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D E S I G N • B R A N D • B U S I N E S S

**An examination of the role of food retailers in alleviating the Covid-19 food crisis through effective food waste management: A Case Study on Woolworths Food Group South Africa**

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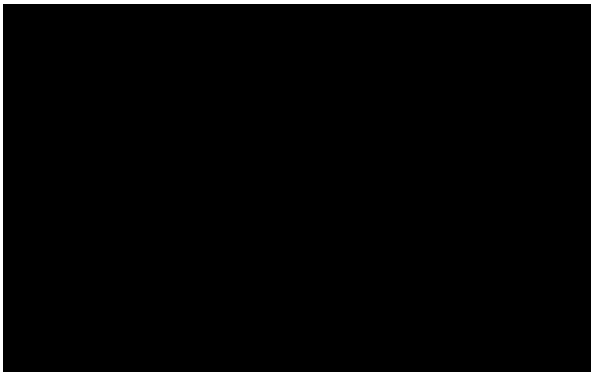
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## **ABSTRACT**

Food waste is a growing concern worldwide that is worsening as the global population and economy grow (Papargyropoulou, Lozano, Steinberger, Wright & bin Ujang, 2014). Looking at the current climate in South Africa and the harsh impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, food accessibility has worsened substantially, making poverty and hunger a larger concern than the virus itself (Investec, 2020). The excessive amount of food waste, alongside the food accessibility crisis, highlights that food waste management is essential to mitigate the high rates of hunger that have increased with the growth in unemployment as a result of Covid-19 (Matiase, 2020; 2oceansvibe, 2018).

Although food waste management is a topic that has already been explored, the drastic increase in hunger in South Africa as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic makes it imperative to explore how large food retailers like Woolworths have implemented food waste management methods to improve food accessibility at this time. This study suggests that investigating how Woolworths manages food waste will create greater awareness for Woolworths and similar companies to further their food waste management efforts in-store. Data were collected and analysed from the interview with two senior managers at Woolworths' head office as well as Woolworths' 2019 *Good Business Journey* report. Exploring and investigating ways in which food retailers implement food waste management practices will provide opportunities for Woolworths and other retailers to alleviate the food accessibility crisis in South Africa, which has worsened dramatically due to Covid-19.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the study on the food waste management methods that are implemented by Woolworths to alleviate the food accessibility crisis in South Africa, which has worsened due to the current Covid-19 pandemic. The research rationale outlining the reasons for writing the report, along with a background on the current food accessibility climate due to the Covid-19 pandemic, will be briefly introduced, accompanied by an introduction to food waste and food waste management. The direction the research took will be indicated and the research goals and objectives along with the research questions will be discussed. To conclude, an outline of each chapter of the research report will be presented.

### **1.2 Rationale**

While many studies have been conducted on the various methods of food waste management, food waste management to alleviate food accessibility in the time of a global pandemic has not been exhausted as a research area. Specifically, new studies should be conducted in the area of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has not only affected people on a global scale, but has had huge implications on impoverished South Africans who were already limited in terms of food accessibility.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic being a new and current issue, with little research having been done thus far on its impacts on society and local and global economies, there is an urgency to address the issue of food accessibility. A study into the different methods of food waste management and how they can alleviate food poverty in South Africa can assist large food retailers like Woolworths to contribute more to these communities and mitigate the food accessibility crisis in South Africa. A critical analysis of the different methods of food waste management can contribute to research on future food waste management practices that Woolworths can implement at the store level.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

South Africa's existing food crisis amongst impoverished citizens has been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Understanding the severity of the phenomenon and the extent to which food accessibility has worsened in South Africa, could allow food retailers, like Woolworths, to alleviate the food crisis by using food waste management to help curb the issue. The reason for using Woolworths as the chosen brand was due to the criteria that it met based on the Havas Group's meaningful brand criteria, i.e. it is a meaningful and sustainable brand (Havas Group, 2017). With a clear outlook on the meaningful brand criteria and Woolworth's existing contribution to sustainability, methods of food waste management were examined to see how Woolworths as a food retailer could implement further practices of food waste management in its stores. By making reference to the food waste hierarchy in the works of Papargyropoulou et al. (2014), this study explored food waste management methods that were already being implemented by Woolworths and could be added to these existing methods of sustainability.

Using an interpretivist research paradigm to guide the research, the extent to which Woolworths is implementing food waste management methods in-store during the Covid-19 pandemic was examined. An interpretivist research approach allowed the research to be carried out in a compassionate manner when considering the needs of impoverished South Africans. Using this type of research approach allowed the researcher to understand the extent of the food crisis and food waste issue by interviewing participants on their perceptions and knowledge of the situation (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

Based on this reasoning, the problem statement for this study follows:

The Covid-19 pandemic has worsened the existing food crisis amongst impoverished South Africans. In a time when food accessibility is limited, food waste is another looming concern that results in excessive waste throughout the food supply chain. If the excessive food waste of food retailers was converted and redistributed to communities in need, it is likely that large, influential food retail groups could alleviate the food crisis in South Africa.

## **1.4 Research Goal**

This section identifies the overall research goal for the study by outlining the research aims of the three key research objectives.

### **1.4.1 Research Aim**

This research paper followed an applied research practice that identified practical social issues that could be solved by identifying people's needs and addressing them through practice (Davis, 2014). The aim of this study was to understand the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the food crisis amongst impoverished South Africans, and to explain which methods of food waste management that Woolworths, as a meaningful brand, could use to alleviate the current crisis.

### **1.4.2 Research Objectives**

- The first objective of this research was to define meaningful brand criteria to ascertain how Woolworths, as a brand, meets those criteria. In order to understand these criteria, the food waste hierarchy was introduced so as to identify which methods of food waste management could be used to alleviate the effects of the food crisis in South Africa, which has worsened due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The second objective was to analyse the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on impoverished South Africans.
- The third objective was to use a case study to identify what current food waste management methods Woolworths has implemented at the store level, and ascertained to what extent Woolworths has responded to the worsening food crisis at the store level.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

### **1.5.1 Main Research Question**

How can Woolworths as a meaningful brand use food waste management to alleviate the impact that the current Covid-19 pandemic has had on the existing food crisis among impoverished South Africans?

### **1.5.2 Sub Research Question 1**

What are the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the food crisis in South Africa?

### **1.5.3 Sub Research Question 2**

What are the current food waste management methods Woolworths is using at the store level in relation to the food waste hierarchy, and to what extent is Woolworths responding at the store level to the food crisis that is being exacerbated by Covid-19?

## **1.6 Chapter Outline**

The chapters in this study address the following:

**Chapter one** introduced the concept of food waste and food waste management, and described the concerns regarding food accessibility in South Africa, which has worsened since the Covid-19 outbreak. The research goal was outlined along with a description of the aims and objectives of the study. The research questions were then set out, before an overview of each chapter was provided in order to give the reader a clear understanding of what the study is about.

**Chapter two** discusses in depth the implications of the Covid-19 global pandemic on food accessibility amongst impoverished South Africans. The urgency of addressing the food accessibility crisis is emphasised and the food waste hierarchy is introduced to explain the concept of food waste and food waste management. Woolworths is critiqued on Havas' meaningful brand criteria and the company's sustainable business practices are explained to justify the reason for the selection of the brand as the focus for the study.

**Chapter three** assesses various research paradigms in order to gain a clearer understanding as to which paradigm was best suited for the study. The interpretivist research paradigm was chosen to guide the study and the reasons for this choice are given.

**Chapter four** explicates the research design and the research methodology in accordance with the objectives of the research. The strategy followed was a qualitative research approach, which used interviews with Woolworths managers in order to identify which methods of food waste management are implemented at the store level across Woolworths stores in South Africa. The data were then categorised in order to find commonalities amongst the responses in order to gain insight as to what food waste management practices are implemented in accordance with the food waste hierarchy.

**Chapter five** contains the data analysis and presentation of the results. The design process of how the data were obtained is explained and common themes are provided, linking the data to the research question as well as the aim and objectives set for this study.

**Chapter six** discusses the results in-depth in relation to the food waste hierarchy discussed in the literature review in chapter two.

**Chapter seven** provides a brief conclusion to the study. Positive outcomes of the findings are noted, limitations in the findings along with appropriate solutions for these limitations are discussed, and recommendations for future studies are provided.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

Chapter one clarified the research question and the aims and objectives set for this study. The necessity of implementing food waste management as a means to curb the food accessibility crisis during a global pandemic was explained, and food waste and food waste management was briefly introduced. Chapter two will further elaborate on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on food accessibility as well as food waste and food waste management, and Woolworths will be discussed as the meaningful brand of choice to focus on.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to understand the meaning of food waste and to investigate which methods of food waste management can be used as a guideline for Woolworths to implement at the store level to mitigate the national food crisis in South Africa, which has been worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic. The strategy followed was to identify the effects of the current Covid-19 pandemic on impoverished South Africans in relation to food accessibility. The terms 'food waste' and 'food loss' will be introduced and the food waste hierarchy will be used as a guide to identify practices of food waste management. Once the severity of the food issue in South Africa is understood and the need for food waste management in food retailers is identified, the literature introduces Woolworths as the chosen brand for this study. Woolworths will be critiqued according to the meaningful brand criteria, and its sustainable business approach will be emphasised in order to justify why it was chosen as the brand for this study.

### **2.2 The Effects of Covid-19 on Impoverished South Africans**

Covid-19 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation on 30 January 2020. The disease manifested in Hubei in China and quickly spread throughout the world, leaving mass infection and death in its wake and instilling fear in people globally (Velavan & Meyer, 2020). As the Covid-19 pandemic lingers, research has confirmed that hunger is a growing concern amongst South Africans. Many South Africans working in the informal sector as car guards, spaza shop owners and barbers, to name a few, have lost their main or sole source of income as a result of the Covid-19 nationwide lockdown, which has restricted these businesses from operating. As a result, they are unable to feed their families and many South Africans who usually get their daily meals at work or at school are left without food. Research shows that the price of food in South Africa has increased by 7% since the nationwide lockdown was implemented at the end of March 2020. While there is no evidence that there is an actual shortage of food in the country, research has shown that the

accessibility to food has decreased with the increase in food prices and the growing unemployment rate (Grootes, 2020).

The alarming food accessibility crisis expresses the importance of addressing the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has not had an equal affect on South Africans (van de Berg, 2020). Prior to the pandemic, South Africa's high levels of inequality were already a concern, with neoliberalism as a result of post-apartheid policies leaving a large gap between low and high income earners (van de Berg, 2020; Subreenduth, 2013). Neoliberalism describes social injustice amongst the oppressed; in the case of South Africa, the majority black population were racialised during the time of Apartheid (Subreenduth, 2013). The ideology of neoliberalism promotes competition in society and encourages a societal hierarchy of the rich and the poor, based on what each individual earns, i.e. inequality in society is accepted (Tsheola & Makhudu, 2017). This inequality has only worsened as many low-income earners have lost their income or jobs as a result of the pandemic limiting them further financially. Since the pandemic reached South Africa poverty has increased, leaving 21% of the population with an annual income of less than R7,000. This means that the cost of living is impossible for many to afford (van de Berg, 2020). Subreenduth's (2013) research on the effects of neoliberalism in South Africa as a result of apartheid, on *Theorizing Social Justice Ambiguities in an Era of Neoliberalism: The Case of Postapartheid South Africa*, emphasises the harsh inequalities that remain.

Given these inequalities, the World Food Programme (WFP) gave a global warning in April 2020 regarding the impact that Covid-19 would have on food insecurity, making this a more dire concern than the virus itself and affecting over a million people since the outbreak (Beumont, 2020). Food insecurity amongst the unemployed and impoverished communities is a result of limited access to, and affordability of, food (Investec, 2020). Although the food supply chain is continuing as normal and there is a sufficient amount of food available, the strain on local food markets is on the rise (Investec, 2020). Supermarkets, informal food shops, spaza shops as well as food delivery trucks have been looted, leaving many people hungry and leading to social unrest. The elimination of the usual government-sponsored meals provided in schools have left millions of children without their daily meals due to schools being closed.

This is especially concerning as stunted growth and malnutrition are the results of these eliminated meals. Impoverished households that receive grant payouts often do not receive enough money to fully support their families, making affordability a key aspect of the food issue, hence the urgency to find a means to alleviate it (Tsheola & Makhudu, 2017; Investec, 2020).

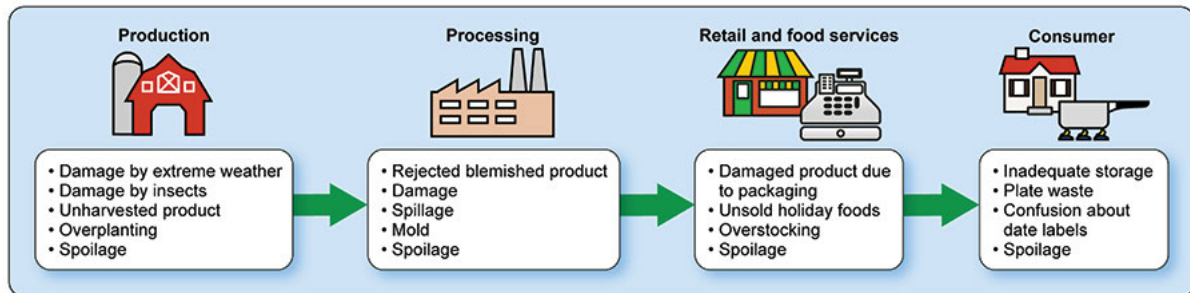
## **2.3 Food Waste Hierarchy**

Unlike food waste, which is considered discarded leftover food, food loss refers to the loss of food caused by spoilage during the production, processing and post-harvest phases in the food supply chain. Food waste generally relates to behavioural issues occurring during retail and consumer consumption phases, whereas food loss or spoilage most commonly occurs due to poor infrastructure, poor storage, extreme climates and poor harvesting (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014). Food waste continues to increase as the global population and economy grow, with millions of tons of food being disposed of in open landfills, causing a large increase in pollution and health issues (Paritosh, Kushwaha, Yadav, Pareek, Chawade & Vivekanand, 2017).

According to the World Wide Fund for Nature WWF, on average 31 million tonnes of food is produced each year in South Africa, of which a third goes to waste and 90% ends up in landfills. Of this figure, 70% of food waste is accounted for during the supply chain, including production, processing, retail and food services, before reaching the consumer, making the food supply chain a crucial factor in minimising food waste overall (WWF, 2017). Annually over three billion tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup> emissions pollute the atmosphere, and methods of incineration to manage the overflow of food waste in landfills result in further environmental and health issues (Paritosh et al., 2017).

Figure 2.1 below displays the reasons for food waste and food loss during different phases of the supply chain. Throughout all the phases, food spoilage is a large contributing factor to food waste. During the food production phase damage can be caused to food by extreme weather; insects, birds or rodents eating the crops; products not being harvested correctly; and/or overplanting of crops (Labs, 2019). During the food processing phase, rejected or damaged food products caused by poor

processing techniques, inadequate infrastructure, spillage and mould, lead to waste. As food products move to retail and food services like supermarkets, restaurants, hotels etc., food waste is caused by overstocking that leads to spoiling, damaged food due to faulty packaging, and unsold food products. Lastly, once the food is purchased by the consumer, food waste is caused by incorrect food storage, expiration date confusion and plate wastage (Labs, 2019).



**Figure 2.1** Food waste in the supply chain (Labs, 2019)

According to the WWF (2017), food waste is directly linked to nutritional waste, as the 44% of fruit and vegetables that land up as waste account for a large majority of nutrients in a person's diet (2oceansvibe, 2018). An average of 15% of the meat and dairy products that should make up a person's essential protein intake are also disposed of, wasting crucial vitamins, minerals and fatty acids (2oceansvibe, 2018). Due to poor nutrition and high levels of malnutrition in South Africa, nutritional waste caused by food waste is a vital factor to consider when looking at food waste management (WWF, 2017).

Finding a means to convert food waste and food surplus into something sustainable and reusable is vital to minimise the impact of food waste (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014). The challenge with food accessibility in South Africa begs the question: What methods of food waste management are being implemented by food retailers in order to help impoverished South Africans feed their families? Literature concerning methods of food waste management can be found in the works of Papargyropoulou et al. (2014), *Journey for Cleaner Production*, who explored methods of food waste management at different stages of the food supply chain – from the agricultural phase right through to the consumer at retail level.

The food waste hierarchy is a framework that is used to inform the appropriate management of food waste and food surplus throughout the food supply chain (FSC), starting at the agriculture stages of the supply chain right through to the consumption stage. The food waste hierarchy deals with five levels of management for food loss and food waste throughout the FSC, ranking from most to least favourable at the bottom of the hierarchy (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014). These food waste management approaches referred to in the food waste hierarchy will be used as a theoretical framework to examine the food waste management methods already implemented by Woolworths at the store level.

Figure 2.2 below shows that the most preferred option of waste management is prevention, with the least preferred being disposal. The framework prioritises the reduction of over supplying and over producing food in the first stage of prevention of food waste. During the agricultural and food production phases in the FSC, prevention includes accounting for food to suit nutritional needs and making sure that food is correctly safeguarded. In the retail and consumption stages, not over supplying food and accounting for the correct size portions suited to the consumer is a contribution to prevention (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014). Figure 2.3 shows that food surplus that is suitable for human consumption should either be prevented or re-used. As soon as food is unsuitable for consumption, it falls into the food waste category and is split into food waste that is unavoidable and waste that is not (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014).

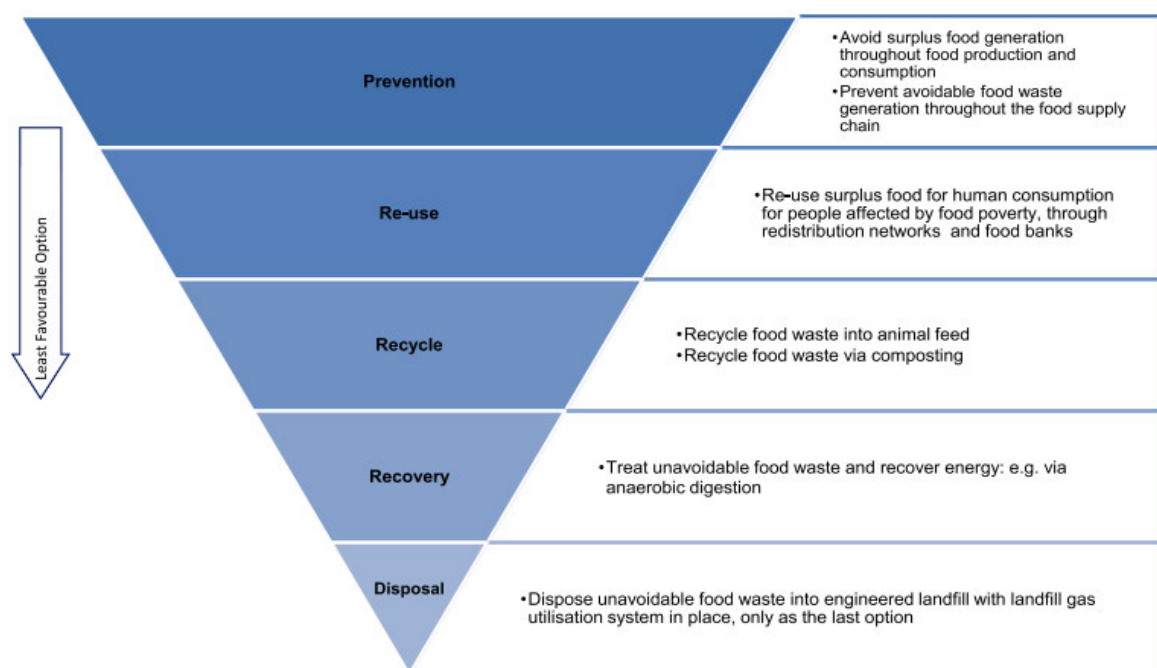
The easiest way to prevent avoidable food waste is at the beginning phases of the FSC by upskilling workers on the relevant technology, improving infrastructure, improving storage, and enhancing transportation and distribution methods. In the retail and consumption phases of the FSC, food waste can be prevented with a new way of thinking and behaving by increasing society's awareness of food waste and the negative impacts it has. Improving food labeling at a retail level can also help consumers to prevent food waste, as well as better the way food items are packaged to improve their shelf life (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014).

In addition, avoidable food waste can be re-used and recycled. Reusable food can be eaten the following day after being prepared, distributed to food banks, or donated

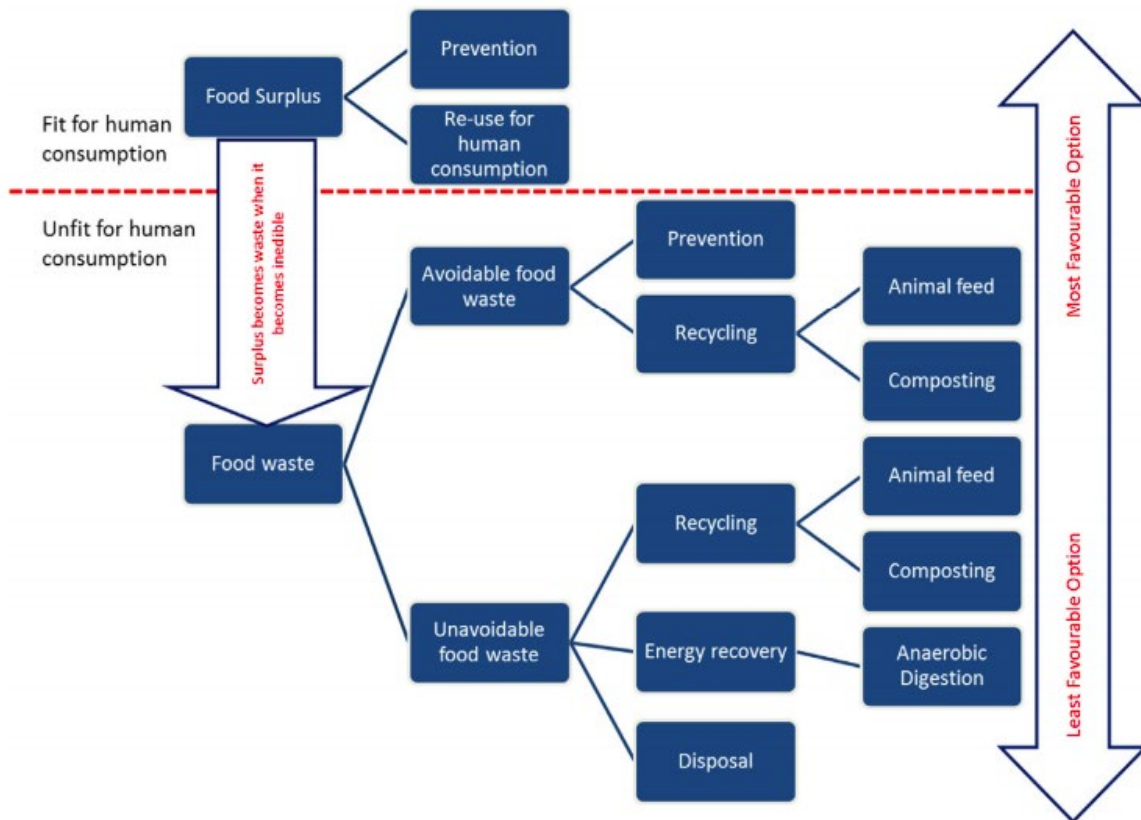
to people in communities that are affected by food poverty. Food waste can also be turned in to compost and animal feed. Unavoidable food waste can further be recycled and composted in the same way (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014).

Unavoidable food waste can go through a process to recover energy through anaerobic digestion, which is a process of food waste management that generates renewable energy and produces soil fertilisers as well as volatile fatty acids and alcohol. The reason for this process being a less favourable option is due to the instability of the process caused by technical problems that can have critical consequences for the economy (Li, Peng, Wang & Wu, 2018).

The last and most undesirable stage of the food waste hierarchy is the disposal phase. Unavoidable food waste that cannot undergo any of the other management methods are disposed of in landfills, which is what all the stages of the FSC should aim to avoid in order to minimise the large intake of waste in these landfills (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014). All of the above methods of food waste management are methods that were considered by Woolworths for their food waste management scheme in order to improve food accessibility in South Africa due to Covid-19.



**Figure 2.2** Food waste hierarchy framework (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014)



**Figure 2.3** Food surplus and waste framework (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014)

## 2.4 Woolworths as a Meaningful Brand

The context of this study was Woolworths. The intention was to identify and suggest methods of food waste management that could be implemented at the store level in order to alleviate the issue of food accessibility in South Africa, which has worsened due to Covid-19. For large food retailers like Woolworths, which has over 1,576 stores nationwide and internationally, excessive amounts of food is wasted or lost throughout their food supply chains. In spite of this, Woolworths is in a unique position to alleviate the excess amounts of food waste and food loss due to its large scale, which enables it to address the food waste issue that not only affects South Africa, but the world (Kor, Prabhu & Esposito, 2017). The company's direct link to each stage of the food chain, including farmers, processors, distributors and consumers, means that it has the ability to influence the impact of each stage on food waste (Kor, Prabhu & Esposito, 2017). Along with its unique position in the food retail market, Woolworths already identifies as a sustainable business (Woolworths

Holding Limited, 2020). It is for these reasons that Woolworths was chosen as the retail brand of choice for the focus of this study.

Woolworths was selected as a meaningful brand using the Havas meaningful brand criteria. Woolworths' "Good Business Journey" initiatives focus on improving the impact the company has on the environment, society and the economy, and tackles multiple areas that are having a negative impact in South Africa (Woolworths Holding Limited, 2020). The first way in which brands show meaning is through the personal impacts they have on people's lives. Meaningful brands give customers a reason to maintain loyalty to them by making their daily lives easier and more efficient, and by offering products or services that ultimately make them happier (Havas Group, 2017). Woolworths meets these criteria as it focuses on providing customers with healthier lifestyles by offering wholesome, healthy food options, as well as through convenient and efficient means of shopping online and in stores that saves consumers time (Woolworths Holding Limited, 2020).

The second criterion for meaningful brands is the collective impact they have on communities and the environment. In this criterion, communal groups and ethics are considered, workplaces are improved, and the environmental impact is concerned for (Havas Group, 2017). Woolworths focuses on its "Good Business Journey", which aims to improve sustainable approaches throughout the supply chain. In partnership with the World Wide Fund for Nature South Africa (WWF-SA), the two brands aim to enhance sustainable practices throughout the supply chain and through the products that are supplied to Woolworths. The partnership seeks to reduce the negative impact that occurs during distribution by exploring low carbon methods; reducing potential impacts during agricultural and aquacultural sourcing phases; and reducing the overall food waste through all the phases of the supply chain that negatively impact the environment (WWF, 2016). Along with its concern for sustainability through its supply chain, Woolworths has focused on other sustainable approaches that fit the meaningful brand criteria. To name a few, the organisation has implemented waste and recycling initiatives; sources products responsibly that also aim to support communities, for example Woolworths is a part of the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI) that globally assists farmers to sustainably growing cotton; creates eco-friendly packaging for many of their products that also include improved recycling instructions and food labeling to assist in food waste management; and aims to continuously develop and grow its staff and suppliers (Woolworths, 2020; WWF, 2019).

Woolworths also supports the EduPlant Programme, initiated by Food & Trees for Africa, to help improve food security in the country. The programme teaches students, teachers and members of under-resourced communities the basics of food gardening with the aim of assisting with feeding schemes (Woolworths, 2020).

Along with this approach to promoting food security, Woolworths donates its surplus foods that have reached their “sell by” dates but are still safe for human consumption. Woolworths donates this food to over 1,000 charities a year that are in need of food (Woolworths, [n.d]). Woolworths additionally provides financial aid to food donation organisations such as FoodForward SA, which is a South African company that aims to curb hunger among more than 14 million South Africans (FoodForward South Africa, 2015). FoodForward SA also addresses the issue of food waste by redistributing edible, quality surplus food that cannot be sold to the consumer to poorer South African communities in need. The FoodForward SA food bank takes surplus foods from different phases of the supply chain, including farmers, manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers, to distribute to beneficiary organisations.

Along with the collection and distribution of food, FoodForward SA has a digital platform, FoodShare, that reports and informs retail stores on available food surplus ready for collection by the food bank (FoodForward South Africa, 2015). In addition, in order to address the massive amount of agricultural food waste, FoodForward SA’s Second Harvest initiative makes edible food products like sauces and jams from donated food waste from different phases of the food supply chain. Farmers who donate their food waste are incentivised by receiving tax benefits for their donations and save costs they would usually lay down for dumping food. The food surplus is given to disadvantaged communities, including HIV/AIDS care facilities, orphanages, community feeding programmes, aged and frail care facilities, creches and schools, shelters and rehabilitation facilities, to name a few (FoodForward South Africa, 2015). Woolworths’ contribution to this initiative provides over 1.2 million wholesome meals a year to communities in need (BizCommunity, 2018). According to Woolworths’ head of corporate affairs, Zinzi Mgolodela, the partnership with FoodForward SA complements the food security initiatives that Woolworths already has in place (BizCommunity, 2018).

Lastly, meaningful brands should offer quality services and products as well as a working environment that is both safe and responsible, and they are most likely to be a leader in their industry (Havas Group, 2017). Since Woolworths opened in Cape Town in 1931, it has grown to become a leading retail group in South Africa. Woolworths also has a strong presence in New Zealand and Australia, and offers a variety of quality food, homeware, clothing and accessories (Woolworths, 2020). Woolworths prides itself on making a difference to its customers, its staff and the environment, thus in this regard, it falls into all the criteria for meaningful brands (Havas Group, 2017; Woolworths, 2020). For large food retailers environmental and social change is imperative to inspire other retailers and consumers to implement methods of food waste management to eliminate the overflow of food waste at the store level. The urgent need to involve food retailers in food waste management is especially important given the high number of impoverished South Africans who lack access to food during the current Covid-19 global pandemic.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

The objective of this chapter was to gain a clearer understanding of the importance of addressing food waste in order to alleviate the food accessibility crisis amongst impoverished South Africans, which has worsened with the Covid-19 pandemic. Food waste and food waste management were explained in-depth, understanding that the goal of food waste management is to reduce food waste and food loss throughout the food supply chain (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014). By using the food waste hierarchy as a guide when approaching this study, Woolworths' food waste management methods at the store level were explored with regards to the impact they can have on alleviating the food crisis in South Africa, particularly given the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **3. RESEARCH PARADIGM**

#### **3.1 Knowledge of the Research Paradigm**

In order to conduct the appropriate research to better understand how Woolworths as a retail brand can positively alleviate the food crisis in South Africa as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak, different paradigms were examined to determine which would be best suited for the study.

A research paradigm can be defined as a worldview that provides a direction for research to be carried out and interpreted. There are multiple paradigms that influence research, motivate the specific questions asked, and shape the processes to be followed by the researcher in order to get more accurate data. In situations where researchers cannot find evidence for their hypothesis or answer their research question, they implement a paradigm shift which is a new development in the research. When this occurs, new ways of thinking are formulated and new research is added onto existing research. There are three main research paradigms or research traditions that are used to assist in research – positivism, interpretivism and critical realism. These were analysed by the researcher in order to decide which paradigm was best suited for this study (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

Each of these paradigms has a level of philosophical reasoning, epistemological positioning, ontological positioning, metatheoretical positioning, methodological positioning, and axiological positioning (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014; Humphrey, 2013). Each of these positionings are introduced below:

- Epistemological positioning routes from the source of knowledge that already exists and can be a result of scientific reality (Humphrey, 2013).
- Ontological positioning stems from the study of existence to determine what is real (Davis, 2014).
- Metatheoretical positioning is founded on proven theories and exploring the depth it has on the given research (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

- Methodological positioning is the collection and analyses of data to gain knowledge and insight on the research and forms the basis of qualitative research, quantitative research or a combination of the two (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).
- Axiological positioning provides insight into why a study is being conducted (Humphrey, 2013).

When describing a paradigm or tradition, each of these levels or positions can be taken into account.

The positivist research paradigm is an approach that is used mostly in natural sciences; its purpose is to find reliable and valid information pertaining to relationships between variables in order to make objective predictions on the findings (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014; Humphrey, 2013). When looking at positivist research at an ontological level, realities are assumed to be as they exist through observational or measurable research; they are perceived to affect all people in the same way, disregarding all personal individual impacts. Positivists on an epistemological level will establish truth through empirical or objective evidence gathered through testing hypotheses by isolating variables. At a metatheoretical level, positivists believe in finding generalised theories that can be universally applied (Humphrey, 2013). Positivist methodology is a result of tested direct observation recorded as quantitative research in the form of statistical numbers and data. Lastly, on an axiological level, factual truths are highly valuable in gathering accurate information about reality in order to be able to control and predict the data (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014; Humphrey, 2013).

In contrast to positivism, interpretivism is a research tradition that is mostly used in social sciences. It is based on the premise that each person is unique and impacted differently by their surroundings, and therefore cannot be studied in a generalised manner like objects. Interpretivist researchers aim to uncover and understand human behaviour (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). At an ontological level, reality is subjective and is influenced by human interactions (Dean, 2018). At an epistemological level, common sense is a major factor in understanding human behaviour, and because of the importance of people's perceptions on reality, there can be no generalisations.

On a metatheoretical level, interpretivists analyse in-depth information in order to gain a better understanding of people's lives in particular contexts (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Methodologically, interpretivists will obtain information from mostly qualitative and subjective methods, in order to better understand the intention of the research (Dean, 2018). Lastly, on an axiological level, researchers find great value in the uniqueness of each individual and conduct research that is open to interpretation, i.e. they do not limit the research to definite truths (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014; Humphrey, 2013).

The third paradigm to be discussed is critical realism, which challenges the research of both positivists and interpretivists. Critical realists do not believe in the scientific facts or human perspectives of a scenario, but rather that both together form a clearer and more accurate understanding of a phenomenon by continuously questioning scenarios (Humphrey, 2013). Epistemologically, critical realists believe that knowledge should always be challenged as researchers' values skew the information received (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014; Humphrey, 2013). At an ontological position, critical realists understand that peoples' realities are influenced by society and that observational research is often false as they are only being exposed to what is on the surface (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Critical realists believe that circumstances may set people back, shaping the way they perceive reality. This metatheoretical position initiates change in order to better each individual's life (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Methodologically, critical realists understand that there are deeper meanings to, and various interpretations of, reality (Humphrey, 2013). To conclude, critical realists believe in using value research that promotes human equality and freedom (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

### **3.2 Justification of the Research Paradigm**

For the purpose of this research paper, an interpretivist approach was assessed to be the most suitable paradigm. The research purpose, i.e. to find ways in which Woolworths can assist in the Covid-19 food crisis in South Africa using food waste management approaches, required the researcher to be compassionate towards the subject of the research, in this case, underprivileged, impoverished communities in South Africa (Dean, 2018). The researcher was required to understand the perceived

reality of the situation and understand that each individual's needs might differ and therefore cannot be generalised. The effects of the Covid-19 outbreak on the food shortage crisis in South Africa needed to be identified in an empathetic way in order to fully understand the impacts it has on the impoverished in South Africa. The researcher needed to find ways in which Woolworths can help a large majority of affected people in South Africa by first understanding their needs on a deeper and more personal level, and then incorporating the food waste management methods discussed in the literature review into an initiative to help these communities (du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

In order to gain these insights and understanding, a qualitative research approach was used. This approach helped the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of how people are impacted by their environment and the effects of the social, political and economic situations in South Africa. The multiple interpretations of each individual's reality collectively assisted the researcher to generate recommendations for how to improve the situation. By using an interpretivist research approach, it was important for the researcher to understand the impact of Covid-19 on South Africans in relation to the pre-existing food accessibility crisis (Merriam, 2002). With the focus of the research being an investigation of the impacts that Covid-19 has had on impoverished South Africans with regards to food shortages, a case study was carried out to gather information on the realities and perceptions of the outbreak in order to provide recommendations for Woolworths to help curb the issue at hand (Merriam, 2002).

For this research study, all the theories and concepts created were built on data collected from the respondents. An inductive approach was used due to the limited existing information at hand, given that the Covid-19 outbreak is a new pandemic and there is insufficient information pertaining to the impact it has had on food shortages in South Africa. As a result of this interpretative qualitative approach, the data collected were highly descriptive, which assisted the researcher to put into context the reality of the phenomenon at hand (Merriam, 2002).

## **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the research design and methodology used in this study. The study followed an applied research approach that aimed to find solutions that can be applied in practice. This type of research approach identifies problems in their social contexts and offers recommendations that can bring about change (Davis, 2014). First, the qualitative research approach used in this study will be described, specifically the case study design. A setting of enquiry is provided, which outlines where the study took place. Additionally, this chapter discusses the convenience sampling method that was used to gather the data. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather data, which were analysed using an inductive content method analysis with line-by-line coding. The food waste hierarchy was used as a point of departure to analyse the data obtained in order to identify what methods of food waste management Woolworths has or could implement at store level.

### **4.2 Research Design**

This section explains the research design that was used for this study, i.e. an inductive qualitative research approach. This type of approach investigates individuals before generalising through observation, which is then interpreted on a deeper level of understanding in order to empathise with the subject (Johansson, 2019). Qualitative research is a research approach that is used to understand how humans interact within their environment during a particular scenario at a particular time. In this case, human experiences were used as data (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The research was carried out with an interpretivist perspective in order to understand how humans make sense of a particular experience within their social setting (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). The reason for using this type of research approach in this specific study was to investigate to what extent Woolworths, as a sustainable retail brand, is contributing to the alleviation of the food crisis in South Africa, which has worsened due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was important to understand the

impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on impoverished South Africans in order to identify methods of food waste management that could be implemented by Woolworths to alleviate the food crisis at hand. The qualitative research method helped the researcher to assess the positive impact that Woolworths can have during a global pandemic.

The research design for this study used a case study, with Woolworths as the selected retail brand under focus. Case studies are used to understand the meaning of human emotions in a particular scenario in order to identify boundaries of a phenomenon (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). The phenomenon in this study focused on methods of food waste management that could be implemented by Woolworths at store level during the Covid-19 pandemic. The extent to which Woolworths is already implementing practices of food waste management at store level was investigated. By using a case study, the researcher was able to gain a better understanding of how Woolworths is carrying out its sustainable business practice at store level. Further, the case study enabled her to identify different methods of food waste management that could be implemented to alleviate the food crisis in South Africa.

### **4.3 Setting of inquiry**

This section describes the setting in which the study was completed and where the research took place. The setting of inquiry was the controlled environment of the researcher's home through the video calling platform, Microsoft Teams. This research environment was used to conduct the study due to the strict "social distancing" regulations implemented by the South African government during the Covid-19 global pandemic. According to a report by the South African Health Department, social distancing is a term used to describe the physical distance between people in public settings (Pieterse, 2020). This need to physically distance limited the researcher from holding in-person interviews with participants and restricted the interviews to online platforms. Along with the virtual interviews, Woolworths Holding Limited company reports were accessed through the internet at the researcher's home setting, making the research collection both convenient and accessible.

#### **4.4 Sampling Plan**

This section explains the sampling method that was used to conduct this study. The sampling method used to conduct this research was a non-probability convenience sampling. Non-probability sampling refers to sampling methods that deviate from the principles of probability sampling, which includes all units of the population as positive and known probabilities (Vehovar, Toepoel & Steinmetz, 2016). The purpose of sampling in qualitative studies is to collect human insights as data in order to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (Thompson, 1999). Convenience sampling is a qualitative method of data collection; it is a cost and time effective approach that incorporates participants who are easily accessible into the study, often in convenient locations including malls and stores (Vehovar, Toepoel & Steinmetz, 2016). In light of this, convenience sampling was used as the researcher wanted to interview Woolworths managers to gather data for this study. Due to social distancing restrictions, Woolworths store managers redirected the research to their head office managers, who were reached initially through LinkedIn and then via email. Being able to contact these managers through the LinkedIn platform made them convenient and readily accessible participants.

Sample sizes in qualitative research studies are generally small, yet adequately provide the relevant answers to the research question. Due to the intention of the study being to understand what methods of food waste management are implemented in Woolworths stores in South Africa, simple questions could be asked, thus only a single digit sample size was necessary (Marshall, 1996). Due to the external factor of social distancing restrictions limiting the researcher's physical access to participants, two Woolworths managers at head office in charge of overseeing store managers and all of the store protocols were interviewed on the same video call. This was an unforeseen limitation due to the Covid-19 pandemic in South Africa. Due to the sample size being very small, data were verified through Woolworths' public business reports.

## **4.5 Data Collection Methods**

This section explains the data collection methods that were used in order to gather data for this study. Due to the nature of this study, interviews were used to gather primary data. The interview was conducted online with two managers at Woolworths head office in Cape Town, South Africa in the same interview. The in-depth interview was semi-structured in order that the researcher could learn more about the views and knowledge of the participants. Open-ended questions in the form of a casual conversation were asked (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Using this form of interview style allowed the researcher to probe the participants during the interview in order to explore their perceptions towards the phenomenon at hand (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).

Unlike structured interviews, where set questions are strictly used, semi-structured interviews utilise a more flexible approach. In the semi-structured interview, the interviewer used a few questions as a guideline to steer the interview in a certain direction in order to achieve the desired response (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). Question guidelines were used throughout the interview with the participants to ensure that the necessary information was obtained. The questions aimed to investigate the participants' knowledge of practices put in place by Woolworths at the store level to understand how the company is contributing to food waste management. The researcher set out to investigate what methods of food waste management are implemented in Woolworths stores and how they are used to help impoverished South Africans. The interview discussion guide can be found in Appendix D.

In order to ensure that the data gained from the interviewees could be cross-checked, the researcher also accessed Woolworths' business reports to verify the data collected. These business reports are made available to the public on the Woolworths Holdings Limited website.

## **4.6 Conclusion**

To conclude, the research approach was utilised to gather data and insights into the food waste management methods used in-store at Woolworths retail stores in South Africa. A qualitative research design approach was used to guide the study through means of a case study, with Woolworths as the focus. Through an interview with two Woolworths managers at their head office in Cape Town, food waste management methods being used in-store at different Woolworths branches around South Africa were examined. Both the information obtained through the interviews as well as information from Woolworths' business reports were used to gain insight into the food waste management methods implemented by Woolworths.

## **5. DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter explains the data analysis process and how the data were sorted in order to interpret the findings with a content method of analysis. Data analysis refers to the collection and sorting of data in order to make sense of the findings (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). In this study, both the interviewees were recorded with their consent using a mobile recording device, and the conversation was transcribed in order for the researcher to clearly analyse the data. Transcribing data refers to the conversion of verbal information into a written format that can be systematically analysed. In this case, the interview was transcribed verbatim so that the researcher could analyse it in text form (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014).

### **5.2 Data Analysis**

The data analysis utilised content analysis with an inductive approach, where the researcher developed themes from specific data that emerged during the research process. These themes were used as a means to compare the information obtained and form a theoretical framework for the study. This process of theme formation is referred to as coding, where coding units, themes or concepts of similarity are grouped together to find relationships (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). For the purpose of this study, line-by-line coding was used to sort the data. The transcribed data (Appendix E) was first put into a table form with each question and interview response alongside it, along with a column of information obtained from the business reports to back up the data. This was done to sort the information from the transcription into a more concise manner for the researcher to analyse. This table form can be found under Appendix F. Using this microanalysis form of coding, the researcher then read the transcribed text line-by-line and highlighted concepts and words that related to each method of waste management in a different colour (pink = level one (prevention), orange = level two (re-use), green = level three (recycle), blue = level four (recovery) and purple = level five (disposal). Lastly, protocols,

procedures and other sustainable practices were highlighted in magenta. These concepts were then categorised into their respective themes or levels. The theme formation for this study was derived from the different methods of food waste management in the food waste hierarchy, namely: prevention, re-use, recycle, recovery and disposal. Following the coding of the data obtained, themes of information were interpreted and analysed using theoretical constructs, as well as the researcher's common sense and empathy. In order to avoid bias when interpreting the data, the researcher considered the political, social and cultural environments of the participants (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014).

Once the text was thoroughly analysed and all the concepts were highlighted, each concept was placed in a table under the respective food waste management practices or themes (see Appendix C). Prevention, the first and most preferred method of food waste management, incorporated all waste management practices that safeguard food and correctly portion food to ensure there is no over supply of food resulting in waste. Concepts that focus on the redistribution of surplus food were categorised under the re-use theme. Following this, concepts that focus on repurposing waste that is not suitable for human consumption fell under the recycle theme. Unavoidable food waste that is not safe for human consumption and is able to be converted into energy was categorised under the recovery theme. Lastly, unavoidable food waste that is not fit for human consumption and not able to be converted fell under the disposal theme (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014). An example of the themes and sub-themes is provided in Table 5.1 below.

### **5.3 Presentation of results**

This section groups the common themes from the interview and the Woolworths business reports into the sub-themes that fall under each level of food waste management according to the food waste hierarchy. The below table categorises the different practices of food waste management by level, ranking from most preferred to least preferred. Each of these different food waste management practices are accompanied by the protocols and practices that Woolworths implements at store level to ensure safe and reliable business practices when handling surplus food.

**Table 5.1** Phase Two of the Data Analysis

| <b>LEVEL OF FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT</b> | <b>WOOLWORTHS FOOD WASTE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES</b>                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>THEME</b>                          | <b>SUB-THEME</b>                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>PREVENTION</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partnerships with companies that implement sustainable business practice throughout the FSC</li><li>• Conscious recycling labels</li></ul> |
| <b>RE-USE</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Donations of surplus foods</li><li>• Re-sale of surplus food at discounted rates</li><li>• Partnerships</li></ul>                          |
| <b>RECYCLE</b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partnerships with companies that recycle inedible food waste</li></ul>                                                                     |
| <b>RECOVERY</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partnerships with companies that recover inedible food waste</li></ul>                                                                     |
| <b>DISPOSAL</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partnerships with companies that collect and dispose of food waste</li></ul>                                                               |

## **5.4 Conclusion**

The objective of this chapter was to lay out all the findings based on the data in order to identify which methods of food waste management, in relation to the food waste hierarchy, are used by Woolworths. Through the content method of analysis, the data were recorded, transcribed and categorised in table form under the respective themes according to the food waste hierarchy.

## **6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this section is to discuss the research results that emerged from the data collection and analysis (as discussed in chapter 5) with regards to the methods of food waste management implemented by Woolworths at store level. As noted in section 5.3, the food waste management methods implemented by Woolworths were categorised and analysed as per the levels of waste management of the food waste hierarchy, namely prevention, re-use, recycle, recovery and disposal. These levels of food waste management serve as the main themes in this study. Table 5.1 in chapter 5 captured the main themes and respective methods of food waste management implemented by Woolworths in stores as sub-themes, which will be discussed in section 6.2 below.

### **6.2 Discussion of results**

This section of the findings discusses the different methods of food waste management that fall under each of the levels of the food waste hierarchy captured in Table 5.1. The five themes will be discussed in-depth using information gathered from the interview with Woolworths managers as well as the business reports. Along with the methods of food waste management implemented at Woolworths stores, the interviewees were also questioned regarding methods of food waste management and practices that are being used at stores to assist with food accessibility in impoverished communities during the Covid-19 outbreak. They were also questioned on other sustainable business practices implemented at store level.

The respondents were first asked to elaborate on what procedures are in place for removing food that has reached its sell-by-date in stores. In response to this question, the interviewees reassured the researcher that before any food waste management methods are implemented at store level, all food products that have reached their sell-by-date or use-by-date, as well as damaged items, are immediately

removed from the sales floor and isolated in the back area of the store, however none of these products are destroyed as some items might still be deemed fit for human consumption (Interviewee 1, 2020). According to the 2019 *Good Business Journey* report, Woolworths' focus as a large food retailer is on implementing waste management methods that can ultimately reduce the large amounts of waste that end up in landfills, which has been one of the company's great successes to date (Woolworths Holdings Limited, 2019). According to Interviewee 2 (2020), following strict protocols in waste management is crucial for meeting Woolworths' quality standards and brand reputation; the company's aim as a brand is to provide the same high quality to all end users. The following themes were derived from the analysis according to the food waste hierarchy in order to categorise the different food waste management procedures.

### **6.2.1 Prevention**

Level one of the food waste hierarchy focuses on the prevention of food waste; this is the most preferred option for waste management. At this level of waste management, methods include reducing the over-production and supply of food in the beginning stages (agricultural and production phases) of the food supply chain (FSC). At the retail and consumption stages of the FSC, in order to prevent food waste, over-supplying needs to be carefully monitored and reduced, and portion sizes need to be considered to suit consumer needs so as not to have excess avoidable food waste (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014). According to the food surplus and waste framework in Figure 2.3, surplus food that is still suitable for human consumption should either be prevented or re-used (Papargyropoulou et.al, 2014). The following practices for the prevention of food waste were identified in the interview with the Woolworths managers as well as the Woolworths 2019 *Good Business Journey* report. These practices include implementing sustainable business practices throughout the FSC by partnering with responsible suppliers who follow food waste practices, and making sure that recycling labels on food items are clear.

### **6.2.1.1 Partnerships with companies that implement sustainable business practices throughout the FSC**

According to the 2019 *Good Business Journey* Report, Woolworths has partnered with the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa (CGCSA) and the Department of Trade and Industry (dti) in order to ensure that sustainable business practices are carried out throughout all stages of the FSC to reduce food loss and food waste (Woolworths Holdings Limited, 2019). In order for Woolworths to ensure that its partners follow the same protocols and business ethics, partners need to comply with Woolworths' "Code of Conduct and Good Business Journey" (Woolworths Holdings Limited, 2019: 12). According to Interviewee 2 (2020), Woolworths' strict protocols ensure that only partners that can guarantee the same ethical consideration and brand culture are considered. These partnerships ensure that food loss and waste are carefully considered and managed throughout the FSC.

### **6.2.1.2 Conscious recycling labels**

Another way in which Woolworths is mitigating food surplus at the store level is by including unambiguous recycling labels for consumers to carry out food waste management even after the food is bought (Woolworths Holdings Limited, 2019). As mentioned in the literature, improving the food labelling at store level can help consumers to prevent food waste ending up in landfills once products are purchased to maintain sustainable habits (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014).

### **6.2.2 Re-use**

Level two of the food waste hierarchy looks to re-use surplus food that is still fit for human consumption. This food can be used to mitigate food shortages amongst poverty-stricken communities and can be redistributed to food banks and charity organisations (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014). The information gathered shows the methods that Woolworths utilises to re-use surplus food from its stores, including

donations, re-sale at discounted rates, and partnerships with redistribution networks. It is important to note that according to Interviewee 2 (2020), all practices involving the re-use of surplus food are handled by store managers and fall under the process of stock management. Training is provided to store managers and store staff who provide this function in stores (Interviewee 2, 2020). Woolworths' training department is dedicated to implementing ongoing training on "ethical sourcing topics" amongst suppliers and staff members, in order to keep them informed and up-to-date with the latest procedures that Woolworths implements. Store staff are also continuously involved in community programmes that inform and teach them about the importance of sustainable and meaningful business practices (Woolworths Holdings Limited, 2019). This thorough staff training ensures that staff are correctly informed on the correct procedures and handling of surplus food in stores.

#### **6.2.2.1 Donations of surplus food**

The study found that Woolworths largely focuses on alleviating food insecurity and hunger in the country by redistributing surplus food to local communities in need (Woolworths Holding Limited, 2019). According to Interviewee 2 (2020), consumable food that has reached its sell-by-date and been removed from the sales floor is donated to local charity organisations and communities on a daily basis. According to Interviewee 1 (2020), removing the surplus food from the sales floor and redistributing it as soon as possible is Woolworths' main priority to ensure that food that is donated is still fit for human consumption. According to the 2019 *Good Business Journey* report, R611 million worth of surplus food was donated by Woolworths in 2019, with R570 million of surplus food being donated the year before (Woolworths Holdings Limited, 2019).

Woolworths' devotion to meeting the societal and economic needs of the local communities in which the stores operate has contributed to R3.5 billion of financial aid to these communities in the form of surplus food (Woolworths Holdings Limited, 2019). According to Interviewee 1 (2020), an estimated 1,400 charity organisations collect surplus food from Woolworths stores. Interviewee 1 (2020) mentioned that

Woolworths has "...about 400 stores in our organisation, of which about 330 of them donate surplus food" due to these stores being food stores. Interviewee 2 stated that Woolworths sees these donations as a part of the company "giving back to the communities" in which it trades. Each store is encouraged to find its preferred charity organisation or local community to donate surplus food to, enabling store staff to connect on a more personal level with these communities or organisations and build long-term relationships (Interviewee 2, 2020). These communities are approved if they meet the criteria in Woolworths' policies and procedures for surplus food donations (Interviewee 2, 2020). According to Interviewee 1 (2020), items on the sales floor with damaged packaging are resealed and donated if the food is not spoiled, is still edible, and meets Woolworths' quality and standards.

In alignment with the literature, donating surplus food that is still fit for human consumption is an important contributing factor in mitigating food poverty amongst impoverished communities. This method of food waste management has a direct impact on the current food accessibility in South Africa (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014).

#### **6.2.2.2 Re-sale of surplus food at discounted rates**

According to Interviewee 2 (2020), food that is removed from store shelves that has reached its sell-by-date is first offered to store staff at a discounted sale price before being donated. This staff benefit was implemented because according to Interviewee 2 (2020), "...charity begins at home..."; there is a need to look inward in a company like Woolworths as many of the staff members come from poverty stricken communities that could also benefit from this food. This process, along with the removal of food surplus from shelves, the isolation and inspection of the food and donations, is all handled by the store managers of each branch. These surplus food sales take place in the "waste shop" within Woolworths stores, where staff can purchase this food at discounted rates during their shifts. Whatever food is not bought and is still fit for human consumption according to the best-before-date, is donated (Interviewee 2, 2020).

As a means to encourage staff to achieve work goals, an “energizer programme” has been put in place that recognises commendable work ethic from staff and rewards them with a surplus food voucher that can be redeemed at the waste shop so that staff can “take something home to their families” (Interviewee 2, 2020). This resale of surplus food at discounted prices showed it had a positive impact on employees as they expressed happiness about the service offering and struggled without it when it was restricted during lockdown due to Covid-19 regulations (Interviewee 2, 2020).

### **6.2.2.3 Partnerships**

The data collected also showed that Woolworths partners with redistribution companies like FoodForward SA, which collects surplus food and redistributes the edible food to communities and charities in need (Woolworths Holdings Limited, 2019). Over the last three years, Woolworths has also donated R3 million in funds to FoodForward SA to curb food insecurity in South Africa. This donation has contributed 1.2 million meals per year to people in need (Woolworths Holdings Limited, 2019).

According to the literature, FoodForward SA is a surplus food redistribution organisation that addresses issues of food waste and food accessibility by redistributing edible surplus food, which is unable to be sold to consumers, to impoverished South Africans and charity organisations in need. The communities that FoodForward SA supports include disadvantaged communities such as orphanages, community food programmes, schools and shelters (FoodForward South Africa, 2015).

### **6.2.3 Recycle**

Level three of the food waste hierarchy explores different practices of recycling food waste that is both avoidable and unavoidable. For example, recycled food waste can be turned into compost or animal feed (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014). In Woolworths

stores, the recycling of food waste is outsourced through partners who handle the recycling process (Interviewee 2, 2020).

#### **6.2.3.1 Partnerships with companies that recycle inedible food waste**

Due to Woolworths outsourcing its recycling process for food waste, the company partners with organisations that will collect the inedible food waste and manage the practice responsibly (Interviewee 2). According to Interviewee 2 (2020), an example of this type of organisation is based in Johannesburg, which collects the left-over chicken fat from the chicken ovens in stores and converts it into soap that can be resold to the public.

#### **6.2.4 Recovery**

Level four of the food waste hierarchy finds ways of recovering inedible food waste through anaerobic digestion, which converts food waste into renewable energy, soil fertilisers, fatty acids and alcohol. This process of food waste management is less common and desirable due to the technicality and cost of the process, however (Li, Peng, Wang & Wu, 2018). Along with food waste recycling, Woolworths also outsources its food waste recovery to partner companies that recover inedible food waste (Interviewee 2, 2020).

##### **6.2.4.1 Partnerships with companies that recover inedible food waste**

Woolworths partners with responsible and environmentally conscious companies that collect food waste from stores and recover the waste. For example, similar to the soap manufacturer, another partner of Woolworths' collects the chicken fat from the chicken ovens in stores and converts it into biofuel (Interviewee 2, 2020).

### **6.2.5 Disposal**

Level five is the least favoured method of food waste management on the food waste hierarchy, as it results in unavoidable food waste being disposed of in landfills (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014). Woolworths' dedication to avoiding food ending up in landfills means that the company uses this method of management as the last resort (Woolworths Holdings Limited, 2019). It is important to note that although food that has reached its best-before-date might still be edible for a few days after expiration, no food past its sell-by-date is sold or donated. This food is rather collected by partnering organisations that responsibly dispose of this food waste (Interviewee 2, 2020). Food that has expired or is spoiled and cannot be resealed and sold to staff or donated is not disposed of in landfills, but is "destroyed responsibly" through a "safety destruction process" or "disposal process", according to Interviewee 1 (2020).

#### **6.2.5.1 Partnerships with companies that collect and dispose of food waste**

Woolworths partners with responsible disposal companies that collect food waste regularly (Interviewee 2, 2020). According to Interviewee 2 (2020), some of the food waste is disposed of in municipal dumps and destroyed by the municipality, in which case Woolworths receives a certificate of destruction. Only food that is not fit for human or animal consumption, and which is unable to be recycled or recovered, ends up going through this disposal process.

### **6.3 Food waste practices implemented during Covid-19**

In light of the current Covid-19 pandemic, literature has shown the dire need to mitigate the food accessibility crisis in South Africa (Investec, 2020). Woolworths is constantly implementing innovative campaigns to give back to communities in need;

according to Interviewee 1 (2020), there are "...various initiatives and campaigns in stores right now (during the Covid-19 pandemic), where we (Woolworths) invite the customer to donate". Currently, Woolworths' "customer trolley donation campaign" allows customers to buy non-perishable products and drop them off in the donation trolley at the entrance to any Woolworths store (Interviewee 1, 2020). An example of the campaign can be seen in Figure 6.1 below, which was photographed by the researcher outside the Woolworths store in Hyde Park Shopping Centre, Johannesburg. Interviewee 1 (2020) referred to this campaign as a "give back campaign", and mentioned that for this particular campaign the company has partnered with the Gift of the Givers to collect and donate this food to vulnerable communities. Along with customer donations, customers can also make Snapscan donations to this fund at the till when they pay (Interviewee 1, 2020).



**Figure 6.1** Woolworths "Customer Trolley Donation" (Ovadia, 2020)

Along with the current campaign in stores, Woolworths has also partnered with Gift of the Givers and Community Action Network (CAN) to assist companies that have not qualified for an Essential Service permit during the Covid-19 lockdown to collect and redistribute surplus food (Interviewee 2, 2020).

## **6.4 Other sustainable business practices at store level**

Along with the food waste management methods and donation campaigns that Woolworths implements at store level, the organisation is also in the process of

phasing out single use plastic bags by encouraging customers to purchase and use reusable, low-cost shopping bags. This, along with Woolworths' efforts to reduce water consumption in stores (which has dropped 55.6% since 2007), is another sustainable business practice that Woolworths implements in its stores (Woolworths Holdings Limited, 2019).

## **6.5 Conclusions**

This chapter described all the methods of food waste management that are implemented by Woolworths at the store level, along with some of the other sustainable business practices that the company focuses on. Looking at all five levels of the food waste hierarchy, this chapter identified that Woolworths' biggest focus regarding food waste management at the store level is on re-use and redistribution. Where food waste is unavoidable, Woolworths has partnered with other sustainably conscious companies that responsibly recycle, recover or dispose of this waste.

## **7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 Introduction**

In this final chapter, the ethical considerations that were taken into account during the study will be discussed. The limitations of the study are also detailed, as are the difficulties the researcher faced during the research process. Trustworthiness is explored, with the methods used to ensure the trustworthiness and reliability of the study explained. To conclude, recommendations for further studies are discussed based on the research findings.

### **7.2 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations are a fundamental part of conducting research. Ethics are important to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of participants, should individuals not wish to disclose their identity with the information they provide. Ethical clearance is the process through which a researcher is able to ensure the protection and privacy of the research participants. Gaining informed consent from participants allows researchers to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of participants, avoids conflicts of interest for participants, avoids deception and misunderstanding of the research, and provides participants with a clear and concise debriefing of the research topic (Smythe & Murray, 2000).

To ensure ethical research practice for this study, the researcher's supervisor provided ethical clearance prior to conducting the interviews, to confirm that the study would not harm any of the participants involved. This ethical clearance letter can be found in Appendix G. In light of the researcher using human subjects for this research process, granted consent from the participants was critical in order to ensure that all subjects are protected correctly. With the research method being interviews with Woolworths managers, allowing the participants the option to remain anonymous was crucial, as they may have been reluctant to disclose information for fear of conflicts arising with the Woolworths group (Beauchamp, 2011). The process of informed consent with the participants was implemented before the interview was

conducted, which ensured that they were fully apprised of the purpose of the research and understood that they could withdraw from the interview at any time. Honouring the rights of interviewees makes for an ethical research approach (Beauchamp, 2011).

In order to ensure the confidentiality of the participants in this study, each participant was required to sign a consent form to approve their participation in the interview. This ethical consent form, which was given to the participants prior to the interview, gave a clear and concise explanation of the study and outline the contribution of the interviewees to the research. Although the participants were required to state their names on the consent form, confidentiality has been assured by referring to 'participants' and 'interviewees', i.e. names are not used. Their names are also blacked out on the consent forms and on the transcription to ensure that their confidentiality is maintained throughout. The signed ethical consent forms can be found under Appendix B. Appendix A contains an ethics checklist that the researcher was required to complete prior to the interview process to ensure that ethics protocol would be followed.

As the interview was done through video conferencing on Microsoft Teams, the interviewees were also required to sign a recording consent form, which stated that the participants were clearly aware that the researcher would record the full interview and use quotes from the interview in the resulting research. This consent form can be found in Appendix C.

With the interview being semi-structured, the interview discussion guide was also provided to the participants prior to the interview to give them a clear understanding of what type of questions would be asked during the interview. Along with ethical considerations pertaining to the primary research, all secondary research is clearly and correctly acknowledged and referenced according to the IIE's referencing handbook.

### **7.3 Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of a study are characterised by the research design and methodology approaches. Limitations refer to constraints to practice, generalisations, methods of research, and findings of the research (Price & Murnam, 2004). In light of the study being a qualitative research study, there were limitations that need to be considered pertaining to this research approach.

Initially, the interviewer set out to interview seven store managers across Johannesburg stores to obtain the necessary data. However, due to the Covid-19 global pandemic, strict social distancing practices have been put in place in South Africa restricting direct contact with people, making this the largest limitation for the study due to the nature of the interviews being with human subjects (Pieterse, 2020). Finding a solution to this limitation resulted in the use of video conferencing call interviews with managers at head office instead of interviewing store managers in face-to-face interviews.

Another limitation for the study was the use of a small sample size, making the generalisation of information difficult. However, in saying that, using a small sample also provided more comprehensive and personal feedback (USC Libraries, 2020). Although a small sample size of two participants was used, the interview participants held managerial positions at head office, and implement all the protocols and procedures at store level, making the information provided credible and applicable to all Woolworths stores countrywide.

### **7.4 Trustworthiness**

Due to the nature of the research being a qualitative study, the validity and reliability of the study can be measured by its trustworthiness. In order to ensure trustworthiness, “credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability” were considered (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014: 257).

In order to ensure credibility and accuracy, the participants selected were head office based and managed all of the Woolworths store managers countrywide, giving them the authority to speak on behalf of the brand and the procedures in stores. Using these high level participants to take part in the interview ensured that the information gathered was applicable across the Woolworths stores and accurate. The researcher also spent enough time with the participants to gain insight into the research topic, as well as to gain a clear idea on their perceptions of the topic (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). The interview with the participants lasted for just under 40 minutes, at which point the data obtained reached saturation.

Transferability was ensured by applying the data with a general approach, i.e. the participants' responses were not generalised (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). As Woolworths is a large franchise, each branch should be implementing the same food waste management practices, ensuring transferability in the study. The standard procedures followed by all Woolworths branches was also confirmed by the interview participants.

Ensuring dependability integrated methods of data collection and analysis with the theory obtained to ensure that the findings are consistent across the interview and the reports used to gather the data (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014). To ensure that the data obtained from the interview was dependable, all information gathered was supported with information from the 2019 *Good Business Journey* report, an annual Woolworths Holding Limited report that is available to the public. Lastly, confirmability was ensured through a coherent flow of the data throughout the research process (Bezuidenhout & Cronje, 2014).

The limitations of the study created challenges that allowed the researcher to further explore the research topic. These limitations formed the basis of the section to follow, i.e. recommendations which will advise the reader on how Woolworths can further invest in additional methods of food waste management to alleviate food accessibility in the time of Covid-19.

## **7.5 Recommendations**

This section offers recommendations for further studies that are suggested based on the findings, processes and limitations encountered in this study. The first recommendation is made regarding the difficulties encountered due to Covid-19 social distancing restrictions, which limited the researcher from getting the perspectives of store staff. Interviewing store staff to understand their perspectives on, and knowledge of, food waste management practices in stores is important to understand how well these store employees are informed on the matter, as well as how they perceive food waste. Although accurate and sufficient information was gathered on the practices of food waste management in stores countrywide by interviewing two senior managers at head office, the extent to which these practices are implemented at the store level was not confirmed as the researcher was not able to get the perspective of the store managers.

Interviewee 1 (2020) mentioned that because the store managers have built strong relationships with the charities and communities to which they donate surplus food, they have more knowledge about how these redistribution methods impact these communities. Interviewing store managers to gain insight on the difference the surplus food donations makes to the lives of these community members is another recommendation for future studies. Studies that focus on the store managers could identify statistically how communities that Woolworths contributes surplus food and financial aid to are benefiting from these donations, and what more they could benefit from as a community.

Another recommendation for future studies is to assess campaigns that create consumer and employee awareness of food waste. According to Papargyropoulou et al. (2014), upskilling workers and increasing staff and customer awareness are ways in which food waste can be prevented at the retail and consumption phases of the food supply chain. In order to carry out these awareness campaigns, it is recommended that future research identify in-store staff training programmes that focus specifically on food waste that Woolworths can implement. By correctly training and informing store staff on food waste management and the impacts they can have

on their own communities, a more sustainable environment at store level could be encouraged, which could also be conveyed to customers. Training store staff on food waste could allow them to carry out food waste management practices at home as well. In addition to this recommendation, future studies can be carried out on food waste awareness campaigns that can influence and encourage consumers to participate in food waste elimination. Encouraging consumers to participate in campaigns and donations to “give back” to communities in need is one of Woolworths’ main foci, according to Interviewee 1 (2020). Identifying ways in which Woolworths can inform and educate its consumers on food waste management is yet another way to alleviate food waste post purchase and to get consumers involved in the company’s sustainability efforts. Methods of creating awareness amongst store staff and consumers could fall under Woolworths’ EduPlant programme, initiated by Food & Trees for Africa, which aims to improve food security through educating and upskilling members of communities (Woolworths, 2020). This partnership, along with that of FoodForward SA, whose Second Harvest initiative collects and recycles or recovers food waste, could be areas to further explore on a retail and consumption level (FoodForward South Africa, 2015). Partnering with companies that follow Woolworths’ same ethical and sustainable protocols is an important area of development and exploration for future initiatives.

This study should be used as a platform for further studies on methods of food waste management that Woolworths and other food retail brands can implement at store level to reduce food waste and surplus food. Only Woolworths as a food retailer was analysed in this study, and a vast range of other food waste management methods are most likely used across the food industry that were not discussed and can be further investigated.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

This study investigated the different methods of food waste management that are being implemented by Woolworths in alignment with the food waste hierarchy. The aim of the study was to identify these practices in order to understand the extent to

which Woolworths, as a sustainable and meaningful brand, is mitigating the food accessibility crisis in South Africa that has worsened due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The researcher used three objectives in order to answer the research question. The first objective was to define meaningful brand criteria according to the Havas meaningful brand criteria in order to see how Woolworths as a brand meets those criteria. In understanding these criteria, the food waste hierarchy was introduced in order to understand methods of food waste management that could be used to alleviate the effects on the food crisis in South Africa that has worsened due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The second objective was to analyse the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on impoverished South Africans. Lastly, through a case study, the researcher identified what current food waste management methods Woolworths has implemented at store level. This was carried out to understand to what extent Woolworths has responded to the food crisis, which has been worsened by the Covid-19 pandemic, at store level.

The information to achieve these research objectives was obtained through semi-structured interviews with Woolworths head office managers, who oversee the store managers and store protocols and procedures regarding food waste management and sustainable practice. The data obtained through these semi-structured interviews were corroborated with information gathered from the 2019 *Good Business Journey* report. The data obtained were categorised according to the five levels of methods of food waste management on the food waste hierarchy and sorted into appropriate themes, which served as individual methods of food waste management. The themes included prevention, re-use, recycle, recovery and disposal, with respective sub-themes including methods of responsible partnerships with companies that implement sustainable business practice throughout the FSC, donations, the resale of surplus foods, and partnerships with companies that collect and redistribute, recycle, recover or dispose of surplus food or food waste.

This study on food waste management encouraged the researcher to explore the important and current phenomenon of food accessibility in South Africa. Understanding methods of food waste management allowed the researcher to identify practices that could improve the current harsh realities for many impoverished South

Africans when looking at food waste. A limitation encountered in this study was that the researcher was restricted from interviewing store managers due to Covid-19 social distancing regulations, but this was resolved by interviewing two senior managers at head office virtually to speak on behalf of the store managers and to represent what methods of food waste management were implemented in stores across the country.

Identifying methods of food waste management from the research findings gave the researcher a clear idea as to what methods of food waste Woolworths is implementing in stores to further the company's contribution to sustainable business practice. Through the interview process, the researcher gained insight into Woolworths' perspective on food waste, and she was able to interpret the food waste management approaches according to the food waste hierarchy. Understanding the different methods of food waste in the food waste hierarchy gave the researcher knowledge regarding what methods of food waste management Woolworths can still implement, and what further research can be explored.

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[an+Francisco:+Jossey+Bass.&ots=k5dFiagUOY&sig=-BD6ndc4vbLiFQwMr5rTxSaIeRs#v=onepage&q=Merriam%2C%20S.%20%26%20Associates.%20\(2002\).%20Qualitative%20research%20in%20practice.%20San%20Francisco%3A%20Jossey%20Bass.&f=false](https://books.google.co.za/books?hl=en&lr=&id=g8OMDAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA329&dq=non-probability+sampling&ots=DyuGhCX2oV&sig=jv5l9uoxrSRbAjN8asEQ2haTH8Q#v=onepage&q=non-probability%20sampling&f=false)

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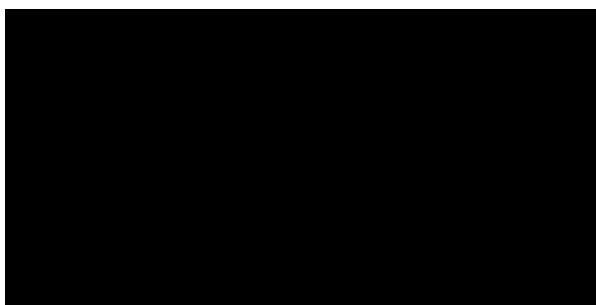
## Appendix A Ethics Checklist



Student name: Michaela Rebecca Ovadia

Title of the research: An examination of the role of food retailers in alleviating the Covid-19 food crisis through effective food waste management: A Case Study on Woolworths Food Group South Africa

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Yes | No | Comment:<br>Supervisor/<br>Navigator/Lecturer |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----------------------------------------------|
| Are you using <b>human subjects</b> in your research?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | x   |    |                                               |
| <b>I intend to use human subjects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I understand that I will not conduct research with human subjects under the age of 18 and other vulnerable groups.</li> <li>I understand I can only proceed once I receive an ethical clearance letter.</li> </ul> |     |    |                                               |
| <b>Interviews/ Focus groups</b><br>An example of the <i>written consent form</i> I intend to use is attached.                                                                                                                                                                                   | x   |    |                                               |
| I will <b>record</b> the interview/focus groups and the sample of the letter where I ask for permission to do so is attached.                                                                                                                                                                   | x   |    |                                               |
| <b>I plan to use an interview schedule:</b> The example of my research instrument is attached.                                                                                                                                                                                                  | x   |    |                                               |
| <b>I plan to use a questionnaire:</b> The example of my research instrument is attached.                                                                                                                                                                                                        |     | x  |                                               |
| <b>I plan to use a gate-keepers letter:</b> The example of my letter is attached.                                                                                                                                                                                                               | x   |    |                                               |
| <b>I plan to do research on an IIE site/</b> with IIE students/staff/artefacts and I filled in the application for permission to do so. The application is attached. I understand I can only proceed once I receive IIE Approval for this.                                                      |     | x  |                                               |



## Appendix B Signed Consent Forms

### Interviewee 1



#### CONSENT FORM TEMPLATE

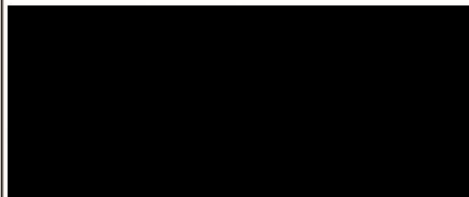
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants</b></p> <p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>My name is Michaela Rebecca Ovadia and I am a student at Vega Johannesburg. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Mbali Rametse about the role of Woolworths in alleviating the Covid-19 food crisis through effective food waste management. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of the need for South Africa as a country with millions of citizens left without food, to better utilise the large amount of food waste and food surplus in food supply chains around the country.</p> <p>I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.</p> |
| <p><b>What will I be doing if I participate in your study?</b></p> <p>I would like to invite you to participate in this research because as a Woolworths store manager / store compliance specialist you can provide insight on Woolworths' food waste management practices at store level being implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to conduct a one-on-one interview with you on a video platform (Microsoft Teams / Zoom / Skype) that will adhere to the current social distancing regulations due to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p><b>Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?</b></p> <p>Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your knowledge of food waste management methods that have been put in place in Woolworths stores without making reference to your role at Woolworths, so not to disclose your identity. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><b>Do I have to participate in the study?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;</li> <li>• If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;</li> <li>• Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <p><b>Will my identity be protected?</b></p> <p>I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Vega Johannesburg, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><b>What will happen to the information that participants provide?</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Post Graduate Diploma in Brand Contact Management at Vega Johannesburg. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

**What happens if I have more questions about the study?**

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

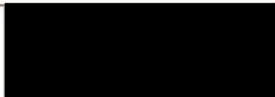


**Consent form for participants**

I, , agree to participate in the research conducted by Michaela Rebecca Ovadia about the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the food crisis amongst impoverished South Africans and the examination of methods of food waste management that Woolworths as a meaningful brand can use to alleviate the current crisis at hand.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

- I agree to be interviewed for this research.
- My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
- My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
- I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
- I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

|                                                                                     |            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
|  | 09/07/2020 |
| Signature                                                                           | Date       |

## Interviewee 2



### CONSENT FORM TEMPLATE

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| To whom it may concern,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <p>My name is Michaela Rebecca Ovadia and I am a student at Vega Johannesburg. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Mbali Rametse about the role of Woolworths in alleviating the Covid-19 food crisis through effective food waste management. I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of the need for South Africa as a country with millions of citizens left without food, to better utilise the large amount of food waste and food surplus in food supply chains around the country.</p> <p>I would like to invite you to participate in my study. In order to explain to you what your participation in my study will involve, I have formulated questions that I will try to fully answer so that you can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate. If you have any additional questions that you feel are not addressed or explained in this information sheet, please do not hesitate to ask me for more information. Once you have read and understood all the information contained in this sheet and are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.</p> |
| <b>What will I be doing if I participate in your study?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <p>I would like to invite you to participate in this research because as a Woolworths store manager / store compliance specialist you can provide insight on Woolworths' food waste management practices at store level being implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to conduct a one-on-one interview with you on a video platform (Microsoft Teams / Zoom / Skype) that will adhere to the current social distancing regulations due to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>You can decide whether or not to participate in this research. If you decide to participate, you can choose to withdraw at any time or to decide not to answer particular interview questions.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p>Whether or not you decide to participate in this research, there will be no negative impact on you. There are no direct risks or benefits to you if you participate in this study. You might, however, indirectly find that it is helpful to talk about your knowledge of food waste management methods that have been put in place in Woolworths stores without making reference to your role at Woolworths, so not to disclose your identity. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Do I have to participate in the study?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;</li><li>• If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;</li><li>• Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Will my identity be protected?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p>I promise to protect your identity. I will not use your name in any research summaries to come out of this research and I will also make sure that any other details are disguised so that nobody will be able to identify you. I would like to ask your permission to record the interviews, but only my supervisor, I and possibly a professional transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings. Nobody else, including anybody at Vega Johannesburg, will have access to your interview information. I would like to use quotes when I discuss the findings of the research, but I will not use any recognisable information in these quotes that can be linked to you.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>What will happen to the information that participants provide?</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Post Graduate Diploma in Brand Contact Management at Vega Johannesburg. You may ask me to send you a summary of the research if you are interested in the final outcome of the study.

**What happens if I have more questions about the study?**

Please feel free to contact me or my supervisor should you have any questions or concerns about this research, or if there is anything you need to know before you decide whether or not to participate.

You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed.

My contact details are as follows:

Michaela Rebecca Ovadia

083 975 2904

michaelaovadia@gmail.com

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Mbali Rametse

68635@ieconnect.co.za

**Consent form for participants**

I, [REDACTED], agree to participate in the research conducted by Michaela Rebecca Ovadia about the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the food crisis amongst impoverished South Africans and the examination of methods of food waste management that Woolworths as a meaningful brand can use to alleviate the current crisis at hand.

This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:

- I agree to be interviewed for this research.
- My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
- My participation in this research is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the research at any time. There will be no repercussions should I choose to withdraw from the research.
- I may choose not to answer any of the questions that are asked during the research interview.
- I may be quoted directly when the research is published, but my identity will be protected.

|                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| <u>[REDACTED]</u> | 09/07/2020 |
| Signature         | Date       |

## Appendix C Signed Consent Forms for Recording and Transcription

### Interviewee 1



#### CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING

| Consent form for participants                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <p>I, <u>[REDACTED]</u>, agree to Michaela Rebecca Ovadia to audio record my interviews as part of the research about the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the food crisis amongst impoverished South Africans and the examination of methods of food waste management that Woolworths as a meaningful brand can use to alleviate the current crisis at hand.</p> <p>This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.</li><li>• The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer.</li><li>• Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.</li></ul> |             |
| <p>Signature</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>Date</p> |

### Interviewee 2



#### CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING

| Consent form for participants                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <p>I, <u>[REDACTED]</u>, agree to Michaela Rebecca Ovadia to audio record my interviews as part of the research about the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the food crisis amongst impoverished South Africans and the examination of methods of food waste management that Woolworths as a meaningful brand can use to alleviate the current crisis at hand.</p> <p>This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I understand that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.</li><li>• The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer.</li><li>• Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.</li></ul> |             |
| <p>Signature</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <p>Date</p> |

## **Appendix D** Interview Discussion Guide

- To your knowledge, what happens to the food in stores that has reached its sell-by-date and is removed from shelves?
- Has Woolworths taken any measures to donate or redistribute food once food has reached its sell-by-date?
- With the current state of food accessibility amongst impoverished South Africans that has worsened since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, has Woolworths taken any measures in store to accommodate and assist these communities?
- What other food waste management practices does Woolworths implement at store level?
- Aside from food waste management, what other sustainable business practices have been implemented at store level?
- If any, how has Woolworths informed store staff on sustainable business practice?
- In your opinion, with the knowledge of what Woolworths stands for, what additional methods of food waste management do you feel should be implemented?

## Appendix E Interview with Woolworths Head Office Managers on Food Waste Management

Transcribed: [10 July 2020]

Transcribed by Michaela Rebecca Ovadia [Interviewer]

*\*\*The interview was held with two managers at Woolworths head office. Participants will be referred to as Interviewee 1 and Interviewee 2.*

*\*Words have been blacked out that mention the interviewees' names*

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### **Transcription Symbols:**

*[Based on the Jefferson (2004) transcription system]*

|                    |                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>(0.6)</b>       | Numbers in parentheses indicate time elapsed to the nearest tenth of a second.                                                    |
| <b>(.)</b>         | A dot in parentheses indicates a brief interval (approximately one tenth of a second).                                            |
| <b>=</b>           | Equal signs indicate no gap or break between words.                                                                               |
| <b>[</b>           | A left bracket indicates onset of overlapping talk.                                                                               |
| <b>]</b>           | A right bracket indicates end of overlapping talk.                                                                                |
| <b>.</b>           | A full-stop indicates falling or final intonation.                                                                                |
| <b>,</b>           | A comma indicates continuing intonation.                                                                                          |
| <b>?</b>           | A question mark indicates rising or questioning intonation.                                                                       |
| <b>!</b>           | An exclamation mark indicates an animated tone.                                                                                   |
| <b>wo::rd</b>      | Colons indicate prolongation of the immediately preceding sound, with more colons indicating longer prolongation.                 |
| <b><u>word</u></b> | Underlining all or part of a word indicates stress, via pitch and/or amplitude.                                                   |
| <b>(words)</b>     | Words in parentheses indicates uncertain hearing, and represent the transcriber's best guess at what was said and/or who said it. |
| <b>( )</b>         | Spaces in parentheses indicate untranscribable talk, with longer spaces reflecting longer durations of untranscribable talk.      |
| <b>((words))</b>   | Words in double parentheses indicate transcribers' descriptions.                                                                  |
| <b>word-</b>       | A dash indicates a cut-off.                                                                                                       |
| <b>.hhh</b>        | Dot-prefixed "h"s indicate an in-breath; "h"s without a dot indicate an out-breath.                                               |
| <b>\$word\$</b>    | Words enclosed by Dollar signs indicate "smile voice" – a speaker hearably                                                        |

[00:00]

**Interviewee 1:** Okay, I'm just going to put the volume up quickly. (..) Um, okay, so (..) do we wanna start with this so then I can know when to start the conversation?

**Michaela Ovadia:** Perfect

**Interviewee 1:** Ug, the recording?

**Michaela Ovadia:** Ya that's fine, we can start if you guys are happy to. (..) Um, so I do have some questions as a guideline but obviously I wanted it to be more of a conversation piece, so anything (..) else additional that you have that you want to add or, (..) ya, its, its, I just want it to be a little bit more casual than, like, a structured piece. Um, but it is on food waste management and as I discussed before with you guys, um, I've done a lot of research on the impacts that Covid has had on, um, on food waste, well on food accessibility, sorry, um, particularly on impoverished South Africans and in my research I've just seen how, um, how (..) how large of an impact food waste has, especially in a country that's so, like, stricken by poverty and so many people are starving. So, I felt that it was quite important, um, to look at food waste management methods that big food groups that do have a big impact of food waste, um, what they could implement during this time of Covid where food accessibility is at its peak, um, and also kind of just to investigate what food waste management methods Woolworths does in store. So, I have done extensive research and the intention of, um, this interview really is to get a perspective, like an insider perspective, kind of a little bit more in depth if possible, just to see what else is happening, um, along, like, with everything else that has been publicized.

(.) So, the first question I have, um, is that, what, what, food, um, what food waste management methods have been implemented in stores in terms of like when products reach their sell by date, how are they disposed of, or what happens to them?

**Interviewee 1:** (..) Okay, so, Michaela, I am going to:: answer that and [REDACTED] (Interviewee 2) and I will swap between, um, maybe different questions that you've got.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay.

**Interviewee 1:** Um, so, just to answer your question, um, our products that reach it's sell-by-date, um, or use-by-date or best-before-date or even just items that is not saleable to customers, you know if it's damaged, the packaging is damaged, etc. It's removed from the sales floor on a daily basis, okay, um, or, at, at least, um (..) a few times during the day they, they look at this and they will take products off the sales floor. These products are then, um, isolated in, in the back area, um, and it's not destroyed, so we actually keep it because it's still fit for human consumption. So, it may -

**Michaela Ovadia:** Ya.

**Interviewee 1:** Have reached its, uh sell-by-date but it's not reached its best-before-date.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Yes.

**Interviewee 1:** Um, so this is then isolated, um, and then we donate these to different charity organisations on a daily basis.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay, and those charity organisations, um, are you able to disclose, (.) like, which sort of organisations you donate to? Are they community groups? Or (..)

**Interviewee 1:** So, so we've got different policies and procedures in place, so, so your charity organisations we try and reach out to charities or, or we donate to charities that's within close, um, situated close to our stores. So, in other words, local communities-

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay-

**Interviewee 1:** And various organisations. We have up to about 1400, um, estimated, (.) or charity organisations that collect surplus food from us, um, over, I mean every day.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay-

**Interviewee 1:** Not every day but over a period of over a week. We've got about 400 stores, um in our, in our organisations, of about 330 of them donate surplus food, um, cause they're stores with foods, and so, um, there's possibly close to 1400 charities that collect food from us-

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay-

**Interviewee 1:** Um, and like I said to you these are food that are still fit for human consumption.

**Michaela Ovadia:** And the food that you say is damaged, like where the packaging is damaged, does that also get passed onto charities, or is that discarded cause its damaged and-

**Interviewee 1:** So, because it's the packaging is damaged, so let's take a mushrooms as an example, the, the cling wrap might be spoiled, we'll seal it, uh, so obviously it doesn't become contaminated, so we'll sell it in another bag. And, and to answer your question, yes that does get donated, cause it doesn't get spoiled. Cold chain is maintained- so it's still fit for human consumption.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay-

**Interviewee 1:** .hhh we're quite clear without stores in policy and procedure that if it is spoilt, so if that packaging is damaged and uh, it became contaminated, then we do not, uh, and it may then, um, it may then affect then the fact that it's not fit for human consumption, we will not donate that.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay, and what happens to that food? Is-

**Interviewee 1:** So, there is another process that, that our stores follow, um, there is a safety destruction process that we, or (let me just) say disposal process that we use. So, it doesn't go to landfills, it gets destroyed responsibly. Obviously if it's not fit for human consumption it shouldn't be eaten by any, uh human or animal, so there's procedures in place for that as well.

**Michaela Ovadia:** And when you say it, it gets destroyed, is it turned into, like, a compost or do you just dispose of it?

**Interviewee 1:** [REDACTED] (Interviewee 2) do you wanna come in here? (.....) [REDACTED]  
(Interviewee 2) ((Connection issue))

**Interviewee 2:** Sorry, I was on mute.

**Michaela Ovadia:** [Soft chuckle]

**Interviewee 2:** Uh, Can you hear me?

**Michaela Ovadia:** Yes.

**Interviewee 1:** Yes, we can.

**Interviewee 2:** Can you guys hear me?

**Interviewee 1:** Yes, we can.

**Interviewee 2:** Hello:::?

**Interviewee 1:** Yes, we can hear you (Interviewee 2) [REDACTED].

**Interviewee 2:** Arlene?

**Interviewee 1:** Oh, sorry I put, I put my phone on mute.

**Interviewee 2:** You put me on mute again.

**Michaela Ovadia:** [Soft chuckles]

**Interviewee 1:** \$Sorry:::\$

**Interviewee 2:** Are you there? (...) Can you guys hear me now?

**Interviewee 1:** I can hear you, can you hear me?

**Interviewee 2:** I can hear you. Can Michaela, can you hear me?

**Michaela Ovadia:** Ya, I can hear you both

**Interviewee 1:** [Laughs]

**Michaela Ovadia:** [Laughs]

**Interviewee 2:** Okay, so, depending on where we are at, there are a few, um, (...), different companies that provide different services. So, there are, um (...) organisations or companies that collect our waste and either recycle it or destroy it, okay. Um, we specifically, things like our fat that comes out of our chicken ovens, those, that, that fat is destroyed, or collected and recycled into biofuel.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay!

**Interviewee 2:** And then, I know there was a company that we were using in Johannesburg that, um, converts it into soap, the, the fat that is. Um, and then there are some companies that um, not some companies, some of it does get destroyed through our municipality, municipal waste dumps, but that then we get, um:: certificates of destructions from our municipality and that is in cases where the food is not fit for human consumption.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay (..) thank you (..) um-

**Interviewee 2:** Okay [

**Michaela Ovadia:** And then

**Interviewee 2:** Just one thing that I'm-

**Michaela Ovadia:** Ya]

**Interviewee 2:** That I'm wanting ( ). You there?

**Michaela Ovadia:** Yes.

**Interviewee 2:** So just one thing that I'm wanting to add on to, um, to:: [REDACTED] (Interviewee 1) comments, okay, when we refer to::, um, us donating surplus food to these charity organisations-

**Michaela Ovadia:** Yes.

**Interviewee 2:** The one thing that we forgot to mention is before it goes to, to those, uh, charities or non-profit organisations that we partner with, we actually sell that food at a discounted rate to our staff.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay!

**Interviewee 2:** - as well. Okay (..) understanding that some of our staff may very well come from these vulnerable communities. So, they could also get an opportunity to purchase, purchase that food that hasn't expired that is still fit for human consumption, um::, on a daily basis.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay, that's great! Um and then [

**Interviewee 2:** ( )]

**Michaela Ovadia:** Just, just on the topic on your staff members, um, in terms of the food waste management, has there been any training for the staff on it, or how are they

informed of the food waste, or is it somebody like from head office that comes in and manages (.) that whole, um, taking the surplus food away?

**Interviewee 2:** (.) So, waste management, waste management is one of our stock management processes.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay...

**Interviewee 2:** Okay, what that means is that there is a process that gets conducted, um, daily, and [REDACTED] (Interviewee 1) eluded to this. So, every day, because we have stock that expires daily, waste is removed from our stores or from our shelves and it is then isolated before it is made available for our, to our staff for sale. Um, And once that, that process of, um, waste, let's call it waste sale ( ), um, the left over, the stock that was not purchased, is then donated to charity. But it's a daily process and it is part of the stock management processes, that waste is recorded daily-

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay...

**Interviewee 2:** Recorded and removed daily.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Um, and sorry just cause I don't know if that was , uh, answered in that question, but I just wanted to find out, like is there any information that's provided to your staff on the food waste management? are they trained and informed on the practices on food waste management?

**Interviewee 2:** (...) I'm not too sure if I'm understanding your question correctly-

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay-

**Interviewee 2:** Because of, because of it being part of a stock management process [

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay, I see-

**Interviewee 2:** There is a:::] There is a:::, um, there is, training given to our staff that performs that function [

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay-

**Interviewee 2:** But then it's also the sale of waste itself in terms of them being able to purchase it-

**Michaela Ovadia:** Yes.

**Interviewee 2:** It's one of the, let's call it perks, so every staff member is aware of it. And we actually have, what we call it, waste shops (.) in our stores, where staff get an opportunity during their shift (.) to go make purchases in that shop, in the waste shop.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay! That's really amazing. Um, .hhh that's very very cool. So, but, on the note of Covid, I, I understand that there were questions that (.) you didn't want to answer, but .hhh just in terms of, um, (.) like, impoverished South Africans that

have been affected by Covid, has Woolworths taken any measures to accommodate and assist these communities, during this particular time? (..). In terms of food waste management, sorry-

**Interviewee 1:** [REDACTED] (Interviewee 2), maybe, uh ya, I want to answer this one. So, um ( )-

**Interviewee 2:** Sorry [REDACTED] (Interviewee 1), do you mind, can I just go back, Michaela, do you mind just going back to the previous, um, question, where [REDACTED] (Interviewee 1) responded to you about these charity organisations that collect food from us on a daily basis.

**Michaela Ovdia:** Yes!

**Interviewee 2:** I think one point that, that we, I, I would like to be noted is that we also see this as part of ourselves giving, sorry, as part of us giving back to the communities in which we trade.

**Michaela Ovdia:** Yes:-

**Interviewee 2:** So, our stores are encouraged to find organisations that, um, they can partner with in their local communities.

**Michaela Ovdia:** Okay, so they won't be- [um

**Interviewee 2:** So there ( )-]

**Michaela Ovdia:** So, it will be specific to that, um, store location. Is that what you're saying?

**Interviewee 2:** Correct! Correct. So, let's assume you (.) you're in Joburg hey?

**Michaela Ovdia:** Yes.

**Interviewee 2:** (..) So, lets, ya, let's assume Sandton store, um, is, they would then be encouraged to find non-profit organisations within their immediate community, and we don't always achieve this, but this is first prize, they would be encouraged to find, um organisations within with communi- immediate communities that they would then make those donations to on a daily basis.

**Michaela Ovdia:** And when you refer to stores, um, is the store manager in charge of that? Or is it more of a group, like, the entire store will get together and discuss it, or-

**Interviewee 2:** So, the store manager will identify, um, organisations-

**Michaela Ovdia:** Okay-

**Interviewee 2:** That they would like to partner with.

**Michaela Ovdia:** Okay.

**Interviewee 2:** Most times that is at the request of an organisation in their-

**Michaela Ovdia:** Okay-

**Interviewee 2:** So, so organisations would come to us, obviously you can't be everything to everyone-

**Michaela Ovadia:** Sure-

**Interviewee 2:** And the organisations would come to us and when I say to us, they would come through to the store and ask, um, you know, how do they get on to our surplus food program, and through a process of elimination, um, and availability obviously-

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay-

**Interviewee 2:** Or consideration of availability, the store then would appoint someone, um, the store manager himself, or the store team, um, of that specific store, would appoint that organisation. Obviously on the condition that they meet the criteria that is set out in our policies.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Yes.

**Interviewee 1:** Ya, just if I can add to, to this in terms of the local communities. The stores also have, um::, what they call CSI projects, um and part of the project, the store teams come together and decide who they would like to nominate, um , and focus on, and maybe do, like, the store actually raises funds and um, has, has um, different events to try and assist that local charity, um, with whatever their needs may be. So, there's a CSI initiative as well from the store side that they also drive, that might be, um, coinciding with the same charities that they donate the surplus food to. So they actually build this relationship and they try and um, assist these charities, not just through food waste, donations but also over and above so, so that's where the rest of the staff get involved and decide as a team who do they want to assist for this period and then they move on to the next ( ) or so I mean there's opportunities for stores to help local communities in that aspect.

**Michaela Ovadia:** And on, um, on that note, do you have a lot of feedback from those communities? Has it been, like, have they come back to you an- given any positive feedback about it? Or have you seen any growth or accomplishments, if I can ask that?

**Interviewee 1:** So re-, so remember that the stores and the store management drive these initiatives, um, in each of their stores. Um, [REDACTED] (Interviewee 2) and myself, um are obviously central, we based at head office, so we may not necessarily see the feedback and that relationship that our stores have with their local communities-

**Michaela Ovadia:** Ya-

**Interviewee 1:** Just to answer your question. But on a broader, higher level, we've got, obviously got a trust as well that operates and engages in this space, so they obviously interact and get feedback and have closer relationships to see what

the actual impact is. They have different campaigns, um, and they make different donations, so that's not necessarily something that um, [REDACTED] (Interviewee 2), you and I, in our role could answer. But there's definitely things happening.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay.

**Interviewee 1:** Ya.

**Michaela Ovadia:** (...) Um, and then, sorry, I just wanted to go back to the, the question on, um, what's been implemented at store level in order to accommodate what's happening with Covid in terms of food waste, if anything. Um,(.) I think [REDACTED] (Interviewee 1) you were, [

**Interviewee 2:** Arlene? ]

**Michaela Ovadia:** You were going to answer that? [Soft laugh]

**Interviewee 1:** So, so it's not so much of food waste management, but its donations, so, we've got various initiatives and campaigns in stores right now, where we invite the customer to donate either by, um, dropping off products, long life products, or products with longer shelf life, um through this customer trolley donation campaign, you may have seen it in your local store, um, its implemented in all our stores. Or there's the option of, um, Snapscan at the till point, so if you don't want to buy and drop off, you could, um, donate via the Snapscan at the till point, and it's available online as well. So um, we're calling it a give-back campaign, and these donations, whether it's in the form of, of products, food or funds is then redirected or onated through partnering with charity organisations such as Gift of the Givers and Community Action Network (CAN), um, and then this is then directed to, to the most vulnerable in the communities.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay, that's amazing, I have actually heard about it, um, the trolley campaign-

**Interviewee 1:** Yes.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Do you have any other information on that if it's like a report or something, cause I'd love to include something on that especially if it's Covid related, um, if you do have anything, that would be great.

**Interviewee 2:** So, [REDACTED] (Interviewee 1), I'm sure Lulu has statistics or outcomes for what we've done that we might be able to share with Michaela.

**Interviewee 1:** Alright, I'll check, I'll check with, um, Lulu, uh Michaela and I'll come back to you on email on that one.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Thank you, that would just be great cause it would be really nice to back up with conversation with like, statistical or other public information that can just confirm that as well. That would be cool [Thank you

**Interviewee 1:** No problem]

**Michaela Ovdia:** Um, and then, I wanted-

**Interviewee 2:** ( ) Michaela? Another area that, um, that specifically, cause I think what [REDACTED] (Interviewee 1) spoke to now, talks to initiatives that enables our customers to participate.

**Michaela Ovdia:** yes.

**Interviewee 2:** Okay (.) what we did find, particularly at the beginning of Covid, when there were restrictions and curfews in place, um, that there were (.) organisations that did not qualify, if I could put it that way, um, for, uh, what was it called, um, Essential Service permits.

**Michaela Ovdia:** Okay...

**Interviewee 2:** Okay, what that could possibly have resulted in was surplus food not going to those intended um (.) [ communities -

**Michaela Ovdia:** Communities]

**Interviewee 2:** But what we did do, was again with, um, ((clears throat)), Gift of the Givers and CAN, um, where organisations, where we did find ourselves in certain stores where these organisations were not able to collect, we then partnered with organisations like Gift of the Givers, to then collect and redistribute in the place of those organisations which could not access, um uh, essential service permits.

**Michaela Ovdia:** Okay, that's amazing. Um (.) and then I wanted to just ask you, um, in terms of other sustainable practices that are implemented at your store level, or other waste management , not necessarily with food, but is there anything, um, else that's been implemented at stores that you, that you feel is vital or relevant for this conversation.

**Interviewee 2:** (...) So, I'll go here [REDACTED] (Interviewee 1), if you, if you don't mind-

**Interviewee 1:** Sure, sure

**Interviewee 1:** I think the one (.) probably links to the comment I made earlier. (.....)

**Michaela Ovdia:** Hello? I think I've lost you (.....). [REDACTED] (Interviewee 2)? ((Connection issue, call cut at this point for a few minutes and reconnected)) Hello?

**Interviewee 1:** Hi, sorry about that.

**Michaela Ovdia:** No, no its fine [soft laugh]

**Interviewee 1:** My PC just went to sleep, so:::

**Michaela Ovdia:** Oh sorry, um, ya, no I lost [REDACTED] (Interviewee 2) during that chat, sorry.

**Interviewee 2:** Guys I'm not too sure what you heard, but I'll start at the beginning.

**Michaela Ovdia:** Thank you.

**Interviewee 2:** So, this one relates, the example, not the example, the initiative I'm going to refer to, relates, um, in some way to:: the example I gave you earlier, or the initiative I gave you earlier, where we make food available to our staff, the waste, the expired food-

**Michaela Ovdia:** Yes-

**Interviewee 2:** To um, to our staff to purchase at discounted rates. The one thing that we are very aware of, is that as much as, well, the saying, the saying goes that "charity begins at home", um and as much as we are partnering with organisations to get food to vulnerable communities, we also need to acknowledge that some of our staff are coming from those vulnerable communities. So we offer things like, we would take waste out of the waste shop, for example, where they be fruit or things like that, um, and we make that available to our staff during, um, their shifts, so they can have something to eat as an example. Um::, and, then, in addition to that what we also do, is we would run, um (.) what's the word? An energizer program, If I can call it that, and we would then recognize staff for doing great work and they would then get a waste voucher as an example, um and the waste voucher for example, will entitle them to go shopping in the waste shop, to the value of x. Um::, so that they can take something home to their families, um, as, as an initiative as well.

**Michaela Ovdia:** I really love that. I think it's so important to, "charity starts at home", and ya, I think that's very very good that that's implemented. Is there anything else, you feel Woolworths could maybe implement in terms of food waste-

**Interviewee 2:** I can't hear Michaela, [REDACTED] (Interviewee 1).

**Interviewee 1:** Can you hear now, [REDACTED] (Interviewee 2)?

**Interviewee 2:** I can hear you. Let's just check.

**Interviewee 1:** Michaela?

**Michaela Ovdia:** Can you hear me?

**Interviewee 2:** Yup, that's better.

**Michaela Ovdia:** Um, so I wanted to just know, um, anyone can answer this, but is knowing, like whatever's gone into your food waste management practices and everything that's been implemented already, is there any other food waste management methods you feel, um, that Woolworths could, could implement or if there's any room to grow in terms of what you already do?

**Interviewee 2:** (...) So I think my response to that, Michaela, is that we are always looking for new opportunities to improve, and one of those opportunities to improve, comes through, um, collaborations. (...) Okay, so you would have heard us talking about our collaborations through with Gift of the Givers, on, on, on a number of occasions, um, we then partnered with the CAN, Community Action Network, in some, on some occasions we partner with guys like FoodForward,

um, and that is ideal. However, what we recognize, what needs to be recognized, particularly in the Woolworths space, is that our brand is recognized for, um, its food safety protocols that are in place. So, you might have heard, um, if you had called into a Woolworths store, there's a little, not an ad, but a voice, voice note while you wait talking about our culture and principles. And we, in order for us to maintain the quality of our product, we maintain those culture and principles throughout the supply chain, but when we refer to the supply chain, we take that supply chain right through to the point to which even our waste is consumed. So why I'm saying that? I'm saying that because we will not give food away through a (.) vendor or a partner if they can't maintain that culture and principle.

**Michaela Ovidia:**

Okay-

**Interviewee 2:**

Um, and because, a lot of the partners that are out there that are able to, that we are able to collaborate, cannot, um, guarantee that that culture is maintained. We then rather, um, elect to manage the process ourselves, even though collaboration might be a better way. But because there is that risk that the product and our brand being compromised, um, to date, we have chosen rather to manage this process ourselves. I don't know, I've said a lot here, I don't know if I've made my point.

**Michaela Ovidia:**

No, I think you have, um, and its, it makes a lot of sense, that I've seen throughout my research that at every stage of production in your supply chain, right through to the consumer, and I've seen it as a Woolworths shopper, that there is sustainable methods implemented everywhere you look. Which is why I wanted to delve into Woolworths, and see what else there was, you know? So I think that it's, to partner with people who have the same ethic belief as you, is, is quite important to continue that same sustainable process.

**Interviewee 2:**

(...) Ya!. (.) Ya! so ya to answer the questions, yes there are opportunities, um and there are probably oppo-, more opportunities that we could have tapped in to to date, but in order to change that brand, not to change, to maintain that brand, um, philosophy and our culture, we have elected to, to continue doing it ourselves, until we can find partners that can maintain our culture throughout the supply chain.

**Michaela Ovidia:**

And now, obviously, um, my study is more focused on what happens in store with food waste management, but have you had any response or feedback from the people in the stores regarding the food waste. Has, you know, is there any feedback that they've given you on the waste store or have you seen how it's um, made a difference?

**Interviewee 2:**

Ya, I think, it, it's part of what we do. So it's not something that is::, "Wow, look what Woolies has done now", it's been there for the last, well for as long as I can remember. Waste has just been something that our staff get access to. (.) So, um, so, yes, it does make a difference, um and it makes a difference to everybody, not only our store teams. it makes a difference to all employees.

Cause even Woolies in Cape Town, um, get access to it, um, and it makes a difference to our people. (.)

**Michaela Ovadia:** And then-

**Interviewee 2:** And during Covid, we actually, um, we've heard our people saying, cause there have been times where we have stopped the sale of waste, purely because of the risk of having too many people ( ) in our stores-

**Michaela Ovadia:** Ya-

**Interviewee 2:** And you've heard people saying, you know, they, it's, it's hard without that, that um, facility being available to you. So, the fact that they are verbalising that they are missing it-

**Michaela Ovadia:** Ya-

**Interviewee 2:** Means that it's making a difference when it is there.

**Interviewee 1:** Ya.

**Michaela Ovadia:** And just in terms of all the practices that you implement in the waste stores, is that (.) across all your Woolworths stores, or is it only in certain branches?

**Interviewee 2:** ( ) so, every, every product that is ex- expired, and I'm specifically talking about foods now.

**Interviewee 1:** Yes!-

**Interviewee 2:** Every, every product that is expired (.) is made available to staff the next day.

**Michaela Ovadia:** [Okay.

**Interviewee 1:** Well, well, well [REDACTED] (Interviewee 2) , can I come in there quickly?

**Interviewee 2:** Ya-

**Interviewee 1:** It's every product that has reached its sell-by-date not expired

**Michaela Ovadia:** Yes.

**Interviewee 2:** Well sorry.

**Interviewee 1:** So in the sense of sell-by-date not best-before-date

**Interviewee 2:** Ya (.). So it's made available, there's a waste sale in every shop every day.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay.

**Interviewee 2:** Other than for exceptional circumstances, um, which is out of our control, but the practice is that, every store has a waste sale, um, every day.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay.

**Interviewee 1:** Ya. (.) With the idea of getting the food to the recipients, whether its staff or the charities that it gets donated to, as, as obviously as soon as possible because you want it to be fit for human consumption when it's donated or sold. So you don't want to keep something for four, five, six days and then sell it, because then it's, it might not be fit for human consumption.

**Michaela Ovdia:** And just, um, just out of intere-

**Interviewee 2:** ( ) it doe- ( )

**Interviewee 1:** Ya

**Michaela Ovdia:** Sorry, I missed that.

**Interviewee 2:** (..) I said and it doesn't meet our quality standards any, either.

**Michaela Ovdia:** Yes.

**Interviewee 2:** As much as I spoke about maintaining the, the cold chain throughout the supply chain right through to the end user, in this case being a charity organisation. We expect that our, that we are giving, the expectation is that the food that we are giving, to these charities, are of the same quality that our staff get it at when they purchase it at waste or that our customers and staff get it at when they purchase it off the floor.

**Interviewee 1:** Ya (..)

**Michaela Ovdia:** Um, and just out of interest, um, (..) so I know that there's normally a couple of days between the best-before and the sell-by date, but past the best before, are there still, um, is there still leeway to play within, where the food is still edible and safe to consume?

**Interviewee 2:** Do you want the official response or...

**Interviewee 1:** [Chuckles]

**Michaela Ovdia:** \$ I mean (..) \$ [laughs]

**Interviewee 2:** Or the opinion?

**Michaela Ovdia:** [Laughs] \$ Whatever you happy to have on paper \$ [laughs]

**Interviewee 1:** [Laughs]

**Interviewee 2:** [Laughs] Listen, I think we've all, from a process perspective, we do not donate anything, of, after its best-be-, best-before date.

**Michaela Ovdia:** Okay.

**Interviewee 2:** Okay, so if it's passed your best-before date, we will not give it to anybody. But you and I both know-

**Michaela Ovadia:** Ya-

**Interviewee 2:** That often, you will buy something from Woolies, um::, you ( ), you um, its passed its, or its reached its best-before date, but it was in the freezer, as an example.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Yes.

**Interviewee 2:** But it's still completely, um, fine.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay. (...) Are you still there?

**Interviewee 1:** Ya!

**Interviewee 2:** Ya, ya!

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay-

**Interviewee 2:** Ya we still here sorry-

**Michaela Ovadia:** No, that's fin-

**Interviewee 2:** ( )

**Michaela Ovadia:** No, thank you. Um, and then I don't know if there's anything else that you'd like to share, or, of my, of my questions I think we've covered everything and um, ya, I've gotten quite a lot of insight into whats, what's happening in actual stores, so that's been really really helpful for me. (...)

**Interviewee 2:** (...) Cool, I think if you've, if you've, um::, managed to get the feedback you were looking for, then no there's nothing more from us. However if there is anything that you feel that you might have missed, please feel free to give myself or [REDACTED] (Interviewee 1) a note and I'm sure we'll be happy to, to, to respond or jump on another call ((if need be)).

**Michaela Ovadia:** Thank you. I really appreciate that, um, and then, ya again if there's any other, I mean I know that you said you may be able to share the reports on you, on the drive that's happening in stores now. But if there's any other information or reports that, um, that you are able to share regarding the food waste management, would you be able to share that with me?

**Interviewee 2:** (...)um::: ( ). Michaela, sorry, I'm struggling to get to your name. Have you accessed our annual report?

**Michaela Ovadia:** Yes, so I have, I have had a look at all of those. Um, obviously, I didn't want to, I didn't want to include everything yet because I didn't know what was going to be discussed in the call. So, um, I am actually using those reports alongside this interview, to accompany my, my research findings.

**Interviewee 2:** ((Perfect)) No, I just wanted to check, cause obviously all our (.) statistics relating to surplus foods and the volumes and, and the values we donate, is in, in the annual reports.

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay.

**Interviewee 2:** So that should be able to support your, your ( ).

**Michaela Ovadia:** Okay, perfect, then that's all. .hhh

**Interviewee 2:** (..) Okay.

**Michaela Ovadia:** \$ Thank you so much. I really appreciate your time and thanks for sharing all your knowledge with me, it's been really really interesting, thank you. \$

**Interviewee 2:** Right, and good luck!

**Michaela Ovadia:** Thank you [chuckles] Um:: -

**Interviewee 1:** All the best Michaela!

**Michaela Ovadia:** \$ Thanks so much [REDACTED] (Interviewee 1)! Have a good evening \$

**Interviewee 1:** Thank you, you too!

**Interviewee 2:** (cheers cheers)

**Interviewee 1:** I'll try and send you that recording, hey?

**Michaela Ovadia:** Thank you. Thanks so much!

**Interviewee 1:** Take care:::

**Michaela Ovadia:** \$ You too, Bye \$

**Interviewee 2:** Bye, bye

**Interviewee 1:** Bye.

[36:10]

## Appendix F Phase One of the Data Analysis

### **Highlighted Colour Chart:**

Pink = Level One (Prevention)

Orange = Level Two (Re-use)

Green = Level Three (Recycle)

Blue = Level Four (Recovery)

Purple = Level Five (Disposal)

Magenta = Procedures and Protocols and other sustainable practices necessary for the study

| QUESTIONS                                                                                                                   | INTERVIEW RESPONSES<br>(Interviewee 1, 2020; Interviewee 2, 2020)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>WOOLWORTHS HOLDINGS LIMITED: 2019 GOOD BUSINESS JOURNEY REPORT</b><br>(Woolworths Holdings Limited, 2019)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| <b>To your knowledge, what happens to the food in stores that has reached its sell-by-date and is removed from shelves?</b> | <p>Products that have reached their sell-by-date, use-by-date or best-before-date, or even just items that are not saleable to customers, for example if the packaging or product itself is damaged, are removed from the sales floor on a daily basis. These products are then isolated in the back area of the stores and are not destroyed. They are kept because most of these products are still fit for human consumption. The consumable food is then donated to different charities on a daily basis.</p> <p>According to Interviewee 1, "getting the food to the recipients, whether its staff or the charities that it gets donated to... as soon as possible because you want it to be fit for human consumption when it's donated or sold. So you don't want to keep something for four, five, six days and then sell it, because then... it might not be fit for human consumption". According to Interviewee 2, breaking these protocols does not meet Woolworths' quality standards; the company aims to provide the end user,</p> | <p>Woolworths' focus on waste management to reduce the large amounts of waste that ends up in landfills is one of its successes to date, according to the 2019 <i>Good Business Journey</i> report.</p> <p>In partnership with the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa (CGCSA) and the Department of Trade and Industry (dti), Woolworths aims to increase its sustainable business practices throughout the supply chain by reducing food loss and food waste.</p> <p>In 2019, Woolworths donated R611M worth of surplus foods.</p> <p>Woolworths focuses largely on food security and alleviating hunger and food insecurity</p> |

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|                                                                                                                                                     | <p>whether it be the consumer, staff or charity organisations, the same quality as when it is purchased at store level.</p> <p>When asked by the interviewer how long it might take for food to actually expire past its best-before-date, Interviewee 2 mentioned that although the produce might be edible for a few days after the expiration date, Woolworths does not donate anything past that date.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>through community based solutions through the redistribution of surplus foods.</p> <p>Woolworths' key partner in reducing food insecurity is FoodForward SA. R3 million in funds were dedicated to food security over the past three years, providing 1.2 million meals per year through surplus food.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>Has Woolworths head office taken any measures to donate or redistribute food that has reached its sell-by-date that you are aware of?</b></p> | <p>Food that is consumable is donated to local communities or charity organisations that are in close proximity to the stores. There are about 1,400 estimated charity organisations that collect surplus food from Woolworths every week. Interviewee 1: "We've got about 400 stores in our organisations... about 330 of them donate surplus food." The interviewee mentioned that the stores that donate are Woolworths food stores.</p> <p>Interviewee 2, "...we also see this (food donations to charities) as part of... us giving back to the communities in which we trade... our stores are encouraged to find organisations that... they can partner with in their local communities." The local communities that Woolworths donates food to are specific to each store location. Each store is "...encouraged to find non-profit organisations within their immediate community... that they would then make those donations to on a daily basis." - Interviewee 2. This process is handled by the store manager of each store who identifies which organisation they would like to partner with. Sometimes, organisations will approach Woolworths stores to find out how they can be a part of their surplus food process. Store management will then consider these organisations on the condition that they meet the criteria in Woolworths'</p> | <p>Woolworths' campaign to contribute to local communities in which its stores operate aims to meet both societal and economic needs. The company's aim is to contribute R3.5 billion financially by 2020. The trust of communities, as discussed by Interviewee 1, is something that is able to help Woolworths achieve its goal. Woolworths is highly committed to developing long-standing relationships with all of its stakeholders, which includes suppliers throughout the supply chain, employees, customers and the communities in which it operates, to name a few. Woolworths' brand philosophy encourages authentic and inclusive relationships that allow everyone to benefit in some way, and allows Woolworths to maintain and grow its sustainability efforts and performance as a brand.</p> <p>"We recognise that we cannot solve the packaging and waste</p> |

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|                                                                                                                                              | <p>policies and procedures for surplus food.</p> <p>Interviewee 1 – Along with surplus food donations, Woolworths store teams form “CSI projects” where the staff will raise funds or host events to raise money to assist the charity organisations and build relationships with them. These nominated charities are changed from time to time in order to provide more “opportunities for stores to help local communities”.</p> <p>Interviewee 1 - Store management is in charge of these initiatives so not much feedback has been provided to head office staff, however the constant support and donations have shown the interviewee that it has made a difference.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>issue on our own. It is for this reason that we have taken a holistic approach and are engaging with key partners across the value chain to walk this journey with us.” – Feroz Koor, Group Head of Sustainability</p> |
| <p><b>The food that is damaged, like where the packaging is damaged, does that also get passed onto charities, or is that discarded?</b></p> | <p>Regarding food items where only the packaging is damaged and the food itself is not spoiled, these items will be resealed and donated as it is still fit for human consumption, for example “mushrooms as an example, (where) the cling wrap might be spoiled, we’ll seal it... so obviously it doesn’t become contaminated, so we’ll sell it in another bag.” - Interviewee 1. Strict policies and procedures are put in place for food that is spoiled or contaminated, and these foods are not donated as they are not fit for human consumption. According to Interviewee 1, these foods are not disposed of in landfills, but are “destroyed responsibly” through a “safety destruction process” or “disposal process” because they are not safe for human or animal consumption.</p> <p>In this disposal process, there are different organisations that Woolworths partners with that provide different responsible disposal practices that either collect the waste products, recycle them or destroy them. Interviewee 2: “For example... things like our fat that comes out of our chicken ovens..</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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|                                                                                                              | <p>that fat is destroyed, or collected and recycled into biofuel." According to Interviewee 2, there is another company that converts the chicken fat into soap.</p> <p>According to Interviewee 2, some waste is disposed of in municipal dumps and destroyed by the municipality, which then provides a certificate of destruction to Woolworths. This discarded waste is food that is not fit for human consumption.</p> <p>Before these surplus food items are donated to local charity organisations or non-profit organisations that Woolworths partners with, the consumable food (food that is still edible based on the best-before-date) is sold at discounted prices to Woolworths store staff. " ...understanding that some of our staff may very well come from these vulnerable communities. So, they could also get an opportunity to purchase... that food that hasn't expired that is still fit for human consumption.. on a daily basis" – Interviewee 2.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <p><b>Is there any staff training or information that is provided to staff on food waste management?</b></p> | <p>Waste management is a part of a stock management process. Because there is "stock that expires daily, waste is removed from.. stores or from... shelves and it is then isolated before it is made available for... staff for sale." – Interviewee 2. Once this food is isolated and inspected, it is then sold to staff members at discounted rates and whatever is not purchased is then donated to charity. Training is provided to staff members who provide this function in stores.</p> <p>According to Interviewee 2, the discounted food shop or "waste shop" within Woolworths stores is referred to as a "perk" and all staff members are well informed about these sales. Staff are given the opportunity to purchase food in the waste shop during their shifts.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>Woolworths emphasises the importance of ethical sourcing by implementing ongoing training on "ethical sourcing topics" to suppliers and staff members (Woolworths Holdings Limited, 2019: 12).</p> <p>Woolworths store staff are continuously involved in community programmes that inform and teach employees the importance of sustainable and meaningful brand practice.</p> |

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| <p><b>Has Woolworths taken any measures of food waste management to accommodate and assist impoverished communities during the time of the Covid-19 outbreak?</b></p> | <p>Woolworths is constantly implementing innovative campaigns to give back to communities in need; according to Interviewee 1, there are "...various initiatives and campaigns in stores right now (during the Covid-19 pandemic), where we (Woolworths as an organisation) invite the customer to donate..." A current campaign that encourages customers to participate is the "customer trolley donation campaign". This campaign allows customers to buy a long life product or product with a longer shelf life, and drop it off in the donation trolley at the entrance of the store.</p> <p>Alternatively, customers can make Snapscan donations at the till points. Interviewee 1 referred to this campaign as a "give-back campaign"; through partnerships with "charity organisations such as Gift of the Givers and Community Action Network (CAN)" these donations are directed to vulnerable communities in need.</p> <p>According to Interviewee 2, at the start of the Covid-19 outbreak when restrictions and curfews were put in place, most organisations were unable to collect surplus food if they did not have an Essential Service permit. In this case, Woolworths "partnered with organisations like Gift of Givers, to then collect and redistribute in the place of those organisations which could not access" the stores without a permit.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <p><b>Aside from food waste management, what sustainable business practices are you aware of that has been implemented at store level?</b></p>                        | <p>To answer this question, Interviewee 2 referred back to the surplus food that is made available to store staff and justified the implementation of this staff offering by saying "...charity begins at home..." Interviewee 2 mentioned the need to look inward before donating surplus food to charity organisations as many of the staff in stores could also benefit from this food. An way in which, according to Interviewee 2, Woolworths looks after its staff, is by making products available to staff during their shifts. For example,</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p>Woolworths' way of mitigating the "waste to landfill" problem in terms of food waste is to donate surplus foods to charity organisations and by including easy to understand recycling labels for consumers to recycle packaging once bought.</p> <p>Woolworths is also phasing out single use plastic bags at the store</p> |

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|                                                                                                             | <p>"...fruit or things like that (assuming the referral to vegetables and other fresh produce)... we (Woolworths) make available to our staff during... their shifts so they can have something to eat." In addition to this staff offering, Woolworths also offers an "energizer programme" that recognises "great work" from staff and rewards them with a voucher that can be redeemed at the "waste shop" so these staff members are able to "take something home to their families..."</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <p>level and encouraging shoppers to purchase reusable low cost bags to help prevent the excess amount of plastic that ends up in landfills.</p> <p>Woolworths' "mandatory compliance by suppliers" in regards to its "Code of Conduct and Good Business Journey" is another way Woolworths ensures that all its stakeholders are following the same protocols and business ethics (Woolworths Holdings Limited, 2019:12).</p> <p>Woolworths is also aiming to reduce water consumption in stores, of which has dropped by 55.6% since 2007.</p>                                                                                                                     |
| <p><b>Are there any other food waste management methods you feel Woolworths should be implementing?</b></p> | <p>Woolworths is "always looking for new opportunities to improve, and one of these opportunities to improve, comes through... collaborations." – Interviewee 2. Woolworths currently partners with organisations like Gift of the Givers, CAN and FoodForward SA to name those that were mentioned in the interview. Woolworths is a brand that is "recognised for... its food safety protocols that are in place". In order to maintain its core brand culture and principles throughout the supply chain, Woolworths chooses to collaborate and partner with companies and organisations that can guarantee that they will follow the same principles in order to maintain the brand culture. So although more food waste management initiatives could have been implemented with partners and collaborations, Interviewee 2 expressed the difficulty of finding other organisations that are able to maintain Woolworths' brand promise throughout the supply chain, which is why Woolworths implements</p> | <p>As a large food retailer, Woolworths has always been conscious of its environmental footprint, which is managed through the Good Business Journey initiative. Woolworths' high sustainability risks urges the brand to maintain its reputation throughout its supply chain by implementing sustainable practices from farm to fork. In terms of food waste, Woolworths' concern regarding food security, price inflation and large amounts of waste that ends up in landfills due to inadequate recycling infrastructure, poor packaging, and poor management, means that the company is constantly sourcing new ways in which it can contribute sustainably.</p> |

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|                                                                                              | many practices in-house. – Interviewee 2.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Targets are set a few years in advance in order to ensure that waste and packaging commitments are met. |
| <b>Have you had any response or feedback on Woolworths' food waste management practices?</b> | <p>When asked this question, Interviewee 2 responded that sustainability and food waste management is "part of what we (Woolworths) do... and it's been there for... as long as I can remember." He mentioned that Woolworths' sustainable efforts have made a difference to everyone, including the store teams and employees across the company, as well as to communities.</p> <p>During Covid-19, due to risk factors, the sale of surplus food to store staff is limited, and according to Interviewee 2, many staff members have expressed that they have struggled without access to this food. This highlights that the fact that staff are verbalising their longing for the product offering means that it obviously made a difference to their lives when it was available.</p> |                                                                                                         |

## **Appendix G PGDIP Ethical Clearance Letter**



3 July 2020

**Student name:** Michaela Rebecca Ovadia

**Campus:** Vega Bordeaux

**Re: Approval of Postgraduate Diploma in Brand Context Management Proposal and Ethics Clearance**

### **PGDIP ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER**

Your research proposal and the ethical implications of your proposed research topic were reviewed by your supervisor and the campus research panel, a subcommittee of The Independent Institute of Education's Research and Postgraduate Studies Committee.

Your research proposal posed no significant ethical concerns and your supporting documents and instruments are in order to proceed. We hereby provide you with permission to proceed with your research.

In the event of you deciding to change your research methodology in any way, kindly consult your supervisor to ensure all ethical considerations are adhered to and pose no risk to any participant or party involved. A revised ethical clearance letter will be issued.

We wish you all the best with your research!

#### GENERAL CONDITIONS TO BE FULFILLED IN RELATION TO RESEARCH

*Permission is granted to proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met and may be withdrawn should any of these conditions be flouted.*

**Please note:** The panel has not considered the merits, accuracy or ethical soundness of the research. The only merits examined are the use of The IIE as a sample.

Permission is granted subject to the following conditions:

1. The researcher(s) will need to obtain informed consent in writing from all of the participants in his/ her sample if the study is not anonymous.
2. The researcher(s) may only use the data collected for research purposes and in no other way.
3. Photographs of human subjects may only be taken if relevant to the research, informed consent was obtained, and even with informed consent, the photographs may not be published on any online platforms.
4. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
5. No names or identifying information of participants may be used within the research and the research must be voluntary.
6. Please make it clear that the information will not be used punitively in any way and participants may in no way be counselled/advised based on this.

Supervisor: Mrs Mbali Rametse



Campus Postgraduate Coordinator (CPC): Dr Tish Taylor

