



RESEARCH REPORT (RESE8419)

Kuhle Mahlatshana (17537269)



The implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a tool to control sustainable practices of a large retail organization in Cape Town.

Supervisor's name: Alan Bird

Lecture's name: Adam de Beer

Institution: The IIE Varsity College Cape Town

I, Kuhle Mahlatshana hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Management degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

Signed _____

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Abstract

Sustainability alludes to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs. Considering this definition, humanity and societies today face challenges to sustainability and these challenges are expected to become more important in the future. Puhace (2017) also asserts that the subject of sustainability is perhaps the biggest challenge for the business industry and is viewed as a main threat to the environment and society, which needs a fast solution. However, this research paper examined the way that the large retail organization in Cape Town implements Corporate Social Responsibility as a business strategy in order to manage their sustainable practices. The qualitative research design was used as the research method while primary data was collected through two individual in-depth interviews because it enabled the researcher to pose questions to participants with the purpose of getting more perspectives, sentiments, and convictions about a specific phenomenon. Responses from the interviews indicate that the large retail organization contributes extensive CSR initiatives to a great extent in order to solve some of the sustainability issues. The findings further show that their CSR and sustainability focus are based on the following areas; educate to employ, environment efficiency, strengthen our communities, develop their local supply chain, and to drive transformation and empowerment.

Keywords: Sustainable practices, Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR initiatives, Business strategy, Sustainable organization.

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1. Introduction

The following section sets the direction for this study by introducing the research topic to the reader. It will further discuss the background of this study, the rationale why this study is worth researching, as well as the research question and the objectives that will be achieved. Additionally, a well-defined problem statement will be clarified.

Contextualization

According to the World Energy Foundation (2014), the word sustainability began to be used more in the 1980s. Rosen (2018; 2) proclaims that the challenge of achieving sustainability for societies is not restricted to the present day, despite the fact that the global nature of the problem has come to the fore in the past decades. According to Du Plessis and Grobler (2014: 3), sustainability originates from the concept of managing the environment with the aim of coordinating how an organization can survive without compromising the ecological, social and economic environment to meet current and future prerequisites. Crowther and Aras (2008; 15) also proclaims that the raw materials of an extractive nature such as coal, iron, or oil are finite in quantity and once used are not available for future use.

However, Iszatt-White and Saunders (2014) assert that over the past ten years, the necessity for organizations and business leaders to act in a responsible manner has expanded at an incredible pace. Social pressure from consumers, activists, and governments has requested that businesses should improve their moral and ecological record. Lawful pressures from changes in both national and worldwide law have demanded organizations to focus on its impact on the world's natural resources. Additionally, Iszatt-White and Saunders further proclaims that scientific and media pressure around the issue of environmental change has constrained numerous organizations to monitor the impact they have on the environment and develop programs that address the key issue of sustainability.

However, Aregbeshola, Luiz, Ojah, Oosthuizen, Palmer, and Venter (2011) maintains that concerns regarding environmental change have prompted an expanding array of laws and incentive structures such as corporate social responsibility. Van Den Ende (2004) also confirms that corporate social responsibility is an expansive term that

highlights the requirement for responsibility in numerous spheres of business such as poor working conditions and dumping of hazardous waste.

Presently, organizations have increasingly attracted attention in the sustainability debate, since they contribute antagonistic effects on the environment and individuals of this planet (Cannon, 1994). To ensure a long-term achievement, Witjes, Vermeulen, and Cramer (2017) assert that organizations need to confront pressures to address the current and future impacts on society which they directly or indirectly cause while executing their business activities. Therefore, with the above background in mind, the researcher developed an interest to explore the concept of CSR as a tool that intends to meet the needs of the present without compromising the capacity of people in the future to meet their own needs.

Rationale

The reason why this study is pertinent and worth researching is that as proposed by Rosen (2018: 1), humanity and societies today face challenges to sustainability and these challenges are expected to become more important in the future. Van Den Ende (2004: 82) also declares that almost 90 million individuals are added to the world populace every year and it appears that this overpopulation growth is putting pressure on the earth and its resources. Ethnic and political clashes rack every corner of the earth, and global warming, the depletion of the ozone layer, the burning of fossil fuels, the eradication of fauna and flora, and HIV/AIDS further compromise planet earth. Additionally, Iszatt-White and Saunders (2014) assert that the world economy is attempting to find methods of dealing with increasingly scarce resources such as energy, food, and water.

Ally (2013) also affirms that with our planet being at stake due to activities that we perform, it is vital that all companies must manage themselves as accountable on all measures and actions that they perform. Therefore, with the above information, CSR initiatives are significant to the extent that they help to control these sustainable challenges that are faced by organizations. Hence, the significance of this study is to create awareness for organizations to apply CSR programs towards the community and environment by satisfying commitments to society and being liable for their activities towards the environment. This research study aims to achieve this by

contributing to the body of knowledge regarding CSR by examining the implementation of CSR by the large retail organization.

Problem Statement

According to Aregbeshola et al. (2011: 41), sustainability alludes to meeting the needs of the present without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs. Considering this definition, Crowther and Aras (2008; 41) comprehends that sustainability begins from the point that if resources are used in the present then they will be no longer accessible for the use of future generations, and then society would face a global crisis. Rosen (2018) affirms that the reason why this is a problem and should be solved is that issues and concerns epitomized by sustainability are wide and various. Puhace (2017) also asserts that the subject of sustainability is perhaps the biggest challenge for the business industry and is viewed as a main threat to the environment and society, which needs a fast solution.

According to Rosen (2018), these issues include challenges such as resource supply (water, energy, minerals), environmental change and contamination, management of wastes (toxic, hazardous, radioactive), sanitation, land use and desertification, species extinction and loss of biodiversity, water quality and droughts, air pollution, ecosystem degradation, natural and anthropogenic disasters. In order for organizations to be considered as sustainable, they are also expected to deal with economic empowerment and social upliftment in their practices because of society's needs and issues such as contributing to education, infrastructure development of communities, creation of jobs, human rights, reasonable labour practices, living conditions, volunteerism, diversity, and wellbeing commitments to society.

Additionally, considering the economic, social, and environmental issues currently experienced in South Africa, Van Den Ende (2004: 82) proclaims that organizations are expected to contribute to a great extent in order to solve some of these issues. Hence, the most ideal option for organizations to go up against these issues is by implementing a CSR program throughout the organization.

Research Goal and Research Question

According to Fasoulis and Kurt (2019), CSR is generally seen as part of a business strategy that integrates and deals with sustainability challenges. With that being said, the general purpose of this study was to investigate how CSR is implemented by the large retail organization. Additionally, the aim of this study is to allow individuals and businesses that are associated with the large retail organization and other organizations to gain a greater understanding on how CSR can be implemented in order to manage sustainability challenges.

The research question of this study states as follow: In which way does the large retail organization in Cape Town implement Corporate Social Responsibility as a business strategy in order to manage their sustainable practices?

Objectives

To determine in which way CSR is implemented by the large retail organization.

To get an in-depth understanding of the significance of CSR within the large retail organization.

To determine whether that the large retail organization is implementing sustainable CSR initiatives.

2. Literature Review

According to du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, and Bezuidenhout (2014: 101), the purpose of a literature review is to put the research study within reach into perspective, to determine what past researchers have composed on the topic as well as to identify the main models and theories that are applicable to your research study. Therefore, the purpose of this literature review is to gain a deeper and more empathic comprehension of the implementation of CSR on a firm-level by gaining insight into the previous literature. The literature review will also tackle CSR based on the objectives of this study using secondary sources such as published academic journals, books, and dissertations. Additionally, different theories will be analysed according to the purpose of this study and all key terms will be identified and conceptualized to the relevance of this study.

Theoretical Foundation

According to du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, and Bezuidenhout (2014: 37), a theoretical framework is a methodical description of concepts, constructs, and relationships of a phenomenon in discipline. On account of this study, Carroll's CSR Pyramid and the Stakeholder theory are the fundamental theories that are used in this study to comprehensively comprehend the concept of implementing corporate social responsibility on a firm-level.

Carroll's CSR Pyramid

Iszatt-White and Saunders (2014: 259) maintain that the CSR pyramid was developed by Archie Carroll. Carroll (2016: 4) affirms that the four-part definition of CSR was originally published in 1979, and in 1991, Carroll separated the four-part definition and altered it as a CSR pyramid.

Iszatt-White and Saunders (2014: 259) assent that the CSR model seeks to identify the duties of an organization, while simultaneously highlighting the tensions that exist when pioneers in organizations need to settle on choices that could be viewed as a decision between two contending goods, for instance, between settling on an ethical decision or making more profits. In view of this, Carroll (2016) proposed that the duty of business could be characterized by understanding the expectations that wider society placed on organizations. The four broad areas of the CSR model consist of economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities in order for organizations to manage their sustainable practices.

Economic responsibility: According to Carroll and Shabana (2010: 90), the economic responsibility of business is to produce products and services that will allow the organization to generate profit. As indicated by Hlatywayo (2015: 16), when an organization like the large retail organization in Cape Town accomplishes its economic expectations it will have the option to perform different responsibilities and it won't be able to breach moral and legitimate expectations by committing violations and neglecting to invest into CSR activities. Hence, the economic responsibility will provide the large retail organization with profits that will assist them on initiating different CSR initiatives that will help to control the sustainable challenges that they are facing.

Legal responsibility: According to Hlatywayo (2015: 17), lawful duties include complying with statutes, guidelines, managerial codes, official institutions, and court decisions. Hlatywayo further assert that when an organization does conform to legal requirements it will be able to accomplish its economic ambitions and eventually be able to meet ethical and philanthropic responsibilities that will assist on solving their sustainable challenges.

Ethical responsibility: Alludes to activities that are viewed as satisfactory by individuals of the community even though they are not recorded as laws (Carroll & Shabana, 2010: 95). Hlatywayo (2015: 17) also avows that such actions are considered as reasonable and just to a specific society and community, and these responsibilities of an organization encapsulate those measures, standards, or expectations that reflect a concern for what employees, consumers, investors, and the community see as reasonable. Hence, ethical responsibilities of the large retail organization in Cape Town will help them to comply with the law in order to manage their sustainable practices and to provide a positive impact within the environment.

Philanthropic responsibility - Cohen, Taylor, and Camen (2012: 5) indicates that the fourth layer of responsibility is to make contributions to society beyond compliance, profitability, and business morals. Hlatywayo (2015; 17) also adds that philanthropic responsibility is considered as voluntary and charitable activities that organizations do because of society's needs such as contributing to education, infrastructure development of communities, and wellbeing commitments to society. In which on account of this study the researcher wanted to identify what philanthropic initiatives are executed by the large retail organization in order to manage their sustainable practices.

Considering the four broad areas of CSR, this theory is applicable for this study to the extent that it expounds on the various duties that organizations should attempt to satisfy all obligations in the best interest of the business, in which on account of this study it assisted on analysing the CSR initiatives performed by the large retail organization in order to remain as a sustainable business.

The Stakeholder theory

According to Asemah, Okpanachi, and Olumuji (2013: 207), the stakeholder concept was developed by Edward Freeman in the 1980s. Currently, the stakeholder concept

is a theory of organizational management and business morals that addresses ethics and values in managing an organization. Freeman and Reed (1983) distinguishes and models the groups which are partners of an organization and both portray and recommends strategies by which management can provide with regards to the interests of those groups.

Chazireni (2017: 97) states that with regards to the Stakeholder theory, the organization's major objective is to adjust the expectations for all stakeholders through their operations. Similarly, Meier, Favero, and Zhu (2015) affirm that the way organizations integrate with investors, workers, community, suppliers, global organizations, environment, government, and other stakeholders is usually a key component of the CSR concept and sustainability upliftment. In any case, Brown and Forster (2013) proclaim that the fundamental aspect of the Stakeholder theory is dictated by the stakeholders of an organization and uncovers the organization's obligation for them. In addition, these aspects are imperative to the organization on the grounds that their investment is liable due to the activities of the organization.

Therefore, the relevance of the Stakeholder theory is that since most organizations need the generosity of the public whether internal or external to succeed, this infers that the large retail organization in Cape Town have reasons to be socially responsible to their partners as well as to manage their sustainable practices. Additionally, this theory is also considered as appropriate for this study due to its managerial nature as it makes the organization aware of the existence of parties that it is responsible for, in which the theory assisted the researcher to identify CSR initiatives that the large retail organization implement in order to be responsible.

Literature Review

According to Motala (2018), the comprehension of CSR is ceaselessly progressing because of the affiliation linking business and society. However, Louw and Venter (2013: 51) affirms that an organizational strategy such as CSR distinguishes the key opportunities and challenges for an organization, and it is at this level the interface among businesses and society must be comprehended and responded to. Furthermore, this is because social and ecological factors such as poverty, water shortage, and environmental contamination present an organization with significant

dangers that should be adequately comprehended and responded to. According to Carroll and Shabana (2010: 87), CSR was absolutely attracting attention during Ford's time, and it is evident that the social movements of the 1960s were the reason for this. Some of the key movements that attracted CSR include social equality, women's rights, customers' privileges, and the environmental movement. Hopkins (2004: 4) also adds to this that during this period citizens were sceptical of their government and organizations, and individuals were concurrently realizing the significance of human rights and the need to save the fragile environment of the planet.

CSR in the South African Business Context

According to Ally (2013: 47), the term CSR is rarely used in the South African setting as there is a typical apprehension that the word responsibility may infer acknowledging and offering to redress human rights infringement that occurred during the apartheid era. Historically, Kabir, Mukuddem-Petersen, and Petersen (2015: 282) also declare that the CSR concept in South Africa was dominated by the concept of corporate philanthropic responsibility, especially pre-1994. However, Van Zyl (2013: 11) proclaims that South Africa has been encountering a lot of interest in CSR activities because of the growing economic, political, social, and environmental issues currently experienced in the nation. With these issues, organizations are beginning to ask themselves how they can engage in the social and environmental upliftment of the nation, and what issues they should spend their cash on. To a large extent, it is also expected by society that associations and the business network have a duty in contributing to solve these issues, and one path for organizations to do so is by implementing CSR programs within the strategies of an organization. With this implementation, the use of natural resources and environmental contamination are likely to be monitored by organizations within their business practices.

However, Ally (2013: 49) contends that organizations in South Africa have executed severe ecological management frameworks but the implementation is still inadequate. These frameworks when executed are on a voluntary premise because organizations are enthusiastic about taking care of the earth and society's well-being. Ally further contends that in order to curb environmental contamination the South African government desperately needs to institute legislations that contain stringent sanctions against such offenses.

CSR as a business strategy of controlling sustainable challenges

As indicated by Carroll (2016: 7), nations have been rapidly embracing CSR practices in both developed and developing regions, and CSR as a business strategy has become typical, formalized, coordinated, and extremely acclimatized into organizational structures, strategies, and practices. In addition, Hohnen (2007: 13) affirms that CSR is basically a strategic approach for organizations that aim to anticipate and address issues related with their interactions with others.

Asemah, Okpanachi, and Olumuji (2013: 198) affirms that corporate social responsibility has been seen for quite a while as an action that should be carried out by organizations to manage their sustainable practices, as well as creating a good reputation and an upper hand that can help the business world to contribute to the prosperity of the earth's environment. Ahmadian and Khosrowpour (2017: 2) also agree to this as they state that a growing number of corporate executives believe that a strategic approach to CSR provides organizations with an advanced method of acting accountable towards actions that they perform. Additionally, Crowther and Aras (2008: 21) proclaims that the CSR strategy is viewed as useful for business, not just in money-related terms but also in ethical terms, in other words; this implies that corporate social responsibility is good for business and its environment. Thus, ethical conduct and a concern for individuals and for the environment have appeared to have a positive relationship with corporate performance

However, Hillman and Keim (2001) contend that organizations seeking to execute CSR into their strategy need to be aware of the distinction between strategic, philanthropic, and coercive CSR. Financial performance studies of organizations occupied with CSR programs have recognized a distinction in the adequacy of CSR activities that are strategic, philanthropic, and coercive. Hillman and Keim further contend that strategic CSR activities such as stakeholder management can provide an organization with an upper hand that is difficult to imitate, whereas philanthropic CSR (resolving social issues) is simply emulated. Moreover, coercive tends to be more reactive than proactive and should be circumvented, for instance, long-term investments in research to develop elective energy sources would be viewed as a strategic CSR movement, whereas donating money to a community would be viewed as philanthropic (Hillman & Keim, 2001).

Additionally, Kabir, Mukuddem-Petersen, and Petersen (2015: 286) entails that South African companies control their sustainable practices by focusing on major areas of CSR activity such as education, social and community improvement, wellbeing and HIV/AIDS, the environment, food security and agriculture, job creation, small business support, housing and living conditions, and safety and security. Consequently, this implies that if an organization would focus on these perspectives, its operational activities would be regarded as sustainable towards the environment and the community.

Drivers of CSR implementation in order to be a sustainable organization

Revathy (2012) argues that corporate social responsibility is concerned about treating the stakeholders of the firm ethically or in a responsible way, and the wider aim of social responsibility is to create higher standards of living while safeguarding the profitability of the corporation. However, alongside economic contemplations of growth and profit as a driver of CSR, Cohen, Taylor, and Camen (2012) affirm that organizations should be held accountable for their effects on society and the environment when settling on all business decisions. With this in mind, creating higher standards of living while doing business would be beneficial for an organization to fulfil their sustainable practices in the essence that their social and environmental factors would be implemented in their CSR strategy.

According to Ahmadian and Khosrowpour (2017), there are two fundamental drivers of CSR, namely public policy and business strategy. Ahmadian and Khosrowpour further argue that a business strategy as a driver of CSR takes the consideration of expenses and advantages, and it is assumed that executing any new plan will come with costs such as cash, assets, and personnel. Hohnen (2007) also adds that CSR initiatives are driven by corporate ethics, organizational leadership, the general society, globalization, and the government. With these drivers, corporations are likely to act accountable towards the environment and the general community.

From the perspective of a large retail organization, Kabir, Mukuddem-Petersen, and Petersen (2015: 284) affirms that a significant driver of CSR is the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE), which sets principles in the CSR sector for listed organizations, as well as Trade Unions in which they play a significant role with regard to labour law, working conditions, employee benefits and HIV/AIDS prescriptions distribution to

representatives. Fredericksz (2015: 21) also suggests that the implementation of CSR within South African companies is driven by government regulations and the undeniably compulsory nature of B-BBEE and industry sanctions. In this way, it is suggested that South African CSR activities are largely driven by historical conditions in order to meet the need of the present without harming the earth's resources.

Nonetheless, Flores-Araoz (2011) argues that legislation is not a determining element for CSR in South Africa and that organizations are increasingly understanding the significance of CSR as a community and business imperative of providing sustainable actions. Van Den Ende (2004: 72-73) also supports this that organizations are generally approached to alter their ways, not only by laws and precedents but also by customers and stakeholders. Subsequently, with the goal for organizations to fulfil their sustainable practices, they have to recover the ethical high ground in front of the eyes of a broad scope of stakeholders, and it has become evident enough that organizations should rethink the manner in which society and people perceive their operations; and the way in which they behave toward society and the environment.

The benefits of implementing CSR towards sustainability issues

According to Kranz (2010), research results on the CSR implementation with strategic contemplations generally show that a more competitive industry has a superior social level that is aimed at reducing sustainability issues. Hohnen (2007: 14) also approves that a rational CSR strategy that is based on integrity, sound ethics as well as a long-term approach will offer a clear business advantage to organizations by providing an optimistic commitment to society, which will also directly solve some of the environmental issues that are concerned within a particular organization. A CSR strategy also provides organizations with the opportunity to show their human face of taking care of the earth's resources and Hohnen further contends that when implementing a CSR strategy, organizations should identify and respect local and social contrasts.

Additionally, in 2002 Porter and Kramer (Yusuf & Kahar, 2018: 244) explained that the monetary sacrifices for CSR initiatives do have a positive impact on the performance of a firm's social and environmental factors. Lawrence and Weber (2002) also agree that if an enterprise makes CSR as a component of its business vision and strategy, it will enjoy a reputation and increment business value of meeting the needs of the

present without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs. Yusuf and Kahar (2018) also assents Lawrence and Weber's opinion and they express that it is supported by the CSR Theory that in order to provide a sustainable living, companies must coordinate business objectives with social and environmental objectives as a whole, and these strategic CSR activities can enhance competitive advantages such as brand reputation and good relationships with regulators and consumers for acting accountable towards the environment.

Yusuf and Kahar (2018) additionally affirms that there are different benefits of CSR implementation by different organizations. According to Crowther and Aras (2008: 37), organizations enjoy the following benefits when they implement CSR initiatives by meeting sustainability issues such as providing health and wellbeing benefits, ease of attracting investment, general improved image and relationship with stakeholders, and providing the firm with a more robust social license to operate in the community. Additionally, Crowther and Aras further proclaim that with these benefits organizations are more likely to initiate CSR initiatives that are aimed at reducing some of the sustainable issues that organisations encounter.

Conceptualization

According to du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, and Bezuidenhout (2014: 107), meanings of specific terms differ with contexts, and in the purpose of this study the following terms have been defined.

Sustainable practices

For the purpose of this study, sustainable practices are defined as creating a plan of action that is sustainable from an ecological, financial, and social perspective and that identifies strategies and practices that contribute to a more sustainable world (Cohen, Taylor, & Camen, 2012: 3).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

According to this study, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is about the integrity with which an organization governs itself, fulfils its mission, lives by its values, engages with its partners and measures its impacts, and publicly reports on its activities (Ally, 2013).

CSR initiatives

This study applies CSR initiatives as the sum of the voluntary actions concerned with diminishing the negative impacts of corporate actions in pursuit of a business strategy (Cohen, Taylor & Camen, 2012: 3).

Business strategy

For the purpose of this study, a business strategy alludes to the utilization of CSR tools, methods and systems that contribute to the sustainable performance of an organization (Cohen, Taylor & Camen, 2012: 3).

Sustainable Organization

According to Louw and Venter (2013: 56), a sustainable organization is a business that contributes to sustainable development by delivering economic, social, and environmental benefits; the so-called triple bottom line. With regard to this study, a sustainable organization is viewed as an umbrella term for proactive efforts to plan and implement financially suitable plans of action that contribute to tackle some of the mind-boggling social and environmental issues that society faces.

3. Research Design and Methodology

This section presents the methodology embraced for a research study and explains the research processes that was utilized throughout the study. Additionally, the methodology of the research is significant as it helps to draw emphasis on systematic methods of giving answers to research questions (Aden, 2017).

Therefore, this section will start with a detailed clarification of the research paradigm and design of this study. It will also present the population of the study, sampling procedure, data collection techniques as well as the data analysis process.

Research Paradigm

According to du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, and Bezuidenhout (2014: 19), a paradigm can be viewed as a group of comparative convictions or the way people think and it facilitates how a particular discipline should be considered, how the pragmatist should be deciphered and in what manner the research should be conducted. However, there

are three types of paradigms that are used in research, namely positivism, interpretivism, and critical realism.

On account of this study, the interpretivism paradigm was used because as proposed by Maree (2020: 66), this paradigm is constructive to the extent that it emphasises the capacity of an individual to construct meaning. Gemma (2018) proclaims that an interpretivism paradigm contends that truth and knowledge are theoretical, as well as socially and historically situated, based on an individual's experiences and their understanding. Maree (2020) also asserts that the role of the researcher in the interpretivist paradigm is to comprehend and explain social reality through the eyes of various participants. Therefore, the relevance of this paradigm to this study is that it analysed respondents' feedback on the essence of reality and social action that assisted on cultivating a deeper understanding of the implementation of CSR on a firm level of the large retail organization.

Additionally, the reason behind why the researcher didn't use the positivism and critical realism paradigm is that according to du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014), the purpose of a positivism is to find causal connections in order to anticipate and control events as well as advocating the use of natural sciences techniques to study certain phenomena whereas a critical realists look for aspects from both traditions (interpretivism and positivism) and combine it in a unique way. Hence, considering these two paradigms it was evident enough to the researcher that both paradigms were not applicable and relevant on the nature of this study.

Research Design

According to Osman (2009: 36), research design alludes to the blueprint that the researcher will use in order to execute the research study and it also shows the manner in which the data will be accumulated. The purpose of the research design is to attempt and ensure that the researcher has the research question in mind. Primarily, there are two well-known and recognized approaches to research namely the qualitative design and the quantitative design.

For this study, a qualitative design based on a questionnaire approach was utilized because the researcher wanted to accentuate on words and content instead of quantifications, in which it assisted to explore on how the large retail organization

implements CSR as a strategy in order to control sustainable challenges. The researcher also used this approach because as proposed by Osman (2009: 36), qualitative research design permits the researcher to gain an in-depth examination of the issue in order to comprehend what and why questions of human conduct, in which with regards to this study this relates to the research question of this study which aims to understand the way the large retail organization implements CSR in order to control sustainable challenges. The qualitative design also connects with the interpretivism paradigm because Osman further proclaims that it is also a systematic methodology that is used to depict life encounters and how individuals make meaning of their experiences.

However, on an ontological perspective, reality is a social construction because it is subjective and is created by human interaction, which alludes to the case of sustainability. Since qualitative studies are more based on deep comprehension and portraying life encounters, this study aimed at gaining a deeper and more empathic comprehension of the implementation of CSR within the operations of the large retail organization by using respondents' feedback on the essence of reality and social action. On an epistemological perspective, this study used respondents' interpretation of facts linked to the implementation of CSR practices of the large retail organization in Cape Town.

Additionally, the research problem was explored in the form of a survey questionnaire using a cross-sectional survey because the research was conducted at a specific point in time where data was collected from the large retail organization's employees once. In terms of the reasoning approach, du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, and Bezuidenhout (2014: 48-49) states that the deductive theorizing incorporates reasoning from general notions to more explicit suspicions, while inductive theorizing moves from explicit to general and applies its findings to more extract and expansive theoretical constructs. For this research study, the researcher used the research questions to solve the research problem using inductive reasoning. This reasoning approach also correlates with this study because the researcher first conducted the research study using a questionnaire with semi-structured questions and then formulated a theory from the conclusion.

Population

According to Mahlatshana (2012: 34), a population of a study can be defined as the total number of potential units or components that are included in a research study. It is the total of all units that get an opportunity of being sampled into a specific study. According to du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, and Bezuidenhout (2014), it is vital for the researcher to recognize the population parameters that guide the study and the sample of the population. du Plooy-Cilliers et al. further asserts that the shared characteristic and the number of individuals or social artefacts in a populace are referred to as the population parameters of the study. For this study, the population parameter consisted of all employees at a large retail outlet in South Africa. However, once the population parameters have been set and we have characterized our populace fittingly, we then need to distinguish between the target and the accessible population.

As indicated by Mack (2019), the accessible population is the group that a researcher has measured or included in a specific study. This is based on the group that the researcher can execute to a study considering the way that the target population might be large or widespread, making it difficult to determine the individuals of a populace. Whereas the target population insinuates to the group that a researcher needs to comprehend, and it is often based on everyone or everything that falls within the population parameters. Therefore, within the purpose of this study, the accessible population consisted of all employees from a specific large retail outlet in Cape Town and the target population were those employees working at the large retail organization head office.

Sampling

According to William and Trochim (2006), the number of inhabitants in a study is also based on the unit of analysis, which suggests the nature of the populace that will be most appropriate in finding answers for a specific research question. For any study, a unit of analysis mainly consists of people, groups, artefacts (books, photographs), geographical units (town, state), and social interactions (dyadic relations, divorces, arrests). For the purpose of this study, the unit of analysis included people (CSR employees of the large retail organization), artefacts (the official CSR report of the

large retail organization) and the geographical unit was the large retail organization itself.

According to Hlatywayo (2015: 50), a sampling frame is a critical component of the research design since it affects the quality of data gathered for the study. Osman (2009: 38) further proclaims that sampling indicates the strategy of selecting a group to represent the aggregate populace, and the qualitative researcher's concern is to find cases that will overhaul what researchers learn about the procedures of social activity in a specific setting. However, a sample refers to a set of objects, events or people selected from a parent populace for a research study. Similarly, Shaughness and Zechmeister (1997) refer to a sample as a subset of a populace drawn from the sampling frame.

According to Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe, and Young (2018), samples in qualitative research tend to be small in order to support the profundity of case-oriented analysis that is fundamental to this mode of inquiry. Alluding to this, the sample size of this research study was made from two representatives of the large retail organization who works under the CSR programs because individuals needed to be interviewed in order to allow an in-depth comprehension of the implementation of CSR within the large retail organization. The researcher's intention was always aimed at using a small sample size because of the nature of a qualitative study, in which two representatives were selected. Although the researcher could have used more CSR representatives of the large retail outlet, the impact of Covid-19 made it difficult for the researcher to increase the sample size of the study, hence, the researcher continued to use the two representatives that were planned at first. Additionally, the sample that the researcher used was suitable enough to gather the data that was needed to solve the research problem and to answer the research question of this study.

When a reasonable sample size has been resolved, the following significant thing is to decide the appropriate sampling technique to use in getting a representative sample (Mahlatshana, 2012: 35). The choice of a suitable sampling method relies upon the sampling procedure one embraces. Sampling procedure, according to Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2006), alludes to the technique utilized by the researcher in the determination of cases to observe. There are two sorts of sampling procedures, which consist of probability and non-probability sampling. Alluding to the above, non-

probability sampling was more suitable and was used for this study because it correlates with the research design of this study as the sample size is typically small and respondents were selected to fulfil a given quota. The researcher also needed to use this sampling procedure by looking at the population and research question of the study, and the researcher determined what characteristics from the populace were significant for the research, in which CSR representatives of the large retail organization were selected. Additionally, this sampling method was also applicable due to the researcher's time constraints and limited financial resources for completing this study.

However, non-probability sampling includes different types of sampling techniques such as the convenience, purposive, snowball, accidental, quota and volunteer sampling (Mahlatshana, 2012: 37). The type of sampling method that was selected for this study was the snowball method because as proposed by Maree (2020: 220), this technique is often utilized in situations where the populace is hard to find or where the research interest is in an interconnected group of individuals such as people working in the same company or a similar type of job. As for this study the researcher had contact with one of the employees of the large retail organization, in which that employee linked the researcher with two of the employees who manages the CSR portfolio of the organization. Referring to the sample size of this study, the reason why the researcher aimed for a minimum of two representatives is that the snowball technique does run the risk of not being able to get enough respondents to supply adequate data. Additionally, the reason why the researcher also chose to be referred to these participants is that the researcher had to acquire a sample with a populace that had a specific characteristic, experience or understanding and to find participants that will enhance the study by making an exceptional contribution that will yield information-rich data to the research study.

Data-collection method

Data collection is a process of gathering data from all the applicable sources in order to find answers to the research problem. Data collection methods can be divided into two categories: namely primary and secondary methods of data collection (Research Methodology, 2019). In order to answer the research question and to meet the objectives of this, this study relied heavily on both primary and secondary sources.

Primary data was collected through two individual in-depth interviews that were conducted by the researcher and these interviews consisted of open-ended questions. The reason why this study used an in-depth interview is that they are a qualitative data collection method which enables the researcher to pose questions to participants with the purpose of getting more perspectives, sentiments, and convictions about a specific phenomenon (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014: 188). Interviews are a form of conversation, with the primary aim of acquiring data based on open-ended questions in which this assisted the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of CSR by the large retail organization. Additionally, the in-depth interviews also provided a more elaborative discussion as it created a safe space for the participants to be open to the questions and feel comfortable when answering.

However, the type of an in-depth interview this study utilized was a semi-structured questionnaire and the significance of it is that it permitted new ideas to emerge during the interviews and the aim was to acquire obscure ideas and thoughts from the interviewee which assisted on gaining a deeper understanding that contributed to answer the research question. Both individual interviews were conducted telephonically through Microsoft Teams because of the impact of Covid-19 that restricted face-to-face contact, and informed consent on recording the interviews was provided to participants. The researcher's plan was to conduct the interviews through a direct phone, but since the representatives of the large retail organization were more familiar and comfortable with Microsoft Teams, the researcher had to learn and use Microsoft Teams as a communicating device tool for the interviews in order to suit the desire of the respondents.

The reason why the interviews were recorded is that information obtained was analysed more effectively and the researcher gained an advantage to reveal any underlying or hidden subtext. Buthelezi (2009: 48) also asserts that recorded interviews tend to be more spontaneous than composed reports and they enable the participant to remain as near as possible to their lived-experienced, in which this benefited this study. Secondary data was also obtained from the official CSR report of the large retail organization because it further assisted the researcher to get enough clarification on the CSR initiatives that are implemented by the large retail organization in order to control their sustainable practices. The researcher asked one of the

participants to share the CSR report of the large retail organization and he/she sent the report via email in which this assisted the researcher to gain a more in-depth understanding of the implementation of CSR by the large retail organization.

Additionally, to successfully gather the data for this study, a questionnaire was designed for the interview because as suggested by Babbie and Mouton (2003), questionnaires benefit a specific study by accelerating the procedure of data analysis as all of the respondents are posed similar questions and they are also less expensive and offer greater anonymity. The aim of using a questionnaire was also to gain more unknown ideas and thoughts from the interviewee and to make an interpretation of the research objective into explicit questions that are posed to the respondents. Referring to annexure A (questionnaire), types of questions that were used in the interviews include:

- Direct questions that demand response in a frank and often confrontational manner;
- Specific questions which focus on a particular aspect of a whole situation;
- Open-ended questions which enable respondents to express their opinions and ideas regarding a phenomenon (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014: 153).

With the in-depth interviews, questions moved from a broad to a narrow focus, clear and straightforward questions were also formulated to ensure that participants knew precisely what to answer and truly open-ended questions were asked in order to allow participants to express different sentiments and responses. All 10 questions that were asked in the questionnaire links with the research problem, purpose and objectives of this study, and each question permitted the researcher to obtain information that was required for this study. Questions in the questionnaire were also formulated in the manner that they were not leading or suggestive.

Furthermore, when the interviews were conducted, the researcher had to discuss the topic of the study and explain to each participant so that they gain a clear understanding in order to build relationships. Therefore, a formal greeting and general conversation took place and then was followed by the construct of the questionnaire where questions were posed. The reason behind this is that the researcher's aim was

not to rely only on the questionnaire for conversation during the interviews, but rather let the interview progress and flow in a natural, conversational manner that aimed at making participants to feel more comfortable when responding.

Before questions were posed to participants, both participants needed clarity from the researcher on the meaning of CSR as both participants were familiar to the term Corporate Social Investment (CSI) which is another term for CSR, and it is implemented in their respective retail organization. Each interview ran for an average of 20 minutes and the researcher booked appointments with participants on their given time and all participants received a questionnaire earlier before the interview date took place and questionnaires were sent via email to participants in order to prepare themselves about different questions that were asked to them.

Data analysis method

According to Osman (2009: 42), data analysis is the technique of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected information. Thom (2018) proclaims that analysing data is one of the most significant steps in conducting a research study because it assists by providing meaning to data drawn from members and converts it into applicable information that could be utilized in further exploration.

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport (2011: 397) assert that there are several ways of analysing qualitative data, and these techniques are expanding in numbers as researchers attempt to comprehend the social and subjective world. Notwithstanding these various strategies for analysis, the process typically involves lessening the volume of raw information, filtering significance from random data, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for conveying the quintessence of what the data uncovers. Thus, the common denominators of qualitative analysis methods are the reduction, organizing, interpretation, and validation of data. For the purpose of this study, the audio transcripts were used to interpret findings of the research. The motivation behind this is that this method provided feedback and explanation of confusing data.

The above method also assisted the researcher to analyse data using grouping and thematic coding methodology and all recordings were listened repetitively in order to establish the image presented by all the participants. The researcher needed to listen

carefully to what respondents were saying and although this method was time-consuming, data was reduced by allocating groups to similar type data and then analysed according to a theme grid (grouping and thematic coding), by deducting the recording and allotting contexts and themes that correlate with one another. In order to interpret the data comprising of 2 in-depth interviews and almost 50 minutes into commendable data, coding also assisted the researcher to minimize a large number of qualitative responses into just a couple of reasonable classifications that hold critical information indispensable for analysis. The coding of the themes was acquainted with the research question, objectives, and the purpose of this study. Information that was grouped within the coded concepts was then analysed with aid of the theories identified in the theoretical foundation and literature.

Data collected from secondary sources (CSR report of the large retail organization) was also coded to facilitate easy classification. This technique is most effective when looking at narratives in texts such as journals, books, leaflets, written documents, transcripts, news reports and visual media (Maree, 2020). In which the focus here for this study was on textual contents such as the CSR report of the large retail organization, as well as spoken words that were transcribed from the interviews. Notes were also composed immediately after the in-depth interviews. These notes served as a guide to the researcher to enquire further clarification with these recordings, thereby obtaining a more in-depth comprehension of the large retail organization's implementation of CSR.

Trustworthiness

According to du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, and Bezuidenhout (2014: 258), trustworthiness alludes to the validity of research findings and aims to gain a comprehension of a phenomenon within a setting rather than generalize findings to a wide populace. However, trustworthiness ensures that the findings of a particular research study are credible, transferable, dependable, and confirmable.

Credibility

Credibility alludes to the precision with which the researcher deciphered the information that was given by the participants (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014: 258). Thereby, to ensure that this study is credible, the act of

enhancing the trustworthiness was conducted through in-depth interview discussions with open-ended questions that provided reliable and comparable qualitative data, and that empowered respondents to express their discernments and perspectives on the concept of CSR within the operations of the large retail organization. Additionally, this research study enhanced the credibility by utilizing data triangulation such as primary and secondary methods in order to gain an in-depth understanding.

Transferability

Transferability is the capacity of the findings to be applied to a comparative situation and delivering similar outcomes (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014: 258). This implies as the study used in-depth interviews, other researchers could produce a study with a similar sample and receive comparative outcomes. The researcher also ensures that the findings were not generated to suit the study and they will empower future researchers exploring a similar study to use the findings of this research study as an academic source.

Dependability

Dependability alludes to the quality of the process of integration that takes place between the data collection technique, data analysis, and the theory generated from the data (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis & Bezuidenhout, 2014: 259). The researcher demonstrated dependability by showing an understanding and detailed discussion of the research design and data collection and analysis to ensure readers have a clear image.

Confirmability

According to Thom (2018: 37), confirmability is the process of ensuring the findings are formed by the respondent's feedback and not according to the researcher's biased interests. Thereby, the confirmability of this study ensures that questions in the questionnaire are formulated in the manner that were not leading or suggestive.

4. Presentation and interpretation of findings

This section sets the tone of assessing the findings that were uncovered after the data collection and data analysis and it will provide insights into the research question, research problem, and objectives of this study by understanding different ways that the large retail organization implements its CSR initiatives in order to control their sustainable practices.

Presentation of findings

The main objective of this study is to determine in which way CSR is implemented by the large retail organization in order to manage their sustainable practices and how important is the CSR strategy within the large retail organization. Alluding to the objectives of this study, ten themes emerged from the respondent's feedback that were obtained from the questionnaire (see Annexure A; interview questionnaire). However, in order to fully answer the research question and to meet the objectives of this study, two main central concepts emerged from the ten themes relative to the research problem statement, in which the main two concepts are the main themes that were used to address findings for this study, namely:

- CSR as a business strategy for controlling sustainable challenges and the impact that it has on the large retail organization.
- CSR initiatives implemented by the large retail organization.

In order to simplify the sample responses from the interviews, the data is clarified using the presentation of findings (below).

1) The question probed if the large retail organization implements CSR initiatives that control their sustainable practices

Both respondents agreed that the large retail organization implements CSR initiatives that are sustainable through their Corporate Social Investment.

2) The large retail organization's CSR initiatives are achieving the intended results of controlling their sustainable practices

When asked, one of the respondents firmly agreed and the other respondent mentioned that its bit of both (yes and no), as there are areas where there's

been improvement, but then there's also areas where there's still room for growth.

3) CSR is important to the large retail organization

When asked, both respondents agreed. One of the respondents also voiced that CSR within the large retail organization is viewed as a social licence to trade.

4) The question probed if the large retail organization is meeting the needs of the community

Both respondents firmly agreed to this, as both mentioned that the general public and the community are important stakeholders into their corporate social investment.

5) Every brand of the large retail organization contributes to their CSR initiatives

Both respondents agreed, as one stated that every single brand of their 29 brands does contribute towards their CSR and sustainability portfolio in different forms.

6) The large retail organization communicates frequently to their stakeholders with regards to their CSR initiatives

When asked, one of the respondents agreed and the other respondent was moderate to her answer, as she expressed that they do provide awareness of their CSR initiatives to their stakeholders, but they should speak about it more, particularly when you look at what other companies are doing, as the large retail organization does not speak about it as frequently or as loudly as some of the other companies do.

7) The question probed if there are any drivers for the large retail organization to implement their CSR initiatives

Both respondents firmly agreed, in which both voiced that sustainability itself is the main driver to them.

8) The large retail organization benefits from implementing their CSR towards their sustainable issues

When asked, both respondents firmly agreed, as they both mentioned that shared value is one of the most benefits for everyone within the sustainability perspective. One of the respondents also voiced that being sustainable and implementing CSR helps the large retail organization to do business better and smarter.

9) The question probed if there are any practices or measures that the company can implement in order to improve and build their CSR initiatives

Both participants agreed to this, as one of the respondents specified that the organization can improve on their CSR initiatives by implementing more collaborations across their industry (retail), in order to manage their sustainable practices and to provide a positive impact within the environment and society. The other respondent elaborated that improvement could be monitoring their projects better and evaluating them better, as well as better measurement.

10)The question probed if is there any motivation for other businesses to further participate in CSR programs

When asked, one of the respondents felt that there is no motivation for companies to participate in CSR programmes, as she expounded that she doesn't think that anyone or any organization really needs motivation because it's pretty clear that if you can, you must be sustainable, and if you can't you need to figure out why you can't so that we can put you in a position where you can. The other respondent elaborated that retail organizations and other organizations from different industries need to recognize that the change that we need in our country is not going to come from one individual or organization or one body of people, but it's going to come from working together and organizations need to consider what they have in their hands and how they can use it in order to bring change to our country.

Interpretation of findings

Theme 1: CSR as a business strategy for controlling sustainable challenges and the impact that it has on the large retail organization

As indicated by Carroll (2016), nations have been rapidly embracing CSR practices in both developed and developing regions, and CSR as a business strategy has become typical, formalized, coordinated, and extremely acclimatized into organizational structures, strategies, and practices. Alluding to Carroll's statement, it is found that the large retail organization's CSR strategy is embedded into their operational practices, as one of the respondent's supports this by a statement that the group has a specific portfolio that holds sustainability, and sustainability to them is a journey and it sits within the business optimization space. The respondent also expounded that they are very aware in terms of their size, but more importantly, their responsibility to give back. Sustainability to them is certainly not a short-term thing, but it's a long-term thing where they want to make sure that they are trading in a hundred years from now.

The other respondent also mentioned that sustainability is quite significant to them as the company is not just concerned with making money, but it's also concerned with ensuring that South Africa is doing well, in which the above aligns with the ethical responsibility in Carroll's CSR Pyramid, which reflects an organization norms, values and convictions. One of the respondents also expounded that sustainability to them is also viewed as a social license to trade, as well as a strategic business imperative in which they ensure to give back before they can even consider how much shoes or clothes they've sold and the organization also recognize the need to find inventive approaches to deliver on business imperatives while ensuring a meaningful and adaptable social and environmental impact. Moreover, the respondent mentioned that the large retail organization has a specific function of portfolio within the group that ensures that these CSR initiatives are happening every year to play a part within the society and the environment.

Additionally, based on the findings it was evident enough as both participants voiced that employees, investors, customers and the general public of the large retail organization are considered as the most important stakeholders that the organization considers when they do their CSR initiatives. The above aligns with Freeman's

stakeholder theory, which introduces a concept that an organization's major objective is to adjust the expectations for all stakeholders through their operations and that the way organizations integrate with investors, workers, community, suppliers, global organizations, environment, government, and other stakeholders is usually a key component of the CSR concept and sustainability upliftment.

Theme 2: CSR initiatives implemented by the large retail organization

Considering the economic, social, and environmental issues currently experienced in South Africa, Van Den Ende (2004) proclaims that organizations are expected to contribute to a great extent in order to solve some of the sustainability issues, and the best alternative for organizations to go up against these issues is by implementing CSR programs throughout the organization. To determine whether the large retail organization is implementing CSR as a business strategy in order to manage their sustainable practices, it is found that the organization's CSR and sustainability strategy is embedded on the following key CSR initiatives and sustainability areas where they believe that they can make the biggest impact which include; educate to employ, environment efficiency, strengthen our communities, develop their local supply chain, and to drive transformation and empowerment.

Educate to Employ

As indicated by Hlatywayo (2015), philanthropic responsibility is considered as voluntary and altruistic initiatives that organizations do because of society's needs such as contributing to education, infrastructure development of communities, and wellbeing commitments to society. Alluding this to the large retail organization's Foundation, it is indicated from their CSR report that they have donated R1.8 million towards educational projects over the previous year, as well as contributing these educational projects in Namibia, Zambia, Swaziland, and Lesotho. The large retail organization also offer internships, learnerships, skills development, academic programmes, and bursaries to attract and up-skill high-calibre individuals for roles at their head office and across their brands in all stores. School shoes for students at Litha Primary school, Gugulethu, were also distributed and one of the intriguing concepts on how they value their CSR initiatives is that doing good for them never goes out of fashion and they always aim to do big compared to what they are capable to do.

Both respondents also mentioned that they collaborated with a group of stakeholders in a project where they built six classrooms at a school in Paarl, Nederburg primary. One of the respondents further expounded that it was such a success for them and everyone when they opened the classrooms, and now those learners have a place to learn and it's not just going to benefit them, but it's also going to benefit learners to come for many years, in which this highlights the standard definition and the aim of sustainability, to meet the needs of the present as well as of future generations. Additionally, the above initiatives also align with the philanthropic responsibility in Carroll's CSR Pyramid, that organizations make contributions to society beyond compliance, profitability, and business morals.

Environment Efficiency

As indicated by Rosen (2018), the sustainability of humankind implies ensuring a capacity of the earth to support human and activities related to it. Human economies and populaces have grown in such a way that anthropogenic activities presently have global and long-term impacts, with different outcomes. Aghbashlo and Rosen (2018) additionally maintains that extraction or utilization of limited resources and the release into the environment of emissions and squanders to the air, water and land also put sustainability at risk. In order for organizations to meet the needs of the present without compromising the capacity of future generations to meet their own needs, organizations need to contribute a positive impact into the environment, and they must ensure that they are aware and accountable of their environmental practices. Alluding this to the large retail organization, their CSR report indicates that they ensure that they meet the needs of present by reducing water consumption, in which significant water-saving initiatives were implemented at their head office and warehouses in 2018, and this included the utilization of underground water and a greywater system. The large retail organization invested R3,6 million in environmental-efficiency initiatives over the past few years, and they also partake in the Carbon Disclosure Project and they achieved a score of B for 2019. However, this aligns with Hillman and Keim's (2001) statement, that long-term investments in research to develop elective energy sources would be viewed as a strategic CSR movement. Additionally, this improvement shows that they are upholding their responsibility to measure and

diminish their carbon emissions and they encourage responsible environmental practice.

Managing waste at their head office and dispersion centres remain a focus area, in which a new system was acquainted in 2018 to manage printing and they have seen a positive abatement of 13% for 2020. One of the respondents also voiced that they have been able to put solar panels, in which that's a great initiative for the environment specifically to get electricity down. The above initiatives align with Hohnen's (2007) statement, that a CSR strategy provides organizations with the opportunity to show their human face of taking care of the earth's resource, and they also address some of the issues of sustainability such as resource supply (water, energy, minerals), diminishing carbon emissions, and management of wastes.

Strengthen our communities

Rosen (2018) maintains that societal sustainability is a broad concept, including wellbeing, equity, cultural development, and many other factors. As human wellbeing and prosperity are a significant factor of social sustainability, Smil (2007) asserts that numerous factors that contribute to human wellbeing incorporate access to healthy and clean food and drinking water, safe garbage removal, and an environment without harmful substances that can prompt incessant or acute infections. Alluding to the above, one of the respondents stated that the organization considers its CSR initiatives important by considering the communities that they operate in, as she further elaborated that they wouldn't just put a factory somewhere, but they would first consider the consequences of that factory on that community. The other respondent stated that they trade in Africa, the United Kingdom, as well as Australia, and what's more important for each of these geographies is to ensure that they understand the needs of the community.

Looking at the initiatives that they have done to strengthen communities, one of the respondents also mentioned that they have done vegetable gardens in Caledon, and they also run a toy and stationary drive every year in some communities. The respondent further expounded that they also do several campaigns for their employees in their head office, as they create opportunities for them to give back to society. The CSR report also indicates that the organization donated R22 million and positively impacted the lives of 650 000 individuals in South Africa. R5.3 million was

also invested into Sew Good, one of the Group's flagship CSR projects, and this year the Group changed the blanket packaging from plastic to recyclable reusable sacks and the decision to change the bags was an environmental one. One of the respondents also elaborated that the Group has also collaborated with some stakeholders on a project that donates customer returned products to communities affected by disaster relief. Additionally, the above initiatives suggest that the large retail organization considers societal sustainability into their CSR initiatives.

Develop their local supply chain

To sustain growth and to provide a positive impact, it is found that their local supply chain strategy is key to growing the large retail organization as they understand that they need to look beyond business as usual and to do things differently. This implies that they consider their actions where operations are under their control, and their actions are guided by their shared value strategy, which is about creating a positive and enduring impact within communities while ensuring financial and reputational gain for the organization. However, the above is emphasized through Asemah, Okpanachi, and Olumuji (2013) statement, that CSR has been seen for quite a while as an initiative that should be carried out by organizations to manage their sustainable practices, as well as creating a good reputation and an advantage that can help the business world to contribute to the prosperity of the earth's environment.

Drive transformation and empowerment

Rosen (2018) maintains that an economy that provides good living standards, the service that individuals require, and occupations is necessary for sustainability in society. A sustainable society requires long term economic development rather than just economic growth, and this aligns with one of the respondent's feedback as she voiced that that they provide economic empowerment from the Sew Good project in which they employ women in a factory and they teach them skills, which is a need in our country. The other respondent stated that's a great initiative for them by taking previously unemployed women to be able to help them and train them, and by giving them a job. This infers that if you're giving one family member a job, they're able to impact their own families, which is the aim of sustainability. Furthermore, one of the respondent's voiced that the organization is looking forward to 2021, as the COVID-19 pandemic has been an unprecedented crisis and placing immense strain on South

African society. As South Africa's economy will be in critical need of job opportunities post-COVID-19, the large retail organization plans to be well-positioned to react to this national need through their CSR and local supply chain strategy.

Additionally, the above initiatives also align with Rosen's statement in the research problem of this study, that in order for organizations to be considered as sustainable, they are also expected to deal with economic empowerment and social upliftment in their practices because of society's needs and issues such as contributing to education, infrastructure development of communities, creation of jobs, and wellbeing commitments to society.

5. Conclusion

Research question, problem and objectives addressed

Referring to how the research problem of this study was addressed and solved, Rosen (2018) maintains that issues and concerns epitomized by sustainability are wide and various, and these issues include challenges such as resource supply, environmental change and contamination, management of waste, sanitation, land use and desertification. Rosen further maintains that in order for organizations to be considered as sustainable, organizations are also expected to deal with economic empowerment and social upliftment in their practices because of society's needs and issues such as contributing to education, infrastructure development of communities, creation of jobs, human rights, reasonable labour practices, living conditions, volunteerism, diversity, and wellbeing commitments to society. Considering these issues to the large retail organization, the findings of this study indicates that the organization contributes extensive CSR initiatives to a great extent in order to solve some of these issues. In which all of the above issues are met and addressed in the large retail organization's CSR and sustainability strategy that is based on the key CSR initiatives and sustainability areas where they believe that they can make the biggest impact which includes; educate to employ, environment efficiency, strengthen our communities, develop their local supply chain, and to drive transformation and empowerment. The above CSR and sustainability areas also answers the research question of this study, which shows the different ways that the large retail organization implements CSR as a business strategy in order to manage their sustainable practices.

The research objectives were also addressed through the research findings and the discussion section of findings relative to the literature gave a detailed overview of all findings necessary for the reader to assess how the researcher had come to a conclusion. Therefore, as the research problem of this study has been solved and the research question has been answered, it can be concluded that the large retail organization plays its part in the sustainability issue as they have embedded their business strategies into the issue of sustainability in order to maintain and enlarge all social, environmental, and economic systems of any establishment in a manner that every generation manages to fulfil its own needs and doesn't threaten the capacity of future generations to provide for themselves.

Heuristic value and implications of findings for future practices

Based on the research findings, it is recommended whether an organization is in the retail industry or not, they need to consider the issues of sustainability within South Africa and their organizational footprint, and they also need to embed the economic, social, and environmental concerns into their business strategies and organizational activities. In order to provide change and a dependable positive impact, businesses need to realize that they can't rely on just the government to address all the needs that we have. Instead, it's going to take a partnership and this partnership needs to come from corporates, government, as well as community-based organizations.

Moreover, the findings of this study can prove important for organizations and other potential stakeholders regarding the issue of sustainability. The findings of this study should also be valuable to other business industries (non-retail) that can benefit from understanding the seriousness of sustainability and how it can be managed and controlled. The findings of this study should potentially contribute to the sustainability debate in creating awareness encompassing the significance of the issue and the negative ramifications it has on the environment and by assisting future researchers with new knowledge to the existing body of CSR literature.

For future scholars, it would be interesting to focus on the customers of an organization to hear their perspectives on how they consider an organization as sustainable. Future researchers should also use a large sample size to get more representative results

and should avoid the risk of using the snowball sampling method, as it runs the risk of not being able to get enough participants.

Ethical Considerations

There are various ethical issues that researchers encounter during the various phases of a research project. Goodwin (2002) defines ethics as a set of standards endorsing practices that are ethically right.

As proclaimed by Osman (2009: 45), a researcher should consistently address the significance of ethical considerations in a research study and he/she has a commitment to respect the rights, needs, and values of participants. To successfully conduct this research study, several ethical issues were considered and applied to this study such as:

- Informed consent was the goal of this study (Annexure B and C);
- At any stage, without prejudice, participants were entitled to accept or withdraw themselves from participating in this study;
- Permission from the company was also obtained to conduct this research study (Annexure D, Gatekeepers letter);
- Participants were informed that the generated data is for academic purposes;
- Participants were treated completely anonymous;
- Full confidentiality was provided to participants;
- The researcher also respected the participant's views and suppositions and did not compel any participant to answer a question that they were not comfortable with.

Additionally, as the researcher stated that informed consent was the objective of gathering data for this study, participants were requested to fill in consent forms in order to ensure that the study has been conducted with their full assent and they were free to contact the IIE Varsity College institution in the event that they wanted to confirm the authenticity of this study.

Limitations

According to Pillay (2018), limitations allude to factors that avert a research study from reaching its potential and they are viewed as constraints that are out of the

researcher's control. Based on the nature of any research study, limitations are bound to exist. Therefore, within the purpose of this study, one of the limitations was the impact of Covid-19 which changed the methods of data collection for this study and which restricted the researcher to access participants. Alluding to the qualitative nature of this study, the sample size was also one of the limitations, as the study consists of a limited sample. A cross-sectional study is also limited and short, and the snowball sampling method was also a limitation, as it runs the risk of not being able to get enough participants. Lastly, another limitation is that the research study had a limited budget because there was no funding for the study.

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Annexure A: Interview Questionnaire



My name is Kuhle Mahlatshana and I am currently doing my Honours in Bachelor of Commerce at the IIE Varsity College Cape Town. As part of the requirements for the completion of my studies, I am conducting a research study on **“The implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a tool to control sustainable practices of a large retail organization in Cape Town”**.

This questionnaire ensures that all responses will be treated with the utmost of confidentiality; therefore, all respondents are completely anonymous. This interview questionnaire should take 15 to 20 minutes and I appreciate your time in completing this questionnaire.

1. In what ways does the large retail organization implement Corporate Social Responsibility as a tool to control their sustainable practices?
2. Do you think the way the large retail organization implements corporate social responsibility initiatives is achieving the intended results of controlling their sustainable practices? (Please explain your answer)
3. What significance does Corporate Social Responsibility has on the large retail organization?
4. How does the large retail organization react to the needs of the community since it implements Corporate Social Responsibility?
5. Which brand of the large retail organization contributes the most towards the initiatives of CSR and why do you say?
6. Since the company has a huge number of stakeholders, how efficient and frequently do they communicate their CSR activities to these various stakeholders?
7. What drives the large retail organization in implementing CSR programmes?
8. In what ways does the company benefits from implementing CSR towards their sustainable issues.
9. What other practices or measures can the company implement in order to improve and build their CSR programmes?
10. What type of motivation do you think the company can give other businesses to further participate in Corporate Social Responsibility?

Should you require further information about this study, please contact me at 0731700135. I assure you that the information provided is for research purposes only. I want to take this opportunity to thank you for availing yourself and thereby contributing towards making my research study a success.

Annexure B: Consent Form Template



CONSENT FORM TEMPLATE

Explanatory information sheet and consent form for participants

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kuhle Mahlatshana and I am a student at the IIE Varsity College Cape Town. I am currently conducting research under the supervision of Alan Bird about the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a tool to control sustainable practices of a large retail organization in Cape Town. The purpose of my research study is to create awareness encompassing the seriousness of the sustainability issue and the negative ramifications it has on the environment and I hope that this research will enhance our understanding of providing society and organizations with an in-depth comprehension of how CSR can be executed in a firm-level in order to reduce sustainability challenges.

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 you are willing to participate, please complete and sign the consent form below.

What will I be doing if I participate in your study?

I would like to invite you to participate in this research because with our planet being at stake due to activities that we perform, it is vital that all companies must manage themselves as accountable on all measures and actions that they perform. Hence, this study aims to assist individuals and organizations to promote sustainability by looking at how the large retail organization implements their CSR initiatives in order to manage their sustainable practices. If you decide to participate in this research, I would like to explain that an interview which will be about 15-20 minutes will be conducted with you telephonically or any communication device preferred by you, and an appointment will be booked with you on your given time. A questionnaire will also be sent to you earlier before the interview date takes place via Email or WhatsApp in order to prepare yourself about different questions that will be asked.

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.

Are there any risks/ or discomforts involved in participating in this study?

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 experiences on how the company has implemented CSR in order to contribute a positive impact on the social and environment issues of sustainability, you are more than welcome too. If you find at any stage that you are not comfortable with the line of questioning, you may withdraw or refrain from participating.

Do I have to participate in the study?

- Your inclusion in this study is completely voluntary;
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

Will my identity be protected?

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 the IIE Varsity College Cape Town 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.

What will happen to the information that participants provide?

Once I have finished all interviews, I will write summaries to be included in my research report, which is a requirement to complete my Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Management. 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:

Kuhle Mahlatshana

The contact details of my supervisor are as follows:

Consent form for participants

I, _____, agree to participate in the research conducted by Kuhle Mahlatshana about the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a tool to control sustainable practices of a large retail organization in Cape Town.

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.

Signature

Date _____

Annexure C: Audio Recording Consent Form



CONSENT FORM FOR AUDIO OR VIDEO RECORDING

Consent form for participants

I, _____, agree to allow Kuhle Mahlatshana to audio record my interviews as part of the research about the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a tool to control sustainable practices of a large retail organization in Cape Town.

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

- My confidentiality will be ensured. My name and personal details will be kept private.
- The recordings will be stored in a password-protected file on the researcher's computer.
- Only the researcher, the researcher's supervisor and possibly a transcriber (who will sign a confidentiality agreement) will have access to these recordings.

Signature	Date

Annexure D: Gatekeepers Letter



Gatekeepers letter/ Request to conduct research

Dear Sir/Madam

I am writing to ask your permission to conduct research at your place of work, The Foschini Group.

My name is Kuhle Mahlatshana, an Honours student of Bachelor of Commerce in Management at the IIE Varsity College Cape Town a brand of the Independent Institute of Education (IIE). The research I wish to conduct for my Honours Project is titled as the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a tool to control sustainable practices of a large retail organization in Cape Town.

The purpose of my research study is to create awareness encompassing the seriousness of the sustainability issue and the negative ramifications it has on the environment by allowing individuals and businesses that are associated with the company and other organizations to gain a greater understanding on how CSR can be implemented in order to manage a firms sustainability challenges. The project consists of gathering information by means of a 15-20 minutes interview with 2 employees who works under the CSR programs in order to gain an in-depth understanding on how the firm implements CSR in order to control their sustainable practices. The interviews will be conducted telephonically, or any communication platform preferred by the respondent due to the impact of Covid-19 that prohibits face-to-face meeting and an appointment will be booked with participants on their given time in the month of July and August. Data that will be collected from the interviews will be composed for academic purposes and summarised for my research report which is a requirement to complete my Bachelor of Commerce Honours in Management. Participants will be treated completely anonymous and at any stage, without prejudice, participants are entitled to accept or withdraw themselves from participating in this study. Full confidentiality will also be provided to participants and the researcher respects the participant's views and suppositions and will not compel any participant to answer a question that they are not comfortable with.

Yours sincerely

Student: Kuhle Mahlatshana

Supervisor: Alan Bird

My contact details are as follows:

The contact details of my supervisor/navigator/lecturer are as follows:



Gatekeepers Approval

Consent form to conduct research at my company					
I,					
Representative of					
My capacity:					
Give my permission thatmay conduct research at my company. This research has been explained to me and I understand what participation in this research will involve. I reserve the right to withdraw this permission at any time. I also understand that research reports are available in the library and IIE Repository unless I indicate below that I would not					
Select below:					
• I request that my company's identity be kept confidential. • My company can be identified in the study • The study may never be available on the repository. • The study may be made available on the repository. • The study may be made available on the repository after months.					
<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="height: 50px; width: 75%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Signature</td> <td>Date</td> </tr> </table>				Signature	Date
Signature	Date				

Annexure E: Ethics Clearance Letter



7th July 2020

Student name: Kuhle Mahlatshana
Student number: 17537269
Campus: Varsity College Cape Town

Re: Approval of IIE BACHELOR OF COMMERCE HONOURS: MANAGEMENT Proposal and Ethics Clearance

HONOURS 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!

Annexure F: Concept Document Template

Provisional Title: The implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a tool to control sustainable practices of a large retail organization in Cape Town.

<u>Research purpose/Objective</u> Is to assist individuals and other organizations to gain a greater understanding on how CSR can be implemented in order to manage sustainability challenges.	<u>Primary Research Question</u> In which way does the large retail organization implement Corporate Social Responsibility as a business strategy in order to manage their sustainable practices?	<u>Research Rationale</u> This study is worth investigating because it is there to provide CSR strategies that can save the sustainability challenges that we are facing. This study also aims in creating awareness of the responsible business and moral reasons to rehearse CSR on a firm level.	<u>Seminal Authors/Source</u> John Elkington Archie Carrol, Craig Smith, James Rowe Jeremy Moon. Edward Freeman	<u>Literature Review – Conceptual Framework</u> Drivers of CSR implementation in order to be a sustainable organization CSR in the South African Business Context The benefits of implementing CSR towards sustainability issues CSR as a business strategy of controlling sustainable challenges	<u>Paradigm</u> Interpretivism On an epistemological perspective, this study aimed to use respondents' interpretation of facts linked to the implementation of CSR practices of the large retail organization On an ontological perspective, reality is a social construction because it is subjective and is created by human interaction, which alludes to the case of sustainability. On an axiological position, the significance of this research is that it provides people with insights to review what is valued with a particular phenomenon, it is important for interpretivist studies that uniqueness is valued.	<u>Approach</u> Qualitative approach <u>Population</u> The unit of analysis were people (CSR employees of the large retail organization), artefacts (official CSR report of the large retail organization) and the geographical unit was the large retail organization in Cape Town itself.	<u>Data Collection Methods</u> Data collection method was conducted through an in-depth telephone interview (Primary Data), and the official CSR report of the large retail organization (secondary data).	<u>Ethics</u> •Informed consent was the goal of this study. •At any stage, without prejudice, participants were entitled to accept or withdraw themselves from participating in this study. •Participants were also informed that the generated data is for academic purposes. •Participants were treated completely anonymous. •Participants were not harmed or exposed to any danger.	<u>Recommendations</u> Based on the research findings, it is recommended whether an organization is in the retail industry or not, they need to consider the issues of sustainability within South Africa and their organizational footprint, and they also need to embed the economic, social, and environmental concerns into their business strategies and organizational activities. In order to provide change and a dependable positive impact, businesses need to realize that they can't rely on just the government to address all the needs that we have. Instead, it's going to take a partnership and this partnership needs to come from corporates, government, as well as community-based organizations.
<u>Research Problem</u> The problem that this research wants to solve is to assist companies by investigating the implementation of CSR within the large retail organization which will assist to apply different CSR methods in order to reduce the sustainability challenges such as environmental change and contamination, management of wastes, land use and desertification and species extinction and loss of biodiversity, etc.	<u>Secondary Questions /Objective</u> To determine in which way CSR is implemented by the large retail organization. To get an in-depth understanding of the significance of CSR within the large retail organization. To determine whether that the large retail organization is implementing sustainable CSR initiatives.	<u>Key Concepts</u> Sustainable practices Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) CSR initiatives Business strategy Sustainable Organization	<u>Key Theories</u> Carroll's CSR Pyramid The Stakeholder theory	<u>Sampling</u> Non-Probability Sampling Snowball Method To answer the research question of this study, the sample size consisted of two representatives of the large retail organization who works under the CSR programs.	<u>Data Analysis Method</u> The researcher analysed the recordings generated from the interviews, as well as secondary data which consisted of the official CSR report of the large retail organization Audio transcripts was also utilized to interpret findings of the research and data was reduced by allocating groups to similar type data and then analysed according to a theme grid, by deducting the recording and allotting contexts and themes that correlate with one another.	<u>Limitations</u> One of the limitations of this study was the impact of Covid-19, that has made to change the means of data collection for this study. Alluding to the qualitative nature of this study, sample size was also one of the limitations of this study, as the study consisted of a limited sample.	<u>Key Contribution</u> This study will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding CSR by examining the implementation of CSR of the large retail organization. This study also aims to create awareness of the responsible business and moral reasons to rehearse CSR on a firm level. The findings of this study can also prove important for organizations and other potential stakeholders regarding the issue of sustainability	<u>Key Findings</u> Responses from the interviews indicate that the large retail organization contributes extensive CSR initiatives to a great extent in order to solve some of the sustainability issues. The findings further show that their CSR and sustainability focus are based on the following areas; educate to employ, environment efficiency, strengthen our communities, develop their local supply chain, and to drive transformation and empowerment.	