Municipality

According to the South African Cities Network (SACN) (2017), the area in which the City of UMhlathuze or UMhlathuze Local Municipality is now located was previously demarcated as part of King Shaka Zulu's royal kraal. The economy of the area was primarily small-scale subsistence and agrarian with produce being bartered or consumed by households (SACN,2017). The introduction of colonial rule in the area brought about a transformation in the economy of the area. Fertile land and forests in the area attracted settlers who began commercially farming several large-scale plantations, these included, eucalyptus and sugar cane. The success of these ventures encouraged the development of sugar, forest and paper mills which drove growth and overall development of the area (SACN,2017). Empangeni provided the social and commercial needs of this farming community and was considered a township with the Zululand Railway linking it with Durban (SACN, 2017). The presence of agro-processing and commercial farming in Empangeni led to further investments in infrastructure (schools, hospitals) and encouraged the expansion of service and professional businesses (SACN,2017). Beyond Empangeni, there were tribal villages or homelands where the Black population remained as labour reserves for the farms and mills.

In the early 1960s, there was a strong promotion of industrialization with the notion that this would provide job opportunities, especially for the Black population (SACN,2017). The development of the harbour in Richards Bay in 1965 was the first step to achieving this. According to SACN (2017), it was the founding of Richards Bay in 1969 and the development of railway lines, a harbour, and basic amenities (water and electricity) that led to the construction of the first industrial plants in the area

(Alusaf and Triomf Fertilizer) as well as an influx of temporary and permanent settlers. Following the democratic elections in the country, the area grew further with major international support and investments from amongst others, Tata Steel and Rio Tito (SANC, 2017). UMhlathuze Local Municipality was formally established on the 5th of December 2000. The UMhlathuze Local Municipality (Figure 4.1.) is made up of 34 wards and the major towns of Richards Bay, Empangeni, Felixton, eSikhaleni, Ngwelezane, eNseleni, and Vulindlela.

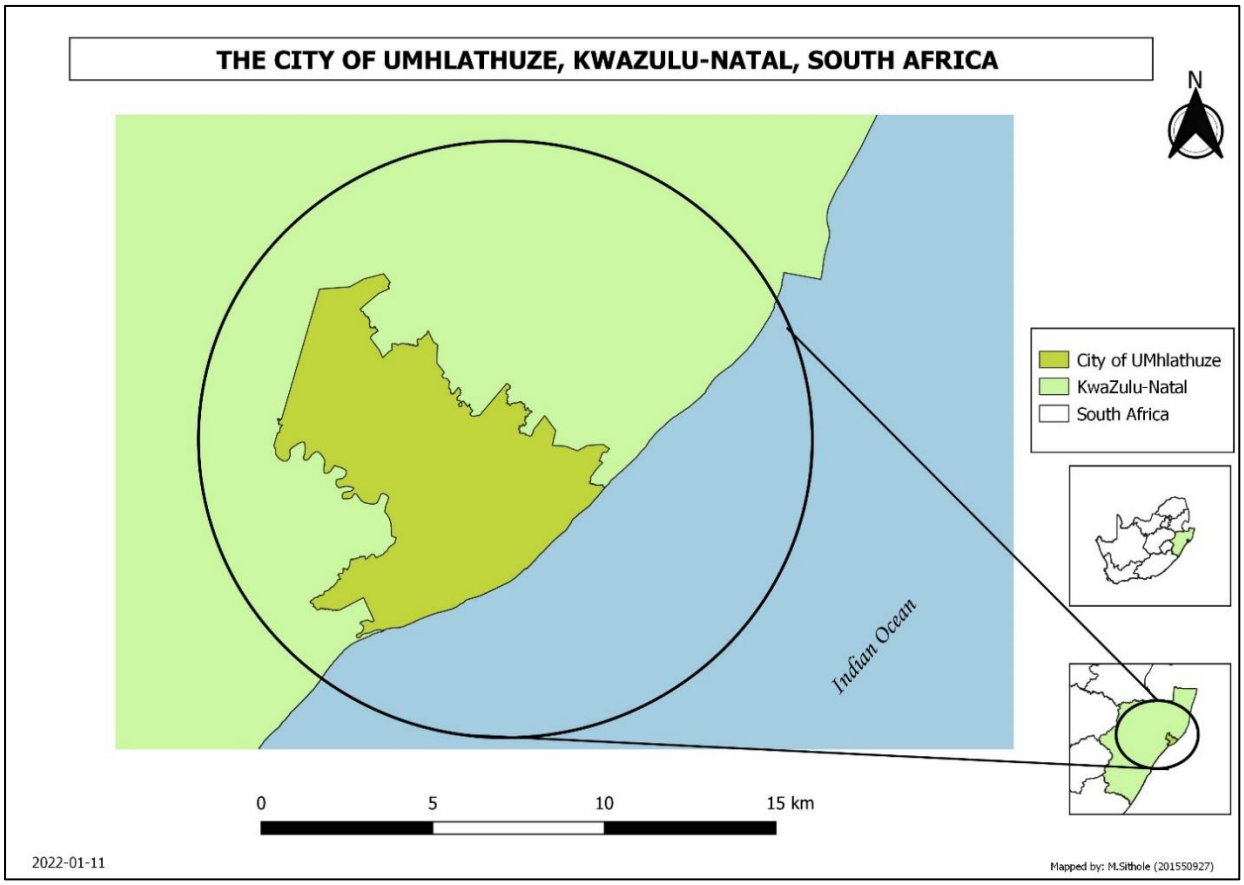

Figure 4.1. : Map of UMhlathuze Local Municipality, KwaZulu-Natal

4.3. Description of the City of UMhlathuze

This section describes the municipality in terms of its spatial characteristics, environmental features, demographic features, and socio-economic characteristics.

4.3.1. Spatial Characteristics

The City of UMhlathuze is located on the northeast coast of KwaZulu-Natal and is one of five local municipalities within King Cetshwayo District Municipality. The area is approximately 123359 ha (UMhlathuze IDP, 2021) and incorporates urban and rural areas. The municipality is bordered by a coastline that is approximately 48 km and is traversed by the N2 which is a major highway reaching as far as the Swaziland border

(IDP,2021). The landscape of UMhlathuze Municipality is shaped by various natural and man-made phenomena. The deep-water port in Richards Bay has been instrumental to the spatial development of the area as it is considered to be the largest deep-water port in the continent (ULM IDP, 2021). Exports of mainly coal, wood chips and chrome make up 92% of goods handled at this port. This suggests that the port contributes greatly to the economy locally and at a district level. The success of the port is linked to the natural endowment of the area. According to SACN (2017), the mining operations in the area can meet the demands for titanium oxide, pig iron and zircon in South Africa. In addition to the mineral-rich soil, the fertile river valleys of the UMhlathuze river and the rolling hills of the area grow vast crops of sugar cane that are manufactured into sugar at the mill in Felixton (SACN,2017).

The municipality is also made up of the formal towns of Richards Bay, Empangeni, Vulindlela, eNseleni, Ngwelezane and Felixton, as well as the Traditional Authority areas under Amakhosi Mkhwanazi, Khoza, Mbuyazi, Cebekhulu, Zungu, Biyela, Dube and Mthembu. Richards Bay and Empangeni are the economic centres in the local and district municipality.

4.3.2. Environmental features

The City of UMhlathuze Local Municipality is bordered by a coastline which offers recreational, economic and conservation opportunities. The shores and beaches are characterized by dunes and sandy beaches (ULM IDP, 2021). The dunes are environmental assets for the area as they contain heavy minerals that are highly sought after and are key to economic development in the area (ULM IDP,2021). The beaches are tourism assets for the local municipality and host beach events as well as provide a seasonal holiday destination for tourists (ULM IDP, 2021).

The landscape of the area is considered low-relief and forms part of the Zululand Coastal Plain with a history of erosion and fluctuating sea levels (ULM IDP,2021). The geomorphology of the area influences the storage and function of groundwater systems. As the soils are primarily sandy, they are highly permeable and can hold most rainfall as groundwater before discharging it into various water bodies (ULM IDP, 2021). Because of this, the streams in the area seldom are without water even during droughts as there is a large underground reservoir that sustains lakes and is the main water supply for the municipality. However, there has been a decline in water quality in lakes and streams which is linked to industrial factors.

The municipality is also rich in biodiversity as it falls within the Maputaland-Pondoland Biodiversity hotspot which is considered the second richest floristic region in Africa (ULM IDP, 2021). The area supports the highest number of Red Data species in the country, considering its size. This concentration is considered irreplaceable (ULM IDP,2021). A large portion of this Biodiversity Hotspot has been degraded by human activities, this poses threat to species and may lead to an imbalance in the ecosystem.

4.3.3. Demographic features

The City of UMhlathuze is reported to have the largest population within the King Cetshwayo District Municipality with a population estimated at 410 456 in 2016 (ULM IDP,2021). Of this, 39% reside within urban areas (ULM IDP, 2021). There are more females than males within the municipality and female-headed households make up 40.70% of total households (ULM IDP, 2021). The municipality is made up of a predominately young population in terms of age. This is purported to be linked to in-migration due to perceptions of employment opportunities in the area. In the 2011 census, the municipality recorded 67.5% of the population as being between the ages of 15-64 (Stats SA, 2011). A community survey in 2016 found that the municipality is made up of a predominantly black African population with isiZulu being a language majorly spoken by 78.73% of the population (ULM IDP, 2021).

4.3.4. Socio-economic characteristics

According to the City of UMhlathuze IDP (2021), a large majority of the population has limited schooling, and more than half of the municipality's population has qualifications less than matric. In the City of uMhlathuze, the highest incidence (more than 61%) of adults without schooling is found in Traditional Authority areas (ULM IDP,2021). The high levels of inequalities, lack of information and level of education have limited the economic prospects of those living in townships and rural areas (ULM IDP, 2021). SACN (2017) states that in the study area instances of unemployment have increased overall. There has also been a recorded increase in people engaged in informal activities from 4163 in 1996 to 15 274 in 2011 (StatsSA,2011). Street traders dominate the informal sector in the local municipality, followed by community services such as hairdressing, car washes, creches and *shebeens*[1] (SACN, 2017).

[1] The term *shebeen* is of Irish origin and refers to informal alcohol or liquor retailers (Charman et.al , 2014).

4.4. The location of the study

This study was carried out in three areas within the City of UMhlathuze. The case study areas in this study were: KwaDlangezwa, Alkantstrand Beach, and Empangeni CBD (Figure 4.2).

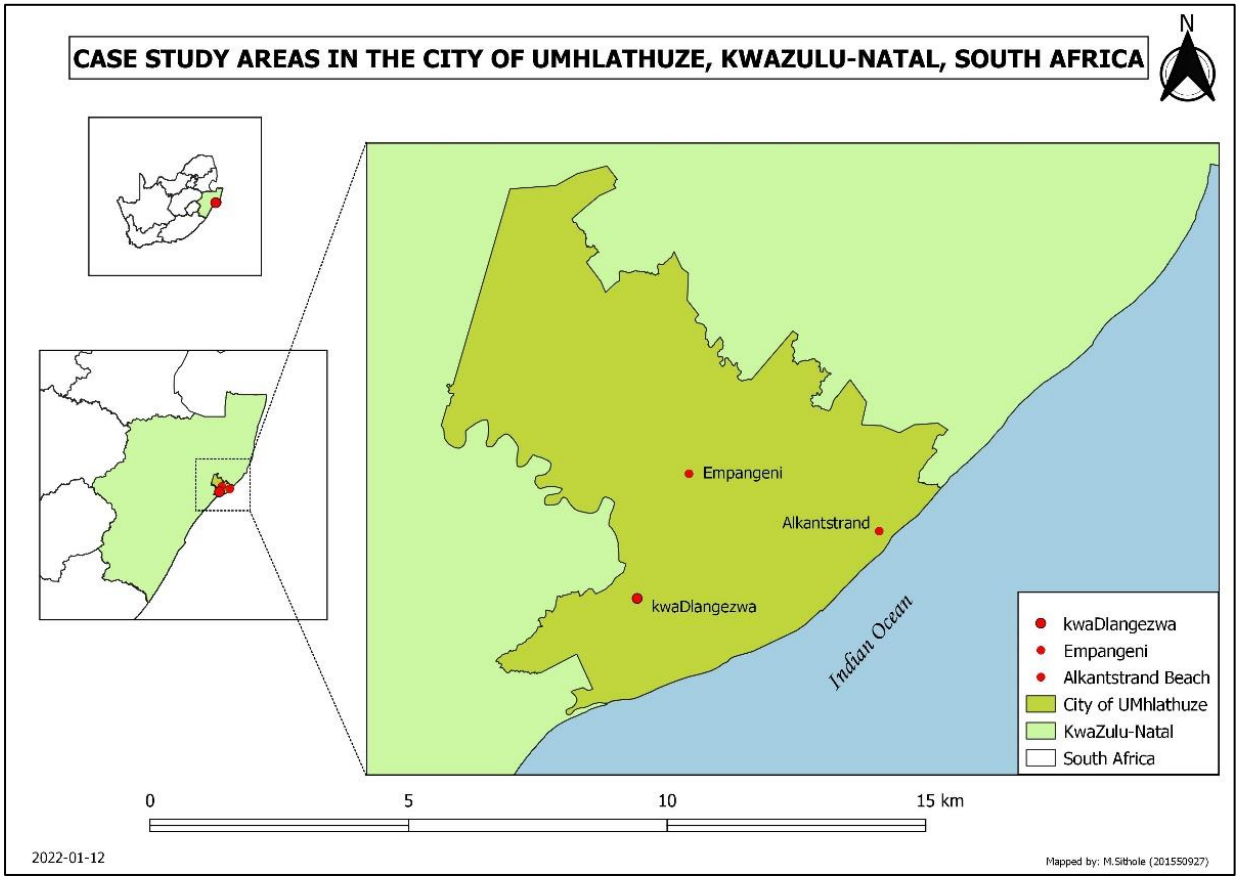

Figure 4.2. : Study sites in the City of UMhlathuze

4.4.1. KwaDlangezwa/ Vulindlela

Vulindlela or KwaDlangezwa offers a combination of mixed-used development such as educational, low-medium income residential (urban and peri-urban living), health facilities and small-scale commercial facilities (ULM IDP, 2017). It also provides a tertiary education facility that is the University of Zululand. The area of KwaDlangezwa has been selected for this study as the presence of the university has transformed the area into a hub for informal economic activity. Therefore, the closure of the university, due to COVID-19 regulations, impacted street trading women in the area who rely on the patronage of students.

4.4.2. Empangeni

Empangeni is a primary node in the City of uMhlathuze and is regarded as a major service and retail centre (ULM IDP,2021). It is the centre of employment, industrial,

residential, office and commercial activity in the area. Empangeni also functions as part of a gateway to the economy through the nearby Richards Bay Harbour. The CBD is a centre of not only formal employment but also informal forms of economic activity. The CBD was selected as an area of interest in the study for several reasons. Firstly, the closure of businesses that were considered non-essential has impacted the supply of goods for trading to female street traders within the CBD. Secondly, the implementation of stay-at-home orders under lockdown also meant that the CBD and various parts of the city were without foot traffic which serves as a source of clientele for female street traders. Lastly, COVID-19 regulations also prohibited street traders from engaging in informal activity and forced many to obtain trading permits.

4.4.3. Alkantstrand Beach

The beach is located in Richards Bay which is a primary node in the municipality. Richards Bay is regarded as a major retail and service centre of the City of UMhlathuze and provides a gateway to the global economy through the Richards Bay Harbour (ULM IDP,2021). Alkantstrand Beach was included to be part of the study because it hosts a variety of street traders who may benefit from the beach being a seasonal tourist attraction. Therefore, the closure and the restrictions placed on recreational areas, such as Alkantstrand Beach, under the lockdown may have impacted female street traders and their street trading activities in the area.

4.5. Research Methodology

A research methodology reflects the overall approach to the research process. Sileyew (2019) states that it reflects the method used by the researcher to find answers to research questions. The research methodology is therefore a systematic procedure used by the researcher to provide valid, objective, and accurate answers to research questions, and it includes data collection techniques, analysis, as well as interpretation of findings (Sileyew, 2019).

4.5.1. Research Paradigm

Guba (1990, cited in Creswell and Poth,2018), states that a paradigm in research refers to the basic sets of beliefs that guide actions. The research paradigm, therefore, can be understood as the philosophy which guides research. Creswell and Poth (2018) state that all research processes need to be guided by philosophical assumptions which provide direction to the research, these assumptions are applied to the research study through the research paradigm. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) in support of Creswell

and Poth (2018) suggest that a research paradigm in a study needs to direct the researcher's investigation, this includes the research design, sampling, data collection and data analysis.

Gounder (2012) posits that when selecting a research paradigm, the philosophical assumptions (ontology, epistemology, and methodology) need to reflect the nature of the study (Figure 4.3.). According to Bryman (2012) ontology is the nature of existence or reality. Blaikie and Priest (2019) further suggest that ontological assumptions are those that make claims to the existence of a social phenomenon and how these relate to each other. Ontology is made up of social processes, interpretations, experiences, and social relations (Mason, 2002). Epistemology refers to questions on what knowledge is and how it is constructed (Mason,2002). Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) propose that epistemological questions inquire about whether knowledge is acquired or experienced. Epistemology is, therefore, the process by which a researcher comes to understand the truth. In qualitative research, for example, this often calls for interaction with research participants to assemble their subjective views (Guba, 1990; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

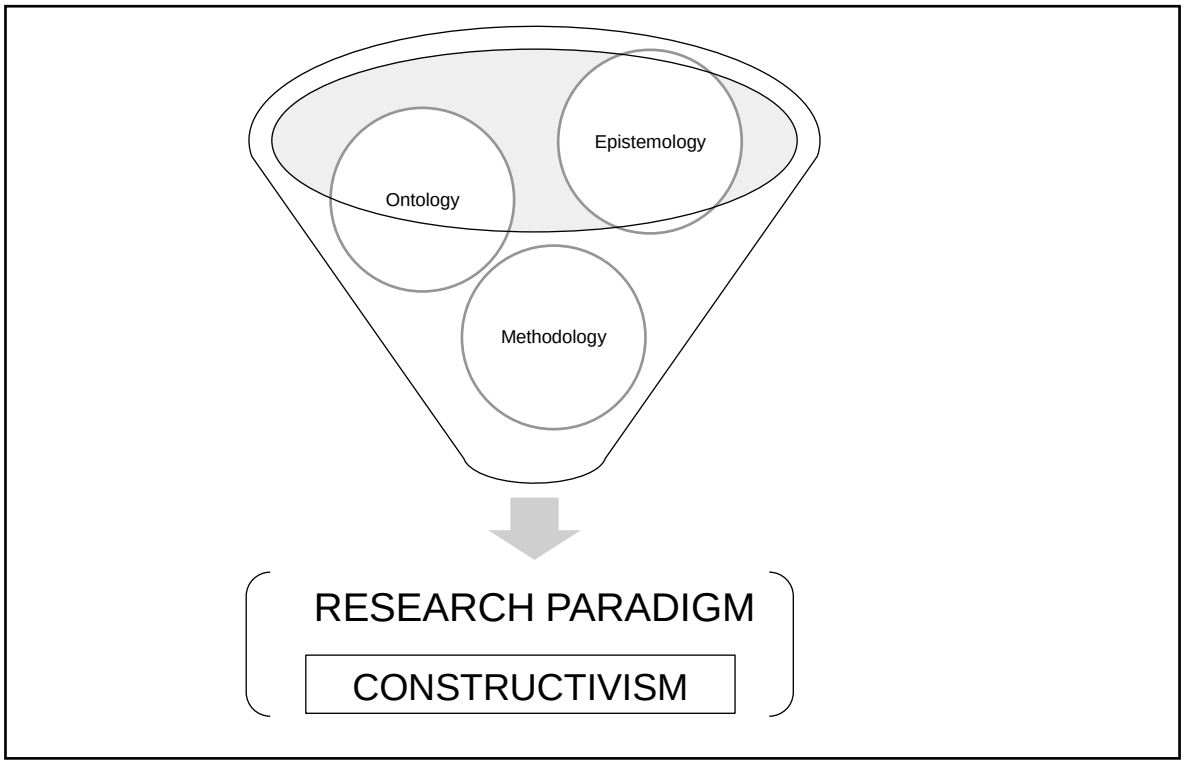

Figure 4.3.: Components of a research paradigm

This study focuses on the experiences of female street traders during the COVID-19 pandemic as these experiences can be constructed into knowledge when analysed

and interpreted. Therefore, this study is informed by the constructivist paradigm. Blaikie and Priest (2019) assert that constructivism assumes that knowledge is constructed through language that participants understand as reality is discovered from them.

In constructivism, the nature of reality or truth is considered as being multiple, ever-changing, and characterised by subjectivity (Guba &Lincoln, 1989). Ontologically, constructivism looks at the development of subjective meanings as well as understandings that are often shaped by a person's historical and social background (Creswell, 2014). In constructivism, the reality is seen as being fluid and pluralistic in that it is formed through interactions and understandings that are constructed and interpreted by people (Crotty,1998). Key to the constructivist paradigm is the notion that meanings and experiences are based on specific contexts (Creswell,2014). The existence of multiple interpretations of an issue is key to this study. Female street traders provide subjective expressions of their experiences and coping strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic. The context of the pandemic as well as their employment as informal economic operators informs the codes and symbols, they use to decipher their experiences during the pandemic and the strategies they use to traverse it.

Constructivism suggests that knowledge can only be constructed and not discovered. According to Guba and Lincoln (1998), constructivist research is either relativist, subjectivist or transactional. This study uses a combination of relativist and subjectivist constructivism. The combined relativist and subjectivist stances emphasise the subjectivity of knowledge and incorporate various interpretations of an issue that has co-operatively been constructed by researchers and research participants (Creswell, 2014). In constructivism, participants serve as primary sources of data, therefore the researcher needs to fully understand and describe the responses given. In Babbie (2011), Belenky et al., (1986:15) suggest that constructed knowledge in feminist research is viewed as " … a position in which women view all knowledge as contextual and view themselves as creators of knowledge."

Understanding cities and activities that occur within them thus require a methodology that looks at both the subjectivities of urban residents and the context in which they are created. This then highlights how people respond to and engage with their

surroundings, creating new knowledge about the city, but it also shows how disadvantaged communities within cities, such as female street traders, contribute to new knowledge systems inside existing structures (Kihato,2009). In this study, the use of constructivism as a research paradigm informed the research design which is discussed next.

4.5.2. Research Design

Fouche and De Vos (2002) define a research design as a plan that outlines how a research project is to be conducted. Hunting (2014) postulates that research designs that are compatible with feminist studies focus on an in-depth study of female respondents, included in these are participatory action research, ethnographic studies, and case studies. The study utilizes a case study research design. Case study research involves studying a case or cases within a real-life context. This case can be an individual, entity or small group and sometimes, a community, a relationship, or a decision process. According to Swanborn (2010), a case study also involves describing and monitoring a phenomenon during a certain period or collecting data concerning the development of a phenomenon during any given period. The key to the use of a case study as a research design is that it ensures that a study is bounded. Creswell and Poth (2018), suggest that a case study be focused on a specific place, a timeframe or certain people involved. This study involves an in-depth study of coping strategies used by female street traders in the City of uMhlathuze in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are two basic approaches to research: the qualitative approach and the quantitative approach. Quantitative research involves the generation of data that is deeply rooted in numbers, and statistics and is easily quantifiable (Gounder, 2012). Cooper and Schindler (2003) suggest that qualitative research, unlike quantitative research usually involves an array of interpretive techniques that seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning of phenomena within the social world. Angrosino (2007), presents feminist research as opposed to methods that are the products of quantitative inquiry, it thus calls for qualitative enquiry which is seen as being more flexible and respectful of lived experience. This study utilizes a qualitative approach. Qualitative research seeks to develop understanding through a detailed description of unquantifiable variables (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Gounder (2012) states that the subjective nature of qualitative research results in research that

looks beyond percentages and helps gain an understanding of the feelings and impressions of participants. The qualitative research approach is useful in empowering participants as it also allows for collaboration between them and the researcher, this is very significant when the research involves marginalized persons (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through qualitative research, female street traders were able to express the challenges they experienced during the pandemic and their responses to these challenges.

4.5.3. Population and Sampling

In research, a population refers to a group of individuals that have the same characteristics (Creswell, 2014). In essence, a population is a combination of elements from which a sample is to be selected (Babbie, 1992; De Vos, 2005). The target population in the study are Municipal officials at the uMhlathuze Local Municipality and female street traders within the local municipality. The actual sample size is further explained in Table 4.1. below.

4.5.3.1. Sampling Technique

Patton (2002) states that qualitative research normally focuses in depth on samples that have been purposefully selected. The study uses a non-probability sampling technique in the form of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to select people or places that are best suited for the phenomenon under consideration (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). According to Bryman (2012), units that are relevant to the study need to be clearly stated to justify their inclusion in the study. Creswell and Poth (2018) suggest that in qualitative research purposive sampling can occur at the participant level, site level or a combination of both. At a site and participant level, the study purposively sampled female street traders in kwaDlangezwa, those who sell at the stalls at Alkantstrand Beach and female street traders in Empangeni CBD. These areas have a high population of female street traders who provided accounts of their own experiences during the pandemic. The original sample in the study included an LED officer from uMhlathuze Local Municipality to provide key information on the municipality's responses to COVID-19, however, they were unavailable to participate. The inclusion of an LED officer from the local municipality was essential as LED officials facilitate and support the growth of local economic development through policies that impact various sectors of the local economy, in this instance, the informal sector (Khumalo, 2015).

4.5.3.2. Sample Size

Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) suggest that the sample size in qualitative research should not be too small to avoid redundancy and not too large, making it difficult to conduct a case-orientated study. Further, Lee (2014) suggests that in qualitative research there is no level of significance or formula that can be used to calculate a sample size because qualitative research focuses on the quality of data that is gathered from a sample rather than the quantity of a dataset. Therefore, the study collected data from a sample of 43 respondents. Of these, 8 were female street traders in kwaDlangezwa, 5 at the Alkantstrand Beach and 30 operated in Empangeni CBD (Table 4.1.). These areas have a high concentration of street traders who ordinarily benefit from the high foot traffic in kwaDlangezwa, where the University of Zululand is located, Empangeni CBD and Alkantstrand Beach. When the hard lockdown was implemented in March 2020, regulations forced the closure of the University of Zululand as well as areas that were considered non-essential, such as businesses in Empangeni CBD and Alkantstrand Beach. Based on the structuralist perspective on informality, the formal and informal sectors are linked, therefore the closure of these areas impacts street traders who rely on the FES for the supply of goods as well as foot traffic in the city centre as people go about their daily tasks. Table 4.1. below summarizes the purposive research sample of the study.

Table 4.1:Summary of the research sample

Respondents	Number	Reason for selection
Female Street Traders (Dlangezwa)	8	Experiences during COVID-19 in the area due to the closure of UNIZULU
Female Street Traders (Alkantstrand Beach)	5	Experiences during COVID-19 in the area due to the closure of the beach
Female Street Traders (Empangeni CBD)	30	Experiences during COVID-19 in the area due to the closure of businesses in the CBD
Total	**43**	

4.5.4. Instrumentation and Data Collection

Data collection methods and instruments are important parts of a research design. Leavy and Harris (2018) state that feminist methods of data collection often employ familiar methods which include focus groups as well as in-depth interviews. This study involved semi-structured interviews with female street traders in Empangeni CBD and Alkantstrand Beach. Further focus group discussions were done with a group of 8 female street traders in KwaDlangezwa.

Semi-structured interviews, according to Kumar (2019), can collect exhaustive information about how participants perceive or share accounts on a specific topic. In this study, semi-structured interviews were composed of predetermined questions that functioned as an interview guide for the researcher to engage during the interviews with female street traders in Empangeni CBD and Alkantstrand. The researcher chose semi-structured interviews as these allow for the exploration of key issues relevant to the research question as well as the ability to probe deeper and follow up on insightful responses provided by participants in the study (Kumar, 2019). Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to encourage participants to express any identities or subjectivities they believe are especially important for responding to the research problem (Creswell & Poth,2018). This allows the questioning to flow to garner a maximum understanding of the way participants view their world (Bryman, 2012). De Vos et al., (2005) suggest that in addition, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to alter questioning to suit the educational level and the background of participants. This is essential when conducting feminist research as Leavy and Harris (2018), suggest that feminist research needs to occur in an environment that is non-hierarchical and caring.

Further, an interview schedule was developed by the researcher to engage in a focus group discussion with female street traders at the University of Zululand to get their views on how they have responded to the pandemic. Focus group discussions are commonly used in feminist research as they shift the focus from the researcher and balance it among participants in the group (Smith & Sparkes, 2014). Feminist research seeks to highlight women's experiences. Focus groups are well-suited to feminist research as they enable women to discuss, participate and create a more balanced research environment that can lead to more insightful information and empowerment of women (Munday, 2014). They are, therefore, effective as they enable female street

traders in KwaDlangezwa to share their experiences and uncover group commonalities. In the study, the addition of focus group discussions helped to clarify information that may have been unintentionally omitted in semi-structured face-to-face interviews.

4.5.5. Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis in qualitative studies typically go hand in hand to construct a coherent interpretation (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Data analysis is the process of systematically searching and organizing interview transcripts, field notes, and other material that can be garnered to increase the understanding and presentation of the findings to others (Creswell, 1994).

The process of identifying patterns or themes in qualitative data is known as thematic analysis. The data collected by the researcher in this study were subjected to thematic analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis of content is a versatile tool for identifying themes or patterns in data, additionally, they contend that this analysis is complementary to feminist intersectionality due to the flexibility associated with it. The goal of thematic analysis is to identify themes, or important or interesting patterns in data, and then use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Therefore a good thematic analysis does more than simply summarize the data, it interprets and makes sense of it.

Braun and Clarke (2006:84) differentiate between semantic and latent themes. Semantic themes are found "...within the explicit or surface meanings of the data, and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or written" (Braun & Clarke, 2006:84). The latent level, on the other hand, goes beyond what has been said and "...begins to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data" (Braun & Clarke 2006:84). Therefore, in the thematic analysis of the findings, the researcher looked for both semantic and latent themes. According to Marshall and Rossman (2006) thematic analysis is a systematic process that is made up of 6 phases:

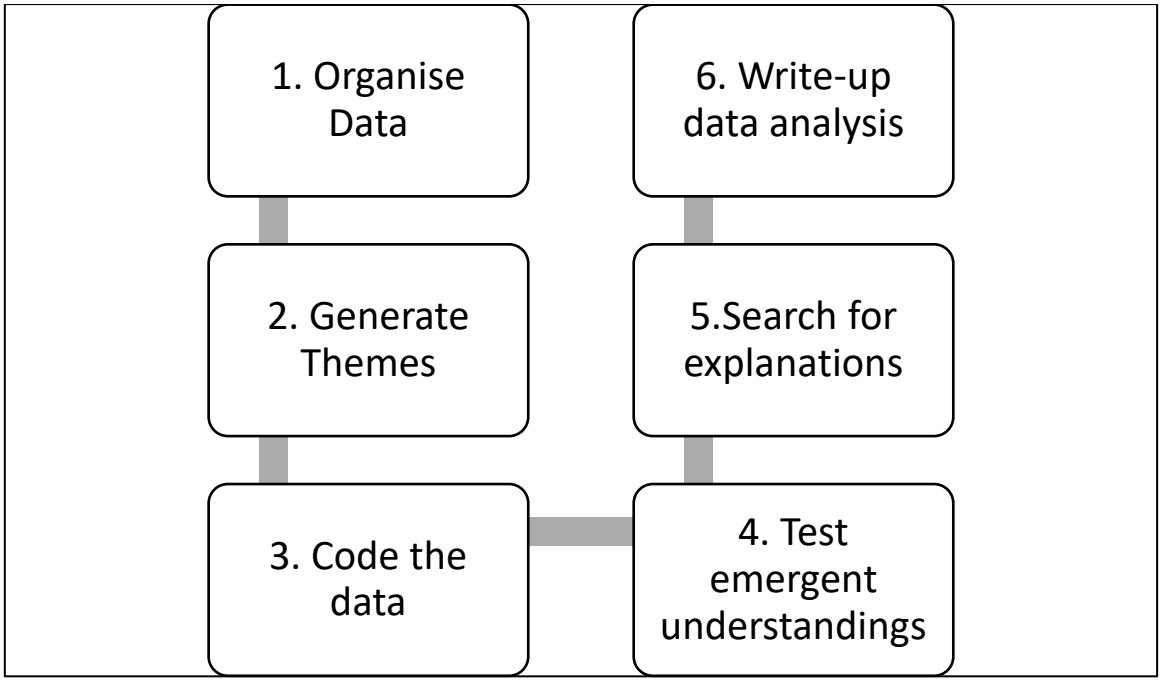

Figure 4.4.: Thematic Analysis Process

The key to the use of thematic analysis in feminist research is reflexivity or reflexive reading by the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Haynes (2012) states that reflexivity encourages the researcher to acknowledge how she affects the collected data as it is assumed that one's beliefs, culture and ideologies influence the generation and interpretation of data.

4.5.6. Limitations

According to Simon and Goes (2013), research constraints are those that arise outside of the researcher's control and can occasionally alter the outcomes and conclusions of a study. The limitations of any specific study refer to possible flaws that are typically beyond the control of the researcher and are directly related to the selected research design, statistical model limits, financing limits, or other issues. In this sense, a limit is an 'imposed' constraint over which the researcher has no influence (Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2018).

Limitations in this study arose in data collection where firstly, the focus group discussion was primarily made up of migrant female street traders, who appeared to have a certain degree of discomfort expressing themselves and partaking in the discussion. This can be attributed to limitations in language as well as fear of discrimination. The focus group discussion was conducted in isiZulu, and even though

they had been made aware that they could use their native language as the researcher was conversant in it, they chose not to.

Additionally, semi-structured interviews with FSTs took longer than initially expected as participants had to answer questions whilst interacting with customers. Although this delayed the collection of data, being able to interact with participants and observe their street trading operations provided insights and also aided in developing a rapport with participants to the benefit of this study.

4.5.7. Ethical Considerations

Parry (2020) suggests that ethical considerations in feminist research need to take into consideration the needs of the participants involved. Kiguwa (2019) reiterates the importance of reflexivity as a core ethical principle in which the researcher constantly reflects on how the research empowers and enhances the personal understandings of participants, whilst still protecting them. This study takes into consideration the following ethics:

a. Reflexivity: According to Mitchell (2017) feminist research advocates reflexivity as this ensures a study is veracious. Therefore, as the researcher is a woman with female family members who are street traders, the researcher's emotional closeness to the research needs to be declared. The researcher has personal accounts as well as a connection to this specific study which may result in over-identification and a projection of personal interpretations to participants (Haynes, 2012).
b. Informed consent and Voluntary Participation: In working with vulnerable groups, it is important to note that participants make autonomous decisions, without coercion (Parry,2020). Participants in the study were informed about the nature of the study as well as that refusal to participate would not penalise them. Participants in were reluctant to answer some questions in the interview guides, they were made aware that they were not obligated to respond to every question.
c. Anonymity: The study involved face-to-face interviews with participants, therefore, to ensure that their identities remain confidential, the interview guides and the final report made use of pseudonyms and responder numbers.

d. Protection from harm and risk: According to Blaikie and Priest (2019) this applies from the start of the study to the reporting of findings. Participants should be made fully informed of any risks be they psychological or social (Blaikie & Priest, 2019). As this is a feminist study, issues of power also need to be reflected (Parry, 2020). The researcher also ensured that the researcher-participant power balance remained cooperative and mutually beneficial (Brannon, 2011). This aspect refers to the principle of reflexivity. Given the researcher's shared experience with female street traders, there may have been an increased level of comfort between the researcher and participants.

4.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a descriptive outline of the City of UMhlathuze and the methodology of the study. Firstly, it discussed the history of the area, a description of the municipality as well as the location. The City of UMhlathuze is strategically located and there are considerable employment prospects, both formally and informally. Thereafter the chapter discussed the research methodology of the study. This study is informed by a constructivist paradigm. The epistemological and ontological assumptions of constructivism result in a methodology that emphasizes the subjective experience of participants and collaboration in knowledge creation. In line with this, the research approach in the study is qualitative with a case study research design. This chapter concludes with discussions on the sampling, data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations of this study. The next chapter presents data analysis and the interpretation of findings.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings regarding the coping strategies of female street traders (FSTs) during the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of UMhlathuze. It is divided into four sections that detail the findings of this study. The findings were obtained through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with 43 FSTs in three locations in the City of UMhlathuze, namely Empangeni CBD, KwaDlangezwa and Alkantstrand Beach.

The first section of this chapter begins by providing the demographic profile of the participants, which includes: identifying the nationalities of FSTs, their level of education, marital status, identifying the sectors of their involvement, employment history and sources of income. The second section analyses the street trading operations of FSTs in this study, including identifying the motivations for entering street trading and the types of street trading activity for FSTs. The chapter goes on to examine the capital, operational and political challenges reported by the participants of the study before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thereafter the coping strategies that FSTs employed to respond to the challenges identified in the previous section are analysed.

5.2. Demographic characteristics of respondents

The participants in this study were all Black African women. This is consistent with the population dynamics in the City of UMhlathuze, in which 87.7 % of the population is Black African (StatsSA,2011). The forty-three (43) Black African FSTs who participated in this study also included nine (9) undocumented migrants from Mozambique (Table 5.1.). These migrant FSTs stated that they had migrated from Mozambique to South Africa due to socio-economic and political conditions. In this study, the research participants did not have substantial differences in income or educational qualifications. Instead, the challenges of being an undocumented migrant, family obligations and structures, and limited support structures were noted as perpetuating inequality among FSTs.

Table 5.1. : Number of participants by nationality

	NATIONALITY		
AREA	**SOUTH AFRICAN**	**MOZAMBICAN**	**TOTAL**
Empangeni CBD	26	4	30
KwaDlangezwa	3	5	8
Alkantstrand	5	0	5

Table 5.2. below indicates the age ranges of FST who participated in this study. In this study, twenty-two (22) women were between the ages of 31 and 40 years, while fourteen (14) were FSTs between 18 and 30. Only four (4) women participants were older than 51 years (Table 5.2.). The age ranges of participants in this study are consistent with suggestions that street traders often are middle-aged working women (Namugumya & Muyanja, 2012).

Table 5.2.: Number of participants by age group

Age range	**Frequency**
18-30	14
31-40	22
41-50	3
51+	4
TOTAL	**43**

In terms of income, 40 (forty) FSTs stated that their combined household income was below R5000, while most also stated that they often rely on various forms of social grants, including child support grants. The study's findings also show that 19 (nineteen) women interviewed had previously held positions in low-paying, contract jobs with no employment benefits or job security. More than half (23) of the participants stated that they have always been informal street traders, however, only twelve(12) FSTs stated that they had previously been employed as domestic workers, (Table 5.3.). The implication was that these women spent several years in occupations that

did not provide social protection or adequate earnings, exposing them to risks of poverty and other forms of marginalisation.

Table 5.3. : Employment history of participants

Employment History	**No. of female street traders**
Domestic Work	12
Street trading	23
Retail	4
Sales	3
Security Officer	1
TOTAL	**43**

In terms of education, 10 (ten) respondents in the study stated that they had only received a primary school education, whereas 32 (thirty-two) women had a secondary school education. Only 1 (one) woman had received tertiary education (Table 5.4.). From the responses of FSTs in the study, it appears that a certain value has been placed on education; hence most had completed secondary school. A look at the participation of these women in street trading from a Feminist Marxist perspective, reveals that the domination of a neo-liberal labour system in South Africa results in reduced job opportunities for women with low levels of education. This economic exclusion often forces these women to enter the informal economy as street traders (Mabilo, 2018). Other motivations for joining street trading are discussed in detail in the next section (see Motivation for entering street trading).

Table 5.4. : Education levels of participants

Education Level	**Frequency**
Primary	10
Secondary	32
Tertiary	1
TOTAL	**43**

In terms of marital status (Table 5.5.), findings show that a majority, of 38 (thirty-eight) participants were single while 5 (five) were married. Furthermore, participants stated that their household sizes ranged from 4 to 10 members per household. The inclusion

of marital status and household size in this study is linked to women's participation in informal economic activities being greatly influenced by the household and family structures they support with their earnings.

Table 5.5. : Marital status of participants

Marital Status	**Frequency**
Single	38
Married	5
TOTAL	**43**

5.3. Street trading operations of female street traders in the City of UMhlathuze

This study was based on self-employed FSTs and included those who operated on behalf of someone else. Those who operated on behalf of someone else can be considered as being informally employed as they have entered an informal employment contract with the enterprise's owner. Most street trading activities carried out by respondents in the study included, among others, the preparation and selling of food and second-hand clothing, fruits, and vegetables.

5.3.1. Motivation for entering street trading

The motivations for these FSTs to enter street trading are linked to issues of unemployment as well as the low barriers of entry associated with street trading. FSTs in the study had been employed in the formal economy for as long as 15 years before they left for various reasons, including resignation due to ill-treatment and retrenchment. The following excerpts best capture this:

> “I was unhappy in my previous workplace, and the salary was insufficient to cover all my expenses. So, I decided to leave that job and started selling a few bags and dresses; the money was better - at least I am my boss here.” (Interview with FST 30, Empangeni CBD, June 2022)

> “When I got retrenched from my retail job, the retrenchment package was too small. I had so many debts to pay that I was left with nothing. So, I decided to start selling sweet potato that I was growing to make some money." (Interview with FST 25, Empangeni CBD, July 2022)

Assertions by participants in this study are consistent with the evidence in the literature (Chirau, 2012; Mabilo, 2018; Armstrong, 2020). When the findings in this study are

viewed from the Feminist Marxist perspective, it is evidenced that some participants considered employment in the formal economy insufficient due to low earnings, insecurity and vulnerability. Therefore, they joined street trading to improve their incomes and achieve relative stability. In this way, the informal economy has allowed these FSTs to improve their earnings and provides a form of empowerment.

When looking at FSTs who were identified as undocumented migrants, their motivation to become street traders is associated with socio-economic and political challenges in their countries of origin. They suggest that street trading was an activity that they already had been involved in before migrating to South Africa. These participants also indicated that they had plans to seek other forms of informal employment on their arrival; however, when these failed, they went back to street trading. The following views best illustrate this:

> "I arrived here a few years ago. My sister is a domestic worker in one of the townships, and she helped me get here. I thought I would get a job, but I am still waiting; in the meantime, I trade here." (Interview with FST 4, Empangeni CBD, July 2022)

> "Back home, I used to sell vegetables in the mornings; there is much competition in this sort of work. There are few jobs, so most people sell in markets or go door-to-door. When I got here, I saw that it is not so different, but at least it is not so competitive." (Focus group discussion 1, KwaDlangezwa, June 2022)

> "I started street trading here because I could not get any other work. I thought that it would be better. Where I am from, South Africa is associated with a better life. Things are a little bit more expensive here, and I still must send money back home." (Focus group discussion 1, KwaDlangezwa, June 2022)

Conversations with migrant FSTs indicated that the inability to find employment in their countries of origin had increased the chance of these individuals working informally in the City of UMhlathuze. The findings of this study are in line with those by Mbatha (2020), who found that street trading is often a survival strategy for migrants. For migrants in this study, the decision to enter street trading was motivated by a need to retain an income and send remittances to their families. Moreover, their undocumented status limited their employment prospects upon arrival and relegated them to the informal economy as street traders.

Their participation as street traders in the City of UMhlathuze can also be seen as an act of resistance to destitution and an attempt to retain their economic autonomy in a foreign environment. This is consistent with findings by Peberdy (2016); Moyo (2014) and Moyo et al., (2016), who found that the most common motivation for migrant street traders was linked to the need to support not only themselves but also remit back to their countries of origin. Through the lens of feminist intersectionality, the social identity of being an undocumented migrant often places migrant FSTs at a disadvantage and contributes to their vulnerabilities; these vulnerabilities are discussed later in this chapter.

5.3.2. Nature of street trading activities of female street traders in the City of UMhlathuze

When looking at the various activities conducted by FSTs in the City of UMhlathuze (Table 5.6.), the most common activity is street trading in fruit and vegetables (15) and cooked food (8). These forms of trade were prevalent with FSTs located in Empangeni CBD. For participants trading in KwaDlangezwa, the dominant street trading activities included selling baked goods (3), snacks, and sweets (5).

Table 5.6. : Number of participants by sector

Sector	**Frequency**
Hairdressing	2
Cakes	3
Second-hand clothes	5
Cooked Food	8
Crafts	5
Snacks and sweets	5
Fruit and vegetables	15
TOTAL	**43**

Participants suggest that the type of activity in which FSTs engaged was influenced by location and customer demands. For example, street traders at Empangeni CBD suggested that their choice in street trade was motivated by customer demands and economic reasons (this is explained in detail below). In addition, at KwaDlangezwa, FSTs at KwaDlangezwa stated that they had decided to sell various baked goods (scones, muffins, and snowballs) as their customers are primarily students.

Concerning their street trading activities, one respondent stated, “my muffins are usually sold out early in the morning. Students do not have the time to cook, so it is good for me to sell this type of food” (Focus group discussion 2, KwaDlangezwa, July 2022). Another asserted that “it is better to sell plates of food here in town especially because I am near the taxi rank. I usually get many customers because the rank is so busy” (Interview with FST 8, Empangeni CBD, July 2022). One respondent also stated, “I have avocado and banana trees growing in my yard, but I can only sell those at certain times of the year. Other times, I must order from a bulk supplier like everyone else” (Interview with FST 14, Empangeni CBD, July 2022).

These assertions resonate with existing studies, which have shown that the choice of street trading activity involves decisions on the goods or services to be provided and the location (Njaya & Murangwa, 2016). Furthermore, participants in this study suggest that their street trading activities are also influenced by the amount of capital and the need to support their households (Focus group discussion 2, KwaDlangezwa, July 2022). This is in line with existing studies, which have shown that the choices that FSTs make on the type of activity to engage in are influenced by low capital investments, the need for consistent income, and quick turnover to meet household needs (Chirau, 2012). The choice in trade can also be linked to gender roles and identity, where historically, women have been assigned to do household cooking duties, such as cooking food (Arizpe, 1977; Holm et al., 2016).

The choice in street trade activities made by FSTs in this study also shows a connection to the formal economy. Although some participants stated that they grew their produce, those selling cooked food, sweets, and chips stock goods from formal wholesale businesses. Valodia and Devey (2012) suggest that there is some connection between formal and informal economies. This is evident in the street trading activities of FSTs in the City of UMhlathuze and is congruent with studies by Chirau (2012) that FSTs often rely on linkages between the formal and informal economy to source stock for their enterprises. This can also be explained using the structuralist perspective on urban informality, which suggests that there are forward and backward linkages between the formal and informal economies. In the City of UMhlathuze, there are backward linkages in that, in some instances, FSTs rely on the formal economy to procure stock for their businesses. However, this linkage does not

mean those FSTs rely entirely on the formal economy to operate their informal enterprises.

When asked about the source of the ingredients used in the cooking, FSTs who sell cooked food in the City of UMhlathuze alluded to having bargaining power and being able to determine their menu based on what goods were on sale at the time (Interview with FST 8, July 2022). When asked to respond on their procurement options for their street trading activities, one participant stated, “I usually only buy what is on sale in stores. Now that beef is too expensive, I really cannot sell beef curry. I have some chicken curry, grilled chicken, and a few salads” (Interview with FST 12, Empangeni CBD, July 2022). Another asserted, “I use premixes for my baking. I have a unique way to mix them, so I do not use so many eggs and oil, cooking oil has become too expensive. I still get good muffins because my customers do not complain” (Focus Group discussion 1, KwaDlangezwa, June 2022).

This notwithstanding, the interface between the activities of FSTs and the formal economy undermines the dualistic conceptualisation of urban informality as a backward economic activity that is a precursor to the formal economy, with the formal and informal economy operating separately from each other. The formal and informal economies are integrated with capital as well as resource flows between the two. This argument is well-developed in literature (see, e.g., Huang et al., 2020; Moyo & Gumbo, 2021) and findings in this study reinforce the same.

FSTs in this study stated that their choice in what they traded was motivated by resources and skills they already had. In the context of this study, these available resources and skills can be drawn from intersecting social identities of nationality, experience, and education. It appears that although there are these links between the street trading activities of FSTs, participants in this study expressed their ability to hunt for bargains. Furthermore, the action of sourcing goods that participants consider more affordable suggests efforts of FSTs to continue with their trade and avoid paying more money whilst procuring stock from the formal economy.

5.4. Challenges experienced by female street traders in the City of UMhlathuze

From the responses provided by participants in this study, it emerged that the challenges they experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic were exacerbated due to existing capital, political and operational challenges. The challenges faced by FSTs

included increasing procurement prices, a lack of suitable infrastructure, and the lack of street trading permits. However, these were not isolated in most cases and were experienced simultaneously. Given this interconnection, these challenges cannot be viewed in isolation from each other (Figure 5.1.).

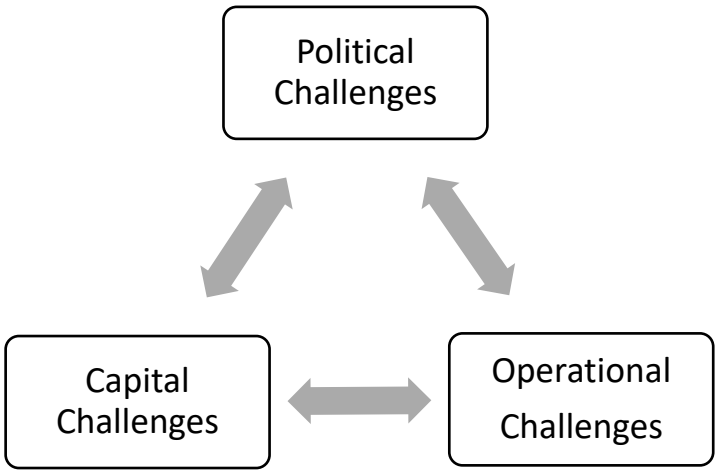

Figure 5.7.: Challenges faced by FSTs

5.4.1. Capital challenges

In terms of financial capital, FSTs in the study expressed challenges in the seasonality of incomes and increased cost of procuring goods. This is captured in these responses:

> “The roads going out of the country were closed (borders), and we get these clothes from Mozambique, they are cheaper. When the pandemic started, we had to pay extra to stock from Johannesburg. We paid so much not just for the clothes but also the transport costs.” (Interview with FST 31, Empangeni CBD, July 2022)

> "I started selling clothes before the pandemic, but due to the lockdown could not continue. Then I had to use my savings to pay my rent and other costs; I could not return to selling by myself afterwards. I had to ask my sister to help me get my business back off the ground" (Interview with FST 29, Empangeni CBD, July 2022)

> " I was selling so many things before the pandemic. I lost customers, and it was not the same when we returned. Customers were not coming, the business just recently picked up again, but I still have not recovered" (Interview with FST 20, Empangeni CBD, July 2022)

Willemse (2011) suggests that the lack of finance to maintain stocks is a common challenge in street trading. Findings in this study support this assertion as FSTs

suggested that the unexpected onslaught of COVID-19 meant they were ill-prepared. Compounded by low foot traffic during the hard lockdown, the incomes of FSTs in the City of UMhlathuze were impacted. From the responses of FSTs, it emerged that financial challenges also impact the choices FSTs make on what they sell and where they are located.

Njaya and Murangwa (2016) also suggest that the nature of street trade can affect the income of FSTs. This aspect is evident in the study, as participants linked their participation in street trading during the COVID-19 pandemic to available economic resources. In this study, participants suggested that they had access to child support grants; however, it appears that FSTs who identify as undocumented migrants were not able to access any social security grants in place. This presents an additional element of vulnerability to them. For example, when asked to comment further on their access to disaster relief grants, one participant stated, “I remember trying to apply for the grant they said was for us, but I could not finish the application because it was too complicated and required too many things” (Interview with FST 37, Alkantstrand Beach, July 2022).

The government made provisions for informal businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic to be provided with economic relief; however, FSTs in the study revealed that their informal businesses could not benefit from these relief measures. Some street traders could not follow through with the application process as they failed to understand what was required of them (Interviews with FST 15 & 31, Empangeni CBD, June and July 2022). The issue of education is also highlighted as it shows how regulations and restrictions were not explained to participants, which negatively impacted the FSTs’ access to that financial relief. Others stated that although they tried to apply, they soon found that they did not meet the requirements due to their being flagged as having other incomes or, in the case of undocumented migrant street traders, not having citizenship (Interview with FST 23, Empangeni CBD, July 2022).

When examined through the lens of feminist intersectionality, the responses of FSTs in this study show how the identities of nationality and class positioned and challenged certain groups of women. For undocumented migrant street traders, their identities as women and migrants challenge their access to relief grants and street trading permits and thus contribute to the already precarious nature of their work. This is in line with

assertions by Khambule (2020), that applications for the spaza and general dealers' relief scheme required proof of identification and a trading permit, which FSTs in this study stated they did not have.

The requirements for permits and COVID-19 relief schemes favoured formal enterprises and restricted the access FSTs in the City of UMhlathuze had to street trading sites. Consequently, the restrictions on street trading impacted respondents' ability to earn an income, and once these were lifted, they experienced reductions in their incomes. Khambule (2020) states that restrictions and requirements showed a system that prioritised the interests of the formal sector.

5.4.2. Operational Challenges

Regarding operational challenges, the issue of infrastructure was highlighted by most FSTs in the study. FSTs identified a lack of water, sanitation as well street trading stalls as having a bearing on their street trading operations. This led to some (10) operating in a mobile format. This involved them carrying their goods around various locations within the City of UMhlathuze, because of their inability to access trading stalls.

Participants in this study also made use of make-shift shelters. These shelters, constructed from refurbished plastic, wooden beams, and cardboard, are said not to be conducive to their street trading activities. One respondent asserted, "I sell various vegetables, including tomatoes, and I noticed that because of this tent on hot days, my tomatoes get sunburnt. Customers do not want to buy something that looks spoilt, so I must sell them for less" (Interview with FST 32, Empangeni CBD, July 2022).

During one interview with a cooked food trader, it began to rain while the interview was ongoing. The makeshift shelter from which the street trader was operating began to sag and visibly leaked in certain areas. The street trader shared in a very resigned tone, "this shelter does this very often. I usually do not work on heavy rain days, but because I lost much during the lockdown, I must come to work" (Interview with FST 13, Empangeni, CBD, July 2022).

From the responses of the street traders, the lack of adequate shelter has impacted their incomes. Having their stock damaged by the elements determines how much money FSTs make from the sale of the goods. This shows a link between operation challenges and capital challenges. This is in line with findings by Rigg (2007), Ngundu

(2010) and Khumalo (2015) that the lack of adequate infrastructure exposes informal traders to environmental conditions which damage their stock resulting in losses of income.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, these challenges were exacerbated. Key themes concerning these were the lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), exposure to elements and lack of water to wash hands. However, from the responses of FSTs, they were affected differently (in terms of, among others, age) by the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, an elderly street trader had to stop trading during the COVID-19 pandemic because she stated, “I am in my 50’s. I got infected with COVID-19. I had to stop coming to work because I was scared to expose myself. I do not have a shelter, so I am in the open; I did not want to get sick” (Interview with FST 24, Empangeni CBD, July 2022). The COVID-19 regulations burdened other street traders, and this is illustrated by the view that “COVID-19 came with way too much. From us having to make sure that customers wear masks to sanitizing. There is no time or money for all of that here” (Interview with FST 28, Empangeni CBD, June 2022).

Coleman (2007) found that access to trading sites determines the well-being of street traders. From the participants' responses, it emerged that the inadequacy of infrastructure hindered their operations and, in some instances, their health. Furthermore, to adhere to COVID-19 regulations, they had to use their incomes to purchase PPEs. This set them back financially. However, there is evidence of an interlock between financial and operational challenges in that their limited ability to generate an income during the hard lockdown was tied to their not having access to PPE and infrastructure.

Street traders in the study also stated that they purchased their goods from bulk suppliers in the formal sector. These are often transported to them once a week; however, due to the restrictions on travel, these street traders could not receive their stock and, as such, could not operate. Hence one respondent stated, “I get my vegetables from some people in Jozini, but because of the lockdown, they were not able to reach us and were expecting more money for the transportation of the stock” (Interview with FST 1, Empangeni CBD, July 2022).

The connection between the formal and informal economy was established earlier in this chapter (see nature of street trading activities of FSTs). However, the structural relationship between the formal and informal economy in this instance shows the exploitative relationship between the two economies and often one side benefits. Structuralism highlights the linkage and flow of goods between formal businesses and FSTs in the City of UMhlathuze; however, this relationship has not been mutually beneficial. Formal businesses, in many instances, are often able to set prices and determine what is available in the market (Huang et al., 2020). This affects street traders' operations, income, and profits, as evidenced in this study.

From the responses of FSTs in the City of UMhlathuze, the barriers placed on travel presented operational challenges as they prevented them from procuring goods and resulted in them incurring additional unexpected transport costs. Willemse (2011) suggests that the lack of adequate road infrastructure limits the ability of street traders to operate properly. However, findings in this study also show that although the infrastructure was there, respondents could not access suppliers and customers due to restrictions on movements and regulations on street trading that had been put in place. The lack of stock resulted in reduced earnings for most during the pandemic, and once the restrictions were eased, the lack of start-up capital meant that groups of FSTs in the City of UMhlathuze did not have sufficient capital to resume their operations.

5.4.3. Political Challenges

Local economic development officials working at the City of UMhlathuze could not be reached to respond concerning their interactions and responses to challenges facing FSTs. Therefore, the aspect of political challenges will focus solely on the responses and experiences of FSTs in the City of UMhlathuze.

Concerning political challenges that FSTs experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, key themes that emerged were the struggle to obtain permits and exclusion from street trading sites. Of the FSTs who participated in the study, only those trading at the Alkantstrand beach indicated that they had permits to operate in the area, and these were also seasonal. Most participants in the study indicated that they did not have any permits due to the costs involved and the restrictions that came with it, as well as, in the case of undocumented migrants, nationality. Therefore, one street trader indicated, “I know about the permits required for one to sell here. I do not want one.

They put us on the other side of town where no one can see or get to us. It is better here" (Interview with FST 9, Empangeni CBD, June 2022). Another stated, "I cannot afford a permit. I hardly make enough here; this permit does not seem worth it" (Interview with FST 18, Empangeni CBD, July 2022). Concerning the migrant street traders, the issue of immigration documentation came to the fore; hence one respondent asserted, "I cannot apply for a street trading permit. I do not have the necessary papers to do so" (Interview with FST 20, Empangeni CBD, July 2022). However, the challenge of obtaining street trading permits in the City of UMhlathuze limits their ability to access infrastructure and funds.

The easing of lockdown restrictions saw the resumption of street trading activities, only for specific activities and subject to the trader having a trading permit. From an intersectional perspective, the form of trade determined the category of service that FSTs were placed in (essential or non-essential services). Furthermore, FSTs in this study stated that not having "permission" to operate within the City of UMhlathuze during the various stages of lockdown also exposed them to harassment. This is consistent with Roever and Skinner (2016), who found that exclusionary policies and practices in informal street trade are common, often leading to violent evictions where street traders are relocated to marginal areas with inadequate facilities. This is evidenced by the experiences of one street trader who stated, "Earlier during the lockdown, I was arrested and my goods were confiscated by the police. This was a terrifying experience" (Interview with FST 23, Empangeni CBD, June 2022).

This aspect of policing street traders was a dominant theme during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Images of soldiers and various law enforcement personnel were the norm on televisions and on the streets. Cases of harassment by officials included confiscation of goods and, in many instances, the payment of bribes. This corroborates the findings by Rwafa-Ponela et al., (2022), that the ill-treatment of informal street traders during the various levels of lockdown presented challenges for street traders.

The implementation of these street trading regulations, when viewed from a dualistic and legalist perspective, shows how the informal economy is often seen as secondary and marginal to the formal economy and those employed in it are also treated as such. For example, the literature on the responses of governments during the COVID-19 pandemic shows how regulations often tended to rely on distinctions of legality and

illegality concerning street trade, resulting in the exclusion and marginalisation of many informal street traders who were not in compliance with permit requirements (Rwafa-Ponela, 2022; Skinner & Watson, 2020). The classification as “illegal” is evidenced in this study and has placed FSTs in a vulnerable position.

During focus group discussions with FSTs in KwaDlangezwa, it emerged that there had been a closure of the University of Zululand during student protests resulting in the closure of the market located on the university premises. As such, street traders were no longer permitted to trade on campus and only formally recognised service providers were allowed to operate once the lockdown had been lifted. One respondent shared, “because we do not have a market to sell from anymore, I had to change the goods I sell- I was not prepared for this” (Focus group discussion 1, KwaDlangezwa, June 2022). Another added, “we used to sell at the University market, but when COVID-19 came, students had to leave, and the market never reopened. We were told it was being fixed and we would come back. We are still waiting” (Focus group discussion 1, KwaDlangezwa, June 2022).

From the responses of FSTs, the emergence of “gatekeeping” by structures in the university has negatively impacted the operations and incomes of street traders. As a result, the university campus has created an exclusionary environment that has determined that street traders are not allowed to trade on the campus. This is in line with findings by Rwafa-Ponela et al., (2022) that decision-makers often marginalize and fail to consider the contribution of street traders. The same was noted by Chigudu (2020) and Moyo (2018) that the allocation of space for street traders is often discriminatory and at the margins of cities.

5.5. Coping strategies of female street traders in the City of UMhlathuze

The responses of FSTs to the challenges mentioned above highlight how existing, overlapping social identities are at play. The heterogeneous identities of FSTs who participated in this study help present the various voices of groups of FSTs who have been relegated to the background when issues of the COVID-19 pandemic are concerned. The evidence of coping strategies by FSTs in the study is presented according to key emergent themes from the participants' responses. These are mobility, altering street trading activities, and solidarity amongst street traders.

5.5.1. Mobility

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and the closure of some places where street traders operated, respondents resorted to carrying their produce around with them while seeking customers. This was particularly the case with migrant street traders from Mozambique, one of whom indicated that “in my home country we have markets, but I used to carry goods on my head and moved around looking for customers because there is not enough space for all street traders in markets. So when the COVID-19 pandemic came, I just went back to doing it that way” (Focus group discussion 1, KwaDlangezwa, June 2022). This is corroborated by another respondent who stated:

> I am not from here. I am used to trading on the street because there are many of us in this type of work. I came to South Africa to get a job as a domestic worker but ended up back as a street trader. When COVID-19 came, and there were not any customers, I sold door-to-door as we do in Mozambique.” (Focus group discussion 1, KwaDlangezwa, June 2022)

Migrant FSTs linked their abilities to adopt mobility as a coping strategy to their experience in street trading in their countries of origin. Through the feminist intersectionality lens, the intersection of race and nationality social identities suggests that the low socio-economic position of migrants and Black people makes them vulnerable and marginalised within the informal economy (De Oliveira & Roberts,1994; Rogerson, 2000). However, the participants' responses in this study also illuminate the agency of the street traders. Findings show that because migrant street traders have extensive experience trading in hostile environments, they could draw on their experience, and because they were not reliant on market stalls, they could continue as mobile street traders during the intense lockdown. This is consistent with findings by Moyo et al., (2018) that migrant street trading activities are often modified to respond to challenges. This study shows that older street traders reduced the quantities they carried around their heads at any given time. Hence one stated, “I am not as young as the other women here, so I cannot carry too much stuff around with me, so I have to try to sell less, which means less profit” (Interview with a street trader, Empangeni CBD, June 2022). Others decided to operate from their places of residence, and the statement illustrates this; “I am used to being mobile with my

trading. When we were forced to stay at home, I just began selling fruit and biscuits to my neighbours" (Interview with FST 3, Empangeni CBD, June 2022).

The responses of FSTs in this study also show the intersection of the social identities of age and experience as having a bearing on strategies that participants used in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. FSTs with years of experience stated that their experience allowed them to quickly adapt to the closure of markets and begin selling door-to-door or directly to their neighbours (Interview with FST 11, Empangeni CBD & Focus Group Discussion 1, June 2022). Mobility as a coping strategy is not unique to the COVID-19 pandemic, but evidence shows that street traders, predominantly women, often resort to this when they are denied access to street trading facilities (Mogobe 2020, Ngomane & Sebola, 2016).

Older participants indicated that they relied on trading stalls before the COVID-19 pandemic as it was easier for them. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they have had to also join the younger population of mobile street traders (Interviews with FST 26, Empangeni CBD, July 2022). Kiaka et al., (2021) and Chigudu (2020) suggest that street traders globally faced several challenges arising from the closure of markets during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Zimbabwe, Kiaka et al. (2021) found that when markets were closed to curb the spread of the pandemic, street traders responded by selling door-to-door; this has also been proven by this study.

5.5.2. Altering street trading activities

The study's findings indicate that within UMhlathuze city, the street trading operations of FSTs currently range from selling cooked food, hairdressing, snacks, sweets and fruits and vegetables. This is in line with findings by Thulare and Moyo (2021) that reveal that within the City of UMhlathuze, street trading encompasses a diverse range of activities. In the context of this study, the act of diversifying and even changing to other/alternative goods and operations can be considered a coping strategy.

Considering the financial challenges that participants cited in the study (see Capital Challenges in this chapter), the need to respond to a reduction in income, procurement of stock, and continuing street trading operations is essential. The importance of maintaining stocks and finding alternate ways to procure stock is highlighted by one respondent who stated; "buying stock has become too expensive. So instead of selling all the different types of sweets and chips as before, I now sell scones, snowballs, and

muffins that I bake myself, which saves me a lot of money" (Focus Group Discussion 1, KwaDlangezwa, June 2022).

The act of diversifying goods is also identified by Chirau (2012), who states that in Zimbabwe, FSTs can often move between various street trading activities due to the seasonality of certain goods. This flexibility is a characteristic of street trading as it is prone to seasonality and shocks. In response to capital challenges, a participant asserted that "buying stock is sometimes difficult for me. So, I now bake because I think that this is more affordable and I can generate more profit from my trade this way" (Interview with FST 7, June 2022).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the closure of stores led to FSTs having to diversify the goods they sold. The need to change to other goods and services provided arose due to capital, operational and political challenges presented by the closure of roads and formal markets. From participants' responses, change in goods and services provided has also impacted income and profit. This is congruent with findings by Njaya and Murangwa (2016), that the nature or category of trade often determines the income street traders generate.

In addition to altering goods being traded, FSTs in the study also stated that they had to try to find other sources of capital (Interviews with FSTs 38 & 25, Empangeni & Alkantstrand, June and July 2022). Participants indicated their membership in stokvels and the increase in child support grants during the lockdown helped them not only meet their household needs but, in some instances, provided capital for them to resume their street trading activities once restrictions had been lifted. For example, one respondent who belongs to a stokvel stated, "I am a part of a stokvel, and although I struggled with making monthly payments because we were not working during the lockdown, the money I got from it helped me meet my children's needs" (Interview with FST 31, Empangeni CBD, July 2022). Another respondent revealed that "I had to stay at home during the pandemic; I relied on the R350 grant and my children's grant to try to cover the loss of my income" (Interview with FST 10, Empangeni CBD, July 2022).

Findings in this study suggest that when incomes from street trading were sometimes insufficient, participants could draw from readily available resources such as welfare grants, stokvels and family members. Participants also raised the issue of the inefficiency of social grants in meeting household needs; however, they stated that

they adjusted in certain areas of their lives to meet household needs. This meant that even with barriers placed on their activities during the lockdown, they could draw on these social networks and try to continue with their street trading activities. The use of social networks in the form of savings clubs also advances the social relations perspective of urban informality, which states that activities in the informal economy are socially constructed. For example, Mogobe (2020) and Thulare and Moyo (2021) also found that these forms of social capital networks are an essential part of street trading.

5.5.3. Solidarity amongst female street traders

From the responses of participants in this study, FSTs often must mobilise resources amongst themselves. This need for FSTs to come together during the COVID-19 pandemic stems from capital, operational and political challenges they faced. The lack of markets, closure of schools, and loss of income may have underscored existing social, political, and economic vulnerabilities faced by FSTs in the City of UMhlathuze.

This solidarity and the importance of social networks is also brought forth by a participant who identified as an undocumented migrant and stated, “I stay with my sister who is also a street trader. When we were allowed to return to trading, schools still were not open, so we took turns staying at home with the children. This way we could still do some work.” (Interview with FST 5, Empangeni CBD, June 2022).

Moreover, because of the patriarchal division of family labour, women perform household chores, which means they typically find themselves trading in areas closer to their homes, which is evident in this study (Focus Group Discussion 1, KwaDlangezwa, June 2022). Women who are breadwinners within their households are faced with the burden of ensuring that household needs are met; with school closure during the lockdown, this role was intensified (Skinner & Watson, 2020). The combination of productive and reproductive duties was also acknowledged by Mitullah (2003) and Ngomane and Sebola (2016), who found that FSTs often must find ways to generate income whilst still meeting their social reproductive roles; this is also evident in this study.

When faced with the choice of providing care to their children or continuing with their street trading activities, participants assisted each other and sometimes family members helped. Furthermore, the social nature of street trading is also highlighted in

the sharing of care and solidarity amongst FSTs. This supports assertions by Assaad (1996) and Moyo and Gumbo (2021) that within the informal economy, transactions are socially constructed with an emphasis on kinship and regional origin.

5.6. Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research findings in response to the study's objectives. What comes to the fore is that within the City of UMhlathuze, street trading is dominated by Black African women, with some being migrants from Mozambique. The findings of this study also show that high unemployment and household needs have led the participants to join the informal economy. For the participants, selling food and other consumables is a dominant street trading activity. From the expressions of FSTs, the capital, operational and political challenges they experienced during the pandemic, which included, increased procurement prices, a lack of infrastructure, and the lack of street trading permits, impacted their activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges interconnect and influence each other. However, these women are not passive to these challenges. Nevertheless, this study shows evidence of their coping strategies to advance their street trading activities. These strategies range from mobility to altering street trading goods and working together. The analysis of these findings helps to draw conclusions and provide recommendations in the subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

This study consisted of six chapters. Chapter 1 provided the background and orientation to the study. Chapter 2 discussed the conceptual and theoretical perspectives that provided an analytical framework for this study. Chapter 3 critically reviewed the literature that is relevant to this research. Chapter 4 presented the physical setting and methodology of the study. The study was based in the City of UMhlathuze, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and incorporated the areas of Empangeni, Alkantstrand and KwaDlangezwa. The chapter also described the research design and methodology, including a discussion on the constructivist research paradigm that informed the qualitative research methodology of this research. Chapter 5 analysed and interpreted the data in line with the objectives of this study. This chapter evaluates the study's objectives and puts forward recommendations based on the analysis of the findings.

6.2. Restatement of the research objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

a) Analyse street trading operations of groups of female street traders in the City of uMhlathuze.
b) Examine the capital, infrastructural and political challenges experienced by groups of female street traders as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in uMhlathuze.
c) Analyse coping strategies used by groups of female street traders during the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of uMhlathuze.
d) Assess the government’s response to challenges experienced by female street traders in the City of UMhlathuze.

The following section summarises the study's results by responding to the objectives in sequential order.

6.2.1. The street trading operations of female street traders in the City of UMhlathuze

In response to the first objective, this study shows that in the City of UMhlathuze, the motivation to join street trading for FSTs was unemployment and the low barriers of entry associated with street trading. The study showed that FSTs dominate the trade in second-hand clothes, cooked food, fruit, and vegetables. These are often sourced from formal wholesalers. However, FSTs are not entirely reliant on this linkage as they

can use what they can afford at that time. FSTs can also employ the skills they possess to adapt to the nature of their street trading operations. This is consistent with findings by Chirau (2012), Mbatha (2020) and, Ngomane and Sebola (2016) that the involvement of FSTs in street trading operations requires low capital investments. Valodia and Devey (2012), Chirau (2012), and Moyo and Gumbo (2021) also suggest that these operations make use of the linkages between the FES and the IE.

6.2.2. The capital, infrastructural and political challenges experienced by female street traders during the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of UMhlathuze

In response to the second objective, this study found that within the City of UMhlathuze, capital challenges faced by FSTs during the COVID-19 pandemic included increased procurement prices and the inability to access disaster relief measures. Regarding operational challenges in the City of UMhlathuze, the study found that FSTs could not access PPE and had inadequate infrastructure (water and shelter). Furthermore, the study found that the political challenge faced by FSTs was the lack of street trading permits. All these challenges influenced the operations of FSTs in the study in terms of income and access to markets. However, FSTs could devise coping strategies to address these challenges. This is consistent with studies that show that street traders face capital, operational and political factors due to shocks which impact their street trading operations (Motala, 2003; Willemse, 2011; Omobowale et al., 2020; Webb et al., 2020; Azeez et al., 2021). When all of this is seen through the lenses of feminist Marxism and feminism intersectionality, it becomes evident how during COVID-19, FSTs in the City of UMhlathuze faced challenges that affected them differently (in terms of, among others, age and nationality).

6.2.3. The coping strategies of female street traders during the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of UMhlathuze

In response to the third objective, this study shows that street traders in the City of UMhlathuze were able to find ways to continue earning a living during the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the increasingly difficult circumstances they faced. Coping strategies used by FSTs in the City of UMhlathuze included them adapting their operations to function in a mobile format. This strategy is linked to the closure of stores and was an attempt by them to address the reduced foot traffic in Empangeni CBD, for example. Alternatively, FSTs could alter the nature of their street trading by diversifying the goods they sold; FSTs devised this strategy to respond to the closure of stores and the reduction in their incomes. Lastly, this study noted that FSTs could

identify networks among themselves from which they drew not only financial support but also childcare support for their children. Findings in this study mirror those by Mogobe (2020), Thulare and Moyo (2021) as well as Moyo and Gumbo (2021) that social capital networks are an essential part of street trading and, during times of crisis, are a valuable resource for street traders. From a global perspective, street traders have shown their ability to adapt their operations and respond to shocks and disasters (Parthasarathy, 2015; Douglas et al., 2018), despite the harsh conditions and challenges they face in their operations.

Studies by Chigudu (2020) and Akuko et al., (2020) found that in other parts of the world, street traders continued operating during the COVID-19 pandemic by devising new strategies. Thus, in this study, the use of Feminist Marxism as an analytical framework shows how, when faced with threats to their incomes, FSTs can devise coping strategies. The identities shared by FSTs shape these strategies from the perspective of feminist intersectionality. Migrant FSTs in this study are more likely to work together and often depend on each other for support, while older FSTs who had more experience in street trading drew on this to devise coping strategies.

6.2.4. The government's response to challenges experienced by female street traders in the City of UMhlathuze

The inability to reach municipal officials for their participation in this study limited the assessment of the government's responses to the challenges faced by FSTs in the City of UMhlathuze. In response to the fourth objective, this study found that challenges faced by FSTs during the COVID-19 pandemic are attributed to the government's approach and response to the informal economy. From the perspective of FSTs in this study, acquiring disaster relief grants and street trading permits was a complex exercise due to them not having the required documentation. Without these, FSTs in this study faced harassment and had their operations disrupted on certain occasions. This is consistent with findings that globally the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic led to governments having to take drastic actions and enact policies to decrease the spread of the virus; these had a great impact on street trading (Pourezzat et al., 2010; Ye et al., 2020; Iken et al., 2020, Lai et al., 2020).

6.3. Recommendations

6.3.1. Recommendations to the female street traders

The study's findings show that FSTs face numerous challenges in their operations, exacerbated during shocks and crises. The challenges experienced by FSTs during the COVID-19 pandemic include, among others, increased procurement prices and a lack of infrastructure. In light of this, it is recommended that:

a) FSTs should form networks in which they will purchase and procure stock in bulk. This will help reduce the amount spent on purchasing and transporting goods. Moreover, these networks may serve as resources for social and financial capital in times of crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. They may be used to share information concerning relief aid and regulations with FSTs and ensure that they are represented in relevant structures.

6.3.2. Recommendations to the City of UMhlathuze

In this study, and others similar, it emerged that governments' responses during crises are not considerate of the nature and scope of the informal economy. Therefore, it is recommended that:

a) Government departments should involve street traders, especially FSTs, in crisis planning and disaster management. This will ensure that the plans and policies implemented integrate the needs of FSTs. In this way, responses to these events will not marginalise those in the informal economy such as in street trading.
b) The City of UMhlathuze should build facilities and infrastructure accessible to FSTs; these should include market stalls for the various street trading operations in the city.

6.3.3. Recommendations to the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Zululand

The informal economy is an integral part of economies in the Global South and is also an essential form of employment for many women. It is a dynamic topic that encompasses issues of gender equality and the political economy, therefore, it is recommended that:

a) Students should be encouraged to take on research studies focusing on the informal economy and street trading and how gender shapes experiences

within it. There is also a paucity of knowledge on women's experiences and challenges in the informal economy.

6.4. Suggestions for future research

Certain elements were not explored in this study as they fell outside the scope of this research. Therefore, the suggested areas of future research are:

a) Previous studies on the informal economy have looked at links between the formal and informal economies; however, they have not looked at the links within the informal economy itself. Therefore, exploring the linkages within the informal economy is a possible area for future research.
b) In this study, migrant women also participated in street trading. This study focused on female street traders, however, future studies may focus on migrant female street traders.

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Appendix 1: Transmittal Letter

University of Zululand

Faculty of Science & Agriculture

Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

Website: http://www.uzulu.ac.za

Private Bag X1001
3886 KwaDlangezwa

Tel: 035 902 6318
Fax: 035 902 6647

31 March 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: REQUEST TO UNDERTAKE A RESEARCH STUDY IN UMHLATHUZE MUNICIPALITY

Makhosazane Sithole is a full time Masters student in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Zululand. She is carrying out a research study on the following topic:

Assessing Coping Strategies of Female Street Traders During COVID-19 In the City of UMhlathuze, KwaZulu-Natal

The Department of Geography and Environmental Studies would like to appeal to you to assist the student with any help she may require to complete this project. I would like to assure you that this research project is undertaken mainly for academic purposes and all information acquired from you will be treated with the strictest confidence. A copy of the final dissertation may be given to you on request.

I would be most grateful for your assistance in this regard.

Yours sincerely

Prof I Moyo
Department of Geography and Environmental studies
University of Zululand

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for female street traders

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND
FACULTY OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING & AGRICULTURE
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Research Topic: Assessing Coping Strategies of Female Street Traders During the COVID-19 Pandemic In the City of Umhlathuze, KwaZulu-Natal
Researcher: Makhosazane Sithole
I am a student in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Zululand, and I am conducting a study on the response of female street traders to the pandemic. The main aim of this study is to assess the coping mechanisms utilised by female street traders during the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of uMhlathuze, KwaZulu-Natal. I would therefore be grateful if you could take part in this study by answering the following questions. Information provided will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for academic purposes.

Consent form for participation

Makhosazane Nokwanda Amingoh Sithole from the Department of Geography, University of Zululand has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project. The nature and the purpose of the research project and this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to assess the coping strategies utilized by female street traders during the COVID-19 pandemic in uMhlathuze, Kwa-Zulu, Natal.

2. The University of Zululand has given ethical clearance to this research project, and I have seen/ may request to see the clearance certificate.

3. I will participate in the project by answering questions relating to the research project and overarching research questions.

4. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.

5. I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

6. There may be risks associated with my participation in the project. I am aware that;

a) The following risks are associated with my participation: divulging personal information.

b) The following steps have been taken to prevent the risks: Confidentiality clauses.

c) There is a 0% chance of the risk materializing.

7. The researcher intends to publish the research results in the form of a dissertation and research journals. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.

8. I will receive feedback in the form of an electronic copy regarding the results obtained during the study.

9. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my participation will be answered by the supervisor (Moyoi@unizulu.ac.za).

10. By signing this informed consent declaration I am not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies.

11. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I, _____have read the above information and confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand, and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask, and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurized in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

……. ……..

Participant's signature Date

ISIGABA SOKUGALA: ONGENELE NGOKUZIBOPHEZELA

ISIVUMELWANO SESIBOPHEZELO

ISIVUMELWANO SESIBOPHEZELO

(ONGENELE)

Igama Locwaningo:Ukuhlola amasu okubhekana nezinkinga ezisetshenziswa ngabahwebi basemigwaqeni besifazane ngesikathi sobhubhane lwe-COVID-19, eMlathuze, KwaZulu, eNatali

U Makhosazane Nokwanda Amingoh Sithole Osuka emkhakheni wezindawo, Enyuvesi yase Zululand (Ongoye).

Uyitholile imvume yami yokuba ngizibandakanye nocwaningo olubhalwe ngenhla.

Inhloso yalolu Cwaningo uhlola amasu okubhekana nezinkinga ezisetshenziswa ngabahwebi ngabesifazane ngesikhathi sobhubhane lwe-COVID-19 eMhlathuze, Kwa-Zulu, eNatali.. Ukwazisa isivumelwano sokuzibophezelo engichazelwe ngakho ngolimi engiliqonda kahle.

Ngiyazi Ngalokhu:

1. Inhloso ngqangi yocwaningo ukuhlola amasu asetshenziswa ngabahwebi besifazane ngesikhathi sobhubhane lwe-COVID-19 eMhlathuze, Kwa-Zulu, eNatali.

2. Inyuvesi yase Zululand (Ongoye) inginikile inqubo ecacisa kabanzi ngo cwaningo nokuthi ngingacela ukubona isitifiketi esicacile.

3. Ngizobamba iqhaza elikhulu cwaningo ekuphenduleni yonke imbuzo ehlobene nezingxoxo zendawo nomphakathi wakithi, kanye nokuphendula noma imuphi umbuzo ngo cwaningo.

4. Ukuzibophezela kwami kulolu cwaningo ukuzinikela ngokuphelele noma ngasiphi isikhathi, engiyohoxisa ngaso, lokho ngiyokwenza ngaphandle kokubheka umthelela nokungaba imiphumela yakho emibi.

5. Angeke nginxephezelwe ngokubamba iqhaza kwami kulolu cwaningo kodwa konke okuphuma ephakatheni lami nokuyizindleka ngiyokhokhelwa ngakho.

6. Okuyoba nobungozi futhi ucwaningeni lwami, Ngiyazi Ngalokhu:

a) Okulandelayo okunobungozi okuhlobene nokubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo: Ukugcina izinto/ imininingwane eziyimfihlo neziyisifuba sami..

b) Isinyathelo esibanelayo engisithathile ukuvikela ubungozi: Izivumelwano eziyimfihlo.

c) Kunokungabi bikho kwethuba eliyingozi..

7. Umcwaningi angaba neqhinga lokushicilela umphumela wocwaningo ngendlela yendaba/ inkulumo yocwaningo iwephephandaba.

8. Ngiyothola impendulo ebhalwe ngomshini/ umqhafazo ephathelene nemiphumela engiyithole ngesikhathi ngiqhubheka nezifundo.

9. Noma yimiphi imbuzo engaba mayelana nocwaningo noma ukuzibophezela kwami iyobuzwa kumphakathi wami (Moyoi@unizulu.ac.za).

10. Nokusayina lokhu kokwazisa ngesibophezelo. Angeke ngizibabele umthetho ngezami izandla , nokuba namalungelo noma ikhuphi engaziduduza ngakho.

11. Okususelwe kokuyokho kuyokwaziswa ngokwesivumelwano sokuzibophezela kuyonikezwa mina, okuyinkho kuyogcinwa kunjengoba kunjalo kuhlale kuyisikhumbuso.

Mina, _____ ngokufunda yonke leminingwane engenhla futhi ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi konke lokhu okungenhla okuchaziwe kimina ngolimi engiluqondayo ngiyakwazi futhi okuqukethwe yilomqulu webhuku.

Ngibuze yonke imibuzo ebengifisa ukuyibuza futhi engiphendulelwe ngokwenelisayo. Ngiyaqonda ngokugcwele okulindelekile kimina ngesikhathi socwaningo.

…… ……

Ukusayina kongenele Usuku

Section A: Demographic Characteristics

Please mark the most appropriate response with a cross [X]. Kindly mark one box only.

1. Age in years

below18	
18-30 years	
31-40 years	
41- 50 years	
51 - and above	

2. What race do you identify as?

African	
White	
Asian	
Coloured	
Other	

3. Marital Status

Single	
Married	
Divorced	
Separated	
Other	

4. Educational Background

Primary	
Secondary	
Tertiary	

None	

5. What is your country of origin?

……

5.1. If you are not South African, for how long have you resided in South Africa?

……

6. How big is your household size?

……

6.1. How many members of your household are employed? What are their occupations?

……
……
……
……

7. What other sources of income does your household rely on? (You can select more than one)

Child Grant	
Pension	
Disability grant	

8. What is your approximate combined household income?

Less than R5 000	
Between R5 000 and R10 000	
Between R10 000 and R20 000	
Between R20 000 and R30 000	
More than R40 000	

Section B: Street Trading Operations

1. Have you ever had any formal employment?

Yes	
No	

1.1. If yes, for how long were you employed and what was your occupation or job title?

……
……
……

1.2. What were your reasons for leaving your previous employment?

……
……
……

2. How long have you been operating as a street trader?

0-4 year	
5-9 years	
10-14 years	
15 + years	

3. What motivated you to start street trading?

……
……
……
……
……

4. What kind of goods or services do you sell?

……
……
……
……

4.1. Where do you source the material or goods you use in your business operations?

……
……

……
……

5. Is this your own business venture or do you trade on behalf of someone?

Own venture	
Someone else's venture	

6. Are there any special skills or training needed for your street trading operation?

Yes	
No	

6.1. If yes, please specify what these are. Where did you acquire these skills?

……
……
……

7. Do you operate alone, or do you have someone helping you?

……
……
……

8. How many days a week do you operate?

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

Section C: Challenges to trading during COVID-19

1. What difficulties do you usually face in your operations?

……
……

……
……

1.1. How has the pandemic influenced these?

……
……
……
……
……

Section D: Coping Mechanisms during COVID-19

1. How have you attempted to deal with the challenges mentioned in the section above?

……
……
……
……
……
……
……

2. Do you get any assistance from the government, municipality, NGOs, donors or any private companies?

……
……
……
……
……
……
……

2.1. How do you think informal traders should be assisted to handle the problems they come across in their work?

……
……
……
……
……
……
……
……

Appendix 3: Interview guide for focus group discussion with female street traders

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND
FACULTY OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING & AGRICULTURE
DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Research Topic: Assessing Coping Strategies of Female Street Traders During the COVID-19 Pandemic In the City of Umhlathuze, KwaZulu-Natal
Researcher: Makhosazane Sithole
I am a student in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Zululand, and I am conducting a study on the response of female street traders to the pandemic. The main aim of this study is to assess the coping mechanisms utilised by female street traders during the COVID-19 pandemic in the City of uMhlathuze, KwaZulu-Natal. I would therefore be grateful if you could take part in this study by answering the following questions. Information provided will be treated with confidentiality and will only be used for academic purposes.

Consent form for participation

Makhosazane Nokwanda Amingoh Sithole from the Department of Geography, University of Zululand has requested my permission to participate in the above-mentioned research project. The nature and the purpose of the research project and this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to assess the coping strategies utilized by female street traders during the COVID-19 pandemic in uMhlathuze, Kwa-Zulu, Natal.

2. The University of Zululand has given ethical clearance to this research project, and I have seen/ may request to see the clearance certificate.

3. I will participate in the project by answering questions relating to the research project and overarching research questions.

4. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without being penalised.

5. I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

6. There may be risks associated with my participation in the project. I am aware that;

a) The following risks are associated with my participation: divulging personal information.

b) The following steps have been taken to prevent the risks: Confidentiality clauses.

c) There is a 0% chance of the risk materializing.

7. The researcher intends to publish the research results in the form of a dissertation and research journals. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.

8. I will receive feedback in the form of an electronic copy regarding the results obtained during the study.

9. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my participation will be answered by the supervisor (Moyoi@unizulu.ac.za).

10. By signing this informed consent declaration I am not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies.

11. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I, _____have read the above information and confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand, and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask, and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurized in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

…… ……..

Participant's signature Date

ISIGABA SOKUGALA: ONGENELE NGOKUZIBOPHEZELA ISIVUMELWANO SESIBOPHEZELO

ISIVUMELWANO SESIBOPHEZELO

(ONGENELE)

Igama Locwaningo:Ukuhlola amasu okubhekana nezinkinga ezisetshenziswa ngabahwebi basemigwaqeni besifazane ngesikathi sobhubhane lwe-COVID-19, eMlathuze, KwaZulu, eNatali

U Makhosazane Nokwanda Amingoh Sithole Osuka emkhakheni wezindawo, Enyuvesi yase Zululand (Ongoye).

Uyitholile imvume yami yokuba ngizibandakanye nocwaningo olubhalwe ngenhla.

Inhloso yalolu Cwaningo uhlola amasu okubhekana nezinkinga ezisetshenziswa ngabahwebi ngabesifazane ngesikhathi sobhubhane lwe-COVID-19 eMhlathuze, Kwa-Zulu, eNatali.. Ukwazisa isivumelwano sokuzibophezelo engichazelwe ngakho ngolimi engiliqonda kahle.

Ngiyazi Ngalokhu:

1. Inhloso ngqangi yocwaningo ukuhlola amasu asetshenziswa ngabahwebi besifazane ngesikhathi sobhubhane lwe-COVID-19 eMhlathuze, Kwa-Zulu, eNatali.

2. Inyuvesi yase Zululand (Ongoye) inginikile inqubo ecacisa kabanzi ngo cwaningo nokuthi ngingacela ukubona isitifiketi esicacile.

3. Ngizobamba iqhaza elikhulu cwaningo ekuphenduleni yonke imbuzo ehlobene nezingxoxo zendawo nomphakathi wakithi, kanye nokuphendula noma imuphi umbuzo ngo cwaningo.

4. Ukuzibophezela kwami kulolu cwaningo ukuzinikela ngokuphelele noma ngasiphi isikhathi, engiyohoxisa ngaso, lokho ngiyokwenza ngaphandle kokubheka umthelela nokungaba imiphumela yakho emibi.

5. Angeke nginxephezelwe ngokubamba iqhaza kwami kulolu cwaningo kodwa konke okuphuma ephakatheni lami nokuyizindleka ngiyokhokhelwa ngakho.

6. Okuyoba nobungozi futhi ucwaningeni lwami, Ngiyazi Ngalokhu:

a) Okulandelayo okunobungozi okuhlobene nokubamba iqhaza kulolu cwaningo: Ukugcina izinto/ imininingwane eziyimfihlo neziyisifuba sami..

b) Isinyathelo esibanelayo engisithathile ukuvikela ubungozi: Izivumelwano eziyimfihlo.

c) Kunokungabi bikho kwethuba eliyingozi..

7. Umcwaningi angaba neqhinga lokushicilela umphumela wocwaningo ngendlela yendaba/ inkulumo yocwaningo iwephephandaba.

8. Ngiyothola impendulo ebhalwe ngomshini/ umqhafazo ephathelene nemiphumela engiyithole ngesikhathi ngiqhubheka nezifundo.

9. Noma yimiphi imbuzo engaba mayelana nocwaningo noma ukuzibophezela kwami iyobuzwa kumphakathi wami (Moyoi@unizulu.ac.za).

10. Nokusayina lokhu kokwazisa ngesibophezelo. Angeke ngizibabele umthetho ngezami izandla , nokuba namalungelo noma ikhuphi engaziduduza ngakho.

11. Okususelwe kokuyokho kuyokwaziswa ngokwesivumelwano sokuzibophezela kuyonikezwa mina, okuyinkho kuyogcinwa kunjengoba kunjalo kuhlale kuyisikhumbuso.

Mina, _____ ngokufunda yonke leminingwane engenhla futhi ngiyaqinisekisa ukuthi konke lokhu okungenhla okuchaziwe kimina ngolimi engiluqondayo ngiyakwazi futhi okuqukethwe yilomqulu webhuku.

Ngibuze yonke imibuzo ebengifisa ukuyibuza futhi engiphendulelwe ngokwenelisayo. Ngiyaqonda ngokugcwele okulindelekile kimina ngesikhathi socwaningo.

…… ……

Ukusayina kongenele Usuku

Interview guide: Focus group discussion, female street traders, kwaDlangezwa

1. Please describe the nature of the work you do.
2. For how long have you been doing this work?
3. What work did you do before? And how did you become a street trader?
4. What is your highest level of education?
5. Are there any special skills required in street trading?
6. If so where did you learn the skills?
7. Have you had any formal employment before? Please elaborate.
8. Where do you get the stock (goods/materials) for your business?
9. Do you think your identity (race, nationality) as a woman has played a role in your experiences as a street trader?
10. What difficulties/challenges/problems do you face in your work?
11. How has COVID-19 affected your trading activities?
12. What do you do to respond to the challenges you mentioned above?

Thank You. Your participation in the study through this interview is greatly appreciated.

Umhlahlandlela Wezingxoxo: Ingxoxo neqembu labadayisi basemgwaqweni besifazane kwaDlangezwa

1. Sicela uchaze uhlobo lomsebenzi owenzayo.

2. Unesikhathi esingakanani wenza lo msebenzi?

3. Ubuwenzani ngaphambilini? Futhi kwenzeke kanjani ugcine ususebenza lapha?

4.Ugcine kuliphi izinga lemfundo?

5. Ingabe akhona amakhono akhethekile adingekayo emsebenzini wakho?

6. Uma kunjalo uwafundephi amakhono?

7. Uke wawuthola umsebenzi osemthethweni? Sicela ucacise

8. Usithathaphi isitoko (izimpahla/impahla) yebhizinisi lakho?

9. Ingabe ucabanga ukuthi ubuwena (uhlanga, ubuzwe) njengowesifazane kube nendima ekuhlangenwe nakho kwakho njengomhwebi wasemgwaqweni?

10. Yibuphi ubunzima/izinselelo/izinkinga obhekana nazo emsebenzini wakho?

11. I-COVID-19 ibe namuphi umphumela emisebenzini yakho yokuhweba?

12. Wenzani ukuze ulwe nezinselele ozishilo ngenhla?

Appendix 3: Permission Letter

CITY OF
uMHLATHUZE
VISION INTO ACTION

[redacted]

www.umhlathuze.gov.za

Your ref:	**Our file ref:** **1526109**
Contact: V SINGH	**In response to DMS No:**
	Date: **19 April 2022**

ATTENTION: Ms MNA SITHOLE
UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Your letter dated 31 March 2022, that was sent to the Municipality requesting permission from Council to conduct your research has reference.

You are hereby granted permission to conduct your research within the City of uMhlathuze. In order to ensure that your study can be used to improve the City of uMhlathuze overall, you may be requested to do a presentation for Council's Management Team on your findings upon conclusion of your research.

Whilst the Municipality grants you permission to conduct this study, you would still have to get consent directly from the respondents that will be participating in your study. Please ensure that all your data gathering methods are compliant with all Covid - 19 protocols and regulations.

For any further information please contact Mr S Morajane (Head: Economic Development Facilitation) on 035 - 907 5430.

I wish you all the best with your research and await a bound copy of your dissertation upon completion of your studies.

Yours faithfully

Ms L KAYWOOD
DEPUTY MUNICIPAL MANAGER: CORPORATE SERVICES
DMS 1526109
20/04/2022

ALL CORRESPONDENCE MUST BE ADDRESSED TO THE MUNICIPAL MANAGER

Appendix 4: Ethical clearance certificate

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
(Reg No: UZREC 171110-030)

RESEARCH & INNOVATION
Website: http://www.unizulu.ac.za
Private Bag X1001
KwaDlangezwa 3886
Tel: 035 902 6273
Email: MangeleS@unizulu.ac.za/
MzaneM@unizulu.ac.za

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Certificate Number	**UZREC 171110-030 PGM 2021/241**						
Project Title	**Assessing coping strategies of female street traders during Covid-19 in the city of uMhlathuze, Kwazulu-Natal**						
Principal Researcher/ Investigator	M.N.A Sithole						
Supervisor and Co-supervisor	Dr I Moyo						
Department	Geography and Environmental Studies						
Faculty	Science and Agriculture						
Type of Risk	Medium Risk- Data collection from people						
Nature of Project	Honours/4th Year		**Master's**	x	Doctoral		Departmental

The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project. The Researcher may therefore commence with data collection as from the date of this Certificate, using the certificate number indicated above.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS: **(1) This certificate is valid for 1 year from the date of issue.**
(2) Principal researcher must provide an annual report to the UZREC in the prescribed format [due date- 25 April 2023]
(3) The UZREC must be informed immediately of any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the meeting.
(4) Under the Protection of Personal Information Act, 04 of 2013 ("POPIA"), researchers have a general legal duty to protect information they process. They must ensure the security and protection of any personal information processed through the research and provide a compliant and consistent approach to data protection. The information collected via interviews must be for research purposes only. No personal information such as opinions, views and academic background may be linked to the respondents' identity or shared with anyone for marketing purposes or otherwise.

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting research.

Prof. Nokuthula Kunene
Chairperson: University Research Ethics Committee
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Innovation
25 April 2022

CHAIRPERSON
UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND RESEARCH
ETHICS COMMITTEE (UZREC)
REG NO: UZREC 171110-030
25 -04- 2022
RESEARCH & INNOVATION OFFICE