

**Exploring operational level employees' contribution towards corporate  
entrepreneurship within a long-term insurance company based in  
Johannesburg.**

**by**

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I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This cross-sectional qualitative study explored and described the role and contribution of operational level employees towards corporate entrepreneurship (CE) in the long-term insurance sector in Johannesburg, South Africa. Individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews took place with 13 operational level employees. Data analysis was done through thematic analysis where themes and sub-themes emerged. The findings indicate that operational level employees acknowledge that CE positively influences their entrepreneurial activity within the organisation. While operational level employees implement the CE strategy, they emphasise non-engagement in the CE initiatives as one of the main barriers to contributing to CE. This study concludes that management should focus on the antecedents of CE such as management rewards/reinforcement, work discretion, organisational boundaries, organisational structure and organisational culture.

## **KEY WORDS**

Corporate entrepreneurship; operational level employees; innovation; entrepreneurial activity; management support; organisational culture; organisational structure; entrepreneurial climate; entrepreneurship; corporate entrepreneurial initiatives

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

- ❖ **BRICS** - Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
- ❖ **CA** - Claims assessment
- ❖ **CC** - Call Centre
- ❖ **CE** - Corporate entrepreneurship
- ❖ **EEA** - Entrepreneurial employee activity
- ❖ **FSB** - Financial Services Board
- ❖ **GEM** - Global Entrepreneurship Monitor
- ❖ **HOD** - Head of department
- ❖ **PA** - Premiums administration
- ❖ **PWC** - PricewaterhouseCoopers
- ❖ **PR** - Policy Replacement
- ❖ **PS** - Policy Servicing
- ❖ **QA** - Quality Assurance
- ❖ **R&D** - Research and Development

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction and Scientific View of the Study

### 1.1 Introduction

History has proven repeatedly that businesses should be able to quickly innovate, change and transform to meet the expectations of a fast-changing marketplace (Lee & Pati, 2017). Companies have to address and act on rapidly changing markets and environments. This is done by recognising opportunities, innovation, entrepreneurial orientation, corporate entrepreneurship (CE), exploiting, and investing in employees as well as entrepreneurial cultures inside their companies (Schwab & Sala-i-Martin, 2015). In the view of Herrington and Kew (2017), it is straightforward that certain aspects of CE within organisations need to be scrutinised. The 2017 South African Global Entrepreneurial Monitor (GEM) reports that entrepreneurial employee activity (EEA) rates in South Africa are among the lowest in efficiency-driven economies that took part in the 2017 survey. EEA refers to employees who, in the past three years, were actively involved in at least one of the phases of idea development for new activity and/or preparation and implementation of a new activity (Herrington & Kew, 2017). Consequently, this is a material concern because CE provides a level of competitiveness within the organisation. As businesses seek to improve their productivity and ensure sustained growth, they will need to improve their capacity to innovate (Tseng & Tseng, 2016).

The focus of this study was to explore operational level employees' contribution to CE within a long-term insurance company and to assess the impediments experienced at this level. It was also deemed vital to understand why some operational level employees in some organisations are more innovative and develop more entrepreneurial ideas than in others. Sometimes it becomes difficult to distinguish between a good innovative idea and a bad one. Organisations need to enhance their innovation prowess and tap into the creative power of their employees (Lee & Pati, 2017). For an innovative idea to be considered seriously, it must have characteristics of an original invention that has the potential to yield new marketable ideas and competitive advantage (Bhardwaj & Sushil, 2011). Firms that exhibit CE are typically viewed as dynamic, flexible entities prepared to take advantage of new business opportunities when they arise (Kuratko, Goldsby & Hornsby, 2012). The

considerable potential for CE to renew companies through innovation-based initiatives has led to increasing interest and research in how CE can be perpetuated within established companies (Corbett, Covin, O'Connor & Tucci, 2013). Zook (2016) states that new ventures started within the structures of existing organisations have a 1 in 8 chance of developing into a “viable” large-scale business venture compared to the 1 in 500 chance faced by start-ups. These odds make CE both an attractive career opportunity for the entrepreneurial personality and profitable action for companies.

## **1.2 Insurance sector in South Africa**

The insurance industry across Africa continues to be one of the most disrupted, but at the same time industry executives continue to innovate and adapt to take advantage of many opportunities for growth that are also emerging (PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) 2017). The African insurance industry has been in a state of continuous disruption since the 2008 global financial crisis and growth has been sluggish. So far, the industry has done well to adapt to the disruption, with regulation being the most dominant disruptive force over the last ten years. In the latest survey, technological advances have now moved to the front of insurers' minds, but while relegated to second position, the unrelenting regulatory changes are still making it difficult for insurers to focus on organic growth (PWC, 2017).

In South Africa, the regulatory and oversight body providing the regulatory framework for all insurance companies is the Financial Services Board (FSB) (Financial Services Board, 2015). There are two pieces of legislation that govern insurers, dictating their licence parameters, namely the Short-Term Insurance Act 53 of 1998 and the Long-Term Insurance Act 52 of 1998. Life insurers fall under the Long-Term Insurance Act. South Africa has the highest insurance penetration rate in Africa at 14% of the population, immediately followed by Namibia at 7% (KPMG South Africa, 2016). The 2016 Report Buyer survey report found that 82.8% market share resided among the top 5 life insurance companies, out of 84 registered life insurers. Alagidede and Mangenge (2015) found that out of a total of 78 registered long-term insurers in South Africa in 2013, the top 5 companies accounted for 73% of the total market share by assets under management. This study focused mainly on the long-term insurance organisation.

Some of the arguments for life insurers having not made radical innovation inroads are due to them not receiving too much pressure from the lower-end markets they serve, for whom they are still developing models and approaches (Oudinot, 2017). For the higher-end market, however, which is where the highest penetration is in the South African context,

the high quality of life insurance products is no longer sufficient for growth and life insurance product acquisition. The market is actively demanding elements such as a more interactive and dynamic interface between the life insurers and customers (Oudinot, 2017). Insurers have to make it easier for people to buy and interact with life insurance products and provider, opening a gap in the market for disruptors to come in and serve the market in the manner they wish to be served (Oudinot, 2017).

The South African insurance market continues to be dominated by large competitive, well-capitalised local players. Smaller new entrants trying to enter the insurance market perceive competition from established dominant insurers as a threat. At the same time, the larger insurers fear the entrance of large retailers, telecom and non-traditional players, which own large customer bases and are more technologically advanced (Alagidede & Mangenge, 2015).

Technology presents insurers with powerful tools to understand changing customer needs and expectations through data mining capabilities and artificial intelligence. The African insurance climate needs insurers to accelerate innovation, to reach new and existing customers quickly and at a reduced cost. Insurers need to consider automating repetitive, business rule driven functions as part of the digital transformation journey. This would reduce costs, improve controls, enhance quality, enable scalability, and make real-time servicing possible for many insurers.

Technology alone will not help insurers to capitalise on all the new opportunities. There needs to be a genuine readiness to change and innovate. Insurers need to move beyond the talk and experiment and introduce real innovation. This calls for agility and nimble decision making to quickly adapt to the changing environment. The industry is too used to big decisions, big system implementations and big product launches. (KPMG South Africa, 2017). However, in today's world, by the time the big decisions and big implementation cycles have run their course, the market would have moved on. Innovation in today's insurance world requires many small decisions, quick lessons and entrepreneurial agility (Baddeley, 2018).

### **1.3 Background to and motivation for the study**

Organisations, in the wake of the technological revolution and intense global competition, are pursuing transformation through CE. The dynamics of today's discontinuous, complex and global economy have challenged the tenets of traditional business operations. No

longer can companies remain static; they should continually adjust, adapt and redefine their market position. Intensifying global competition, retrenchments, rapid technological progress and many other factors have heightened the need for organisations to become more entrepreneurial. To be successful in any industry, companies should continually reduce costs, improve quality, enhance customer service and so forth. Such continuous improvement is a minimal criterion for remaining competitive (Morris, Kuratko & Covin, 2011). In order to survive and prosper, some organisations see the need to enhance CE by forcing themselves to act flexibly and constantly look for innovative ways of operating. A company is better placed at achieving growth and market advantage if there is a clear strategy in place for how to achieve this (Kuratko, Hornsby & Hayton, 2015). Furthermore, to a strategy being in place, a company must deliberately leverage entrepreneurial opportunities through the existence of a CE strategy (Kuratko et al., 2015).

Organisations in Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) need to re-examine traditional ways of conducting business and developing an entrepreneurial mindset as they find themselves in growing but hostile and competitive environments (Yiu & Lau, 2008). Generally, CE for many organisations is etched in words, not actions. Given the unemployment statistics for South Africa of 27.6%, as at March 2019, there is still huge opportunity for corporate entrepreneurs who are entrepreneurially oriented (Statistics South Africa, 2019). Therefore, in the light of the above arguments, a study that creates awareness of the role played by operational level employees in CE was urgently needed. In understanding their role and contribution, operational level employees may take pride of place as a pillar of economic growth in South Africa.

#### **1.4 Definitions of corporate entrepreneurship**

Some definitions of CE are given in the table below.

**Table 1.1: Definitions of corporate entrepreneurship**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Definition or Aspects of Definition</b>
Sathe (1989)	In the 1980s, CE was simply defined as a company's process of organisational renewal.
Covin and Slevin (1991)	"Corporate entrepreneurship involves extending the firm's domain of competence and corresponding opportunity set through internally generated new resource combinations"
Zahra (1995,1996)	"Corporate entrepreneurship is seen as the sum of a company's innovation, renewal and venturing efforts.

	Innovation involves creating and introducing products, production processes and organisational systems. Renewal means revitalising the company's operations by changing the scope of its business, its competitive approaches or both. It also means building or acquiring new capabilities and then creatively leveraging them to add value for shareholders; venturing denotes that the firm will enter new businesses by expanding operations in existing or new markets"
Corbett et al. (2013)	CE "seeks to renew" organisations "thereby facilitating their viability and competitiveness through the utilisation of various innovation based initiatives"
Kuratko (2014)	Entrepreneurship is a dynamic process of vision, change and creation. It requires an application of energy and passion toward the creation and implementation of new ideas and creative solutions.
Chen, Tang, Jin, Xie and Li (2014)	CE describes entrepreneurial behaviour inside established mid-sized and large organisations and centres on re-energising and enhancing the organisation's ability to acquire innovative skills and capabilities resulting in improved company performance, including the aspects relating to innovation.
Venter, Urban, Beder, Oosthuizen, Reddy and Venter (2016)	CE is a process undertaken by a company where they actively leverage the skills and capabilities of their employees to improve the company, through tapping into their innovative skills, also referred to as intrapreneurship.
Vanacker, Zahra and Holmes (2017)	Formal or informal activities aimed at creating new businesses in established companies through product and process innovations and market developments.
Vargas-Halabi, Mora-Esquivel and Siles (2017)	CE is a process in which an individual or group of individuals within the framework of an existing organisation identify, pursue and encourage innovative opportunities and create a new organisation, renewing the organisation or introducing product and process innovations.

The above list of definitions of CE clearly shows that some of the definitional variations tend to be a mere substitution of words that mean the same thing, thereby adding little or no value at all.

Innovation is the central underlying theme in most definitions. It can confidently be deduced that innovation is “the single common theme underlying all forms of corporate entrepreneurship” (Kuratko & Audretsch, 2013).

### **1.5 Definition of key terms**

- **Corporate entrepreneurship** - CE is a process that can facilitate efforts to innovate and can help firms cope with the competitive realities of world markets (Kuratko, 2014).
- **Long-term insurance** - According to the FSB (2013), long-term insurance is insurance that covers life-changing events in life, such as death, retirement and disability. The insured pays a monthly premium over a long period until they die or the long-term insurance policy matures at a specified date. Long-term insurance includes life insurance and funeral insurance that provides for the family after the death of the main member of the life assured. It also includes retirement annuities and endowment policies to provide the main member with either an income when old or a lump sum payment on the date on which the policy is paid out.
- **Innovation** - Van de Ven (2017) defines innovation as the development and implementation of new ideas by people who, over time, engage in transactions with others within an institutional order.
- **Centralisation** - The concentration of control of an activity or organisation under a single authority or the process by which the activities of an organisation, particularly those regarding planning and decision-making, become concentrated at the top levels of the organisation (Caruana, Morris & Vella, 1998).
- **Operational level employee** - The last level in a business hierarchy is the operational level, which is made up of frontline employees who perform the day-to-day activities of a structured nature and deal with the units of operation. These employees have more to do with machines and resource utilisation. Since employees at this level and their supervisors are engaged in actual implementation of technology or in the production of the organisation’s products, they are regarded as operational level.
- **Organisational culture** - A set of values, beliefs, norms and assumptions, held by the members of an organisation (Schein, 1985).

- **Entrepreneurship** – Brush (2014) defines entrepreneurship as “actions involved identifying or creating an opportunity, marshalling the resources and providing leadership to create social or economic value”.
- **Management support** - The willingness by management to facilitate and promote entrepreneurial behaviour (Groenewald, 2010).
- **Work discretion** - The extent to which the organisation tolerates failure, provides decision-making latitude and freedom from excessive oversight and delegates authority and responsibility to lower level employees (Hornsby, Kuratko, Holt & Wales, 2013).
- **Organisational boundaries** - Precise explanations of outcomes expected from organisational work and development of mechanisms for evaluating, selecting and using innovation (Groenewald, 2010).
- **Rewards** - The extent to which the organisation uses systems that reward entrepreneurial activity and success (Kuratko, Hornsby & Covin, 2014).

### **1.6 Problem statement**

Possibly some long-term insurance organisations lack a climate of CE within their respective business units. The opportunity always exists to explore whether management within their business units, especially at operational level, can instil a climate of CE. In the quest for sustainable solutions to a variety of ever-changing community needs, organisations are left with little choice but to adapt an entrepreneurial mindset and heed the call to action for the encouragement of the type of innovative behaviour that enhances corporate entrepreneurial activity. However, other organisations still struggle to facilitate CE to the lower peripheral levels. Centralisation of CE initiatives in the top/middle management level and research and development (R&D) teams tends to be an impediment or limitation to the operational level employees’ contribution to CE within the organisation (Mayisela, 2015). The challenge also faced by operational level employees is the experience of encountering a tall organisational structure which is overly bureaucratic and complex. The organisation needs to start considering alternative approaches to CE, as the hub of innovative ideas is no longer entirely dependent on the R&D department and top-level management to yield innovative ideas.

Non-engagement of operational level employees in contributing to CE within the organisation is quite baffling. This study analyses the important role that operational level employees play in contributing to and implementing the CE strategy of a particular long-term insurance organisation. The roles of operational level employees with regard to CE seem not to be clear within the organisation under study; hence the need to clarify their roles. This study was also necessary to determine how the inclusion of operational level

employees in contributing to CE can be improved in the light of the importance of innovation as one of the values of the company. It becomes imperative for the organisation to inculcate a culture of CE at all levels in order to survive and remain competitive in the market or industry (Engelbrecht, 2015). In view of the current state of the organisation in general, the question that also guided the research was: “How do operational level employees within the organisation actively participate in contributing to CE?” The variation in the level of corporate entrepreneurial activity within different hierarchical levels in the organisation was also explored. The outcome of this study will challenge executives within the organisation and other industries to consider the benefits of inculcating CE at all levels of the organisation, regardless of the position employees hold in the organisational hierarchy, rather than CE being housed in certain departments (Van der Merwe, & Nienaber, 2015).

## **1.7 Research objectives**

### **1.7.1 Primary research objective**

The primary objective of this research was to:

- Explore the role and activities that operational level employees play in contributing to and implementing corporate entrepreneurship within the organisation.

### **1.7.2 Secondary research objectives**

- To explore the role played by management in creating and facilitating corporate entrepreneurship at operational level.
- To explore how the antecedents of corporate entrepreneurship influence entrepreneurship at operational level.
- To explore the corporate entrepreneurship challenges faced by operational level employees in a long-term insurance organisation.
- To explore alternative approaches to improve corporate entrepreneurship among operational level employees.
- To make recommendations for entrepreneurial initiatives or interventions at operational level in the long-term insurance organisation in South Africa in order to contribute to corporate entrepreneurship.

### **1.8 Significance of the study**

The value add of the research lies in its applicability to a large sector in the South African economy and the resulting improved entrepreneurial environment. The results will be useful for organisations that want to improve their entrepreneurial climate at all hierarchical levels, ultimately producing a framework for developing corporate entrepreneurial activity within the organisation. Identifying the factors that contribute to a climate that fosters corporate entrepreneurial activity enables executives and management of organisations to create a corporate climate in which entrepreneurship can also flourish at operational level.

The study will also allow organisations to be more entrepreneurial and thus to produce innovations which will be competitive in the marketplace, ultimately resulting in more innovative products and thus strategically gaining competitive advantage through continuous innovation. Furthermore, knowledge is provided for management on how to promote entrepreneurial activity among operational level employees and how to formulate a corporate entrepreneurial strategy that would facilitate entrepreneurial activity at operational level, which is appropriate for the organisational structure. Awareness is also created of the impediments that affect operational level employees within the organisation. Lastly, guidelines and recommendations are offered for management on how they can create an entrepreneurial environment and culture within the workplace. However, despite the significance of the study, there are certain limitations.

### **1.9 Limitations of the study**

One of the limitations of this study is that it focused only on operational level employees in the long-term insurance sector and in Johannesburg, South Africa. Owing to the fact that operational level employees differ slightly from one organisation to the next and from industry to industry, future studies should include other organisations and industries as well. Moreover, while this study serves as a tool to guide and educate management on the role played by operational level employees in contributing to CE, it cannot be generalised to the broader population because of its qualitative nature. Additionally, since this study sought to explore and describe the experiences of operational level employees with regard to the role and contribution of CE in their organisation, only operational level employees were included in the sample. Since operational level employees are often given tasks that are routine and repetitive in nature, they were seen as individuals who would best be able to help achieve the research objectives. Another limitation of the study is that the sample

size was small and the findings produced may not be typical of the population of operational level employees in South Africa.

### **1.10 Outline of the study**

The dissertation is divided into five chapters, structured as follows:

#### **Chapter 1: Introduction and Scientific View of the Study**

This chapter covers the introduction, background to the study, the research problem, importance of the study, research objectives and limitations.

#### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The objective of this chapter is to provide a critical review of literature pertinent to CE at operational level. The literature singles out certain organisational antecedents as being critical for achieving entrepreneurship within a company. These antecedents have been found to have an influence on CE (Kuratko, 2014).

#### **Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology**

In this chapter, the research design and methodology used for this study are described. Additionally, the research process that was followed is explained. The aim of this chapter is to present the procedures and methods that were used to collect and analyse data. It comprises the research design, population, sampling, data collection, data analysis, reliability and validity.

#### **Chapter 4: Research Findings**

In this chapter, the findings are summarised and each theme and sub-theme is presented. A critical interpretive discussion of the themes is provided. Verbatim quotes of the participants in respect of each sub-theme are given. This chapter also presents a literature control that was performed to compare the findings of the present study with those reported in the literature on the topic.

#### **Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

In this concluding chapter, the findings are reported and conclusions are reached. The findings are correlated with the literature study in Chapter 2. The limitations of the study are also outlined in Chapter 5. Finally, recommendations are made.

### **1.11 Conclusion**

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an orientation to the research, with the first section covering the introduction and the background to the current study. The problem statement, purpose and research objectives were presented. The limitations of the current study were depicted in detail. The main argument was put forward that there is a lack of research on how CE is implemented in a long-term insurance organisation from an operational level perspective. This includes the fact that not much is known about CE at operational level and how the barriers that are experienced by the employees are overcome at that level. In the next chapter, the literature is reviewed by exploring the current body of knowledge on the organisational antecedents of CE. The operational level employees, their roles and activities that are undertaken with regard to CE are also given attention. The barriers experienced within the organisation are discussed in detail.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

#### 2.1 Introduction

Current studies on CE are fragmented and cumulative literature with a focus on operational level employees is lacking. In addition, there are academic differences in key issues around the current understanding of CE. This lack of clarity has implications not only for the academic world, but also for practical application for employees and entrepreneurial companies. To date, little systematic attention has been given to empirically documenting and understanding the contribution that operational level employees make in the context of CE. Burgess (2013) cautions that failure of CE may have unfavourable and even detrimental consequences for organisational performance and overall success. Morris et al. (2011) state that sustained competitive advantage now lies in adaptability, flexibility, speed, aggressiveness and innovation, which comes down to CE. New and continuous innovation in terms of products, processes, administration and structure is needed to compete effectively in the national and global markets (Kuratko et al., 2014). De Jong and Den Hartog (2010) and Turner and Pennington (2015) affirm that in the current dynamic, complex global economy, an organisation choosing to ignore the challenge of these tenets might well end up being ignored by an ever-evolving market that demands relevance. To be competitive in the global economy, firms need to continuously improve their products, services, technological developments and administration. However, large businesses seem to find it difficult to integrate the entrepreneurial spirit in a well-structured or bureaucratic business.

It is not just in entrepreneurship literature where this emphasis on the importance of CE is evident. Literature in the field of strategic management, as well as economics, also considers CE as an important organisational capability (Crawford & Kreiser, 2015). Executives agree that innovation is the most important pathway for companies to accelerate their pace of change in the global environment (Kuratko et al., 2015). Organisations require an entrepreneurial spirit that must be integrated into the mission, goals, strategies, structure, processes and values of the organisation for CE to be sustainable. It is of great significance to understand the entrepreneurial intensity of an organisation and unpack why the organisation has developed the current level of entrepreneurial intensity. Entrepreneurial intensity is concerned with the degree and frequency of entrepreneurship occurring within

the business as well as the diagnosing of the internal work environment (Ireland, Kuratko & Morris, 2006).

In this chapter, firstly, an appraisal is made of the role of management support in the organisation in which this study was conducted in establishing and nurturing CE. This is followed by an explanation of the organisational structure, focusing on hierarchical levels, flexibility or rigidity of the structure and so on. Next, motivational factors are covered, which include rewards/reinforcements, autonomy/work discretion and resource availability. Finally, human factors are assessed, that is human capital/workforce and organisational culture.

## **2.2 Entrepreneurial climate within organisations**

Continuous economic environmental changes force businesses to nurture their entrepreneurial environment to secure global competitiveness, growth and survival. There is a continuous need for research that identifies the factors that contribute to the development and growth of entrepreneurial activities among operational level employees (Bolton & Lane, 2012). Organisations of the future need continual innovation, growth and value creation to survive. Through CE, the entrepreneurial spirit within business boundaries can be created, allowing an atmosphere of innovation to prosper. Businesses need to achieve sustainable competitive advantage to remain competitive (Groenewald, 2010). CE has arisen in response to a number of pressing problems, for example rapid growth in the number of sophisticated competitors, distrust in the traditional methods of corporate management, a mass departure of some of the best and brightest people from corporations to become small business entrepreneurs, international competition and downsizing of major corporations (Kuratko et al., 2015). Organisations should proactively identify and strategically align internal factors that could increase corporate entrepreneurial performance (Engelbrecht, 2015). Companies that have been in the market for a longer period tend to have more experience and knowledge about the industry compared to new entrants. Such advantages position them at a level where they can innovate better. In contrast, smaller companies are more flexible and can easily adapt to market changes, which then gives them a better advantage when coping with environmental changes (Peltola, 2012).

CE is the process of exercising entrepreneurial skills and approaches within a company (Mehta & Gupta, 2014). Duobiene (2013) and Moyaka (2012) refer to CE as intrapreneurship that has been used in many organisations as a major strategy for

organisational renewal and improved performance. Furthermore, Kuratko (2014) states that CE is a process that can facilitate efforts to innovate and can help firms cope with the competitive realities of the world markets. Firms that exhibit CE are typically viewed as dynamic, flexible entities prepared to take advantage of new business opportunities when they arise (Kuratko et al., 2012). CE and innovation are concepts that have captivated the interest of executives in many corporate boardrooms (Morris et al., 2011). As Kuratko (2009) points out, organisations must realise the entrepreneurial imperative of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is now at hand. Gupta and York (2008) also point out that CE is considered as a key issue and fundamental tool for organisational growth.

### **2.3 Organisational antecedents of CE**

The literature singles out certain organisational antecedents as being critical for achieving entrepreneurship within a company (Hornsby et al., 2013). According to Kuratko et al. (2014) and Hornsby et al. (2013), these antecedents include the following:

- Management support - The willingness of top management to facilitate and promote entrepreneurial behaviour, including championing innovative ideas and providing resources people require to take entrepreneurial actions.
- Work discretion/autonomy - Top management's commitment to tolerating failure, providing decision-making latitude and freedom from excessive oversight and delegating authority and responsibility to managers.
- Rewards/reinforcement - Developing and using systems that reinforce entrepreneurial behaviour, highlight significant achievements and encourage pursuit of challenging work.
- Resource availability - Evaluating workloads to ensure that individuals and groups have the time needed to pursue innovations and that their jobs are structured in ways that support efforts to achieve short- and long-term organisational goals.
- Organisational boundaries - The extent to which there are flexible and supportive organisational boundaries that are useful in promoting entrepreneurial activity as they enhance the flow of information between the external environment and the organisation as well as between departments/divisions within the organisation.

These antecedents have been found to have an influence on CE (Kuratko, 2014). Therefore, organisations desiring to achieve a sustainable entrepreneurial climate and competitive advantage have to ensure that these antecedents are vigorously promoted internally in order to enhance entrepreneurial activities and ensure sustained company performance.

### **2.3.1 Management support**

Management within an organisation is significant to the overall success of CE. The levels of management are not limited to senior levels, but also include middle management. Senior management provides direction to implement CE initiatives at macro level, focusing on strategic imperatives. Middle level managers need to endorse the initiatives and ensure that sufficient resources are available. Furthermore, through the “shepherding function, middle-level managers’ champion, protect, nurture and guide the entrepreneurial initiative” (Kuratko & Audretsch, 2013). These managers play a critical role as they serve as a hub in driving entrepreneurial initiatives of the organisation. The notion that middle managers play a central role in the facilitation of corporate entrepreneurial efforts is also supported by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995) as well as Zahra, Nielsen and Bogner (1999) and it is for these reasons that middle managers form a significant point of interest. Although entrepreneurial initiatives are dependent on various levels of management to fulfil their responsibilities, managers must portray optimistic behaviour towards the initiative. Failure to do so is likely to lead to lower entrepreneurial activity (Kuratko & Audretsch, 2013). Management support can be described as the provision of an enabling work environment for employees to function effectively and to innovate (Onuma, 2015).

However, not all employees perceive management support the same way. Those on higher levels, such as middle and senior management, might perceive a lot more support from executive management. They have more contact and discussions in meetings and correspondence with and are closer to top management or the executive than the lower levels of employees (Kuratko et al., 2014). Furthermore, Kuratko et al. (2014) maintain that management support captures the encouragement and willingness of managers to facilitate and promote entrepreneurial behaviour, including championing innovative ideas and providing the resources people require to behave entrepreneurially. In addition, Ireland, Covin and Kuratko (2009) believe that an organisation’s top management should exhibit a strategic intention toward entrepreneurial activity for their firms to successfully compete in such environments. In support of this, Kuratko et al. (2014) assert that a top level manager’s willingness to facilitate and promote entrepreneurial behaviour includes championing innovative ideas. However, Rigtering and Weitzel (2013) argue that trust has to be established first between the employees and the management for the facilitation of CE to be effective. The reciprocity of trust between employees and management is an important component that allows operational level employees to thrive in their ideation and implementation of innovative ideas. The relationship between management at all levels should be improved in order to develop better relationships with employees.

Corporate entrepreneurial strategy is driven from top management down, in order to gain successful adoption from all levels within the company (Sarooghi, Libaers & Burkemper, 2015; Hornsby et al., 2013). Management support itself is a driver for creating a corporate entrepreneurial culture and is considered a top-down approach. This approach can be intensified through encouraging intrapreneurial behaviour, which is considered a bottom-up approach to corporate entrepreneurial culture (Demirci, 2013). Executive or management engagement is essential for employees to trust the process of CE and that good ideas will be indeed be developed and commercialised. However, this is not always the case as sometimes management is unwilling to accept new innovative ideas because they are generally viewed as digressions from normal business practice (Visser, Krosnick, Lavrakas & Kim, 2013). Thus, in introducing CE behaviour, management needs to give freedom to their employees to make decisions about its working process and avoid criticism when things go wrong in the innovation process (Kuratko, 2014). The lack of involvement by senior managers in driving and articulating the vision and mission and aligning these with strategic direction also puts constraints on CE in an organisation (Morris, Kuratko & Covin, 2008). More often than not, managers create internal barriers that limit aspiring corporate entrepreneurs because of fear that their employees might become more powerful than them and that their departments might become fragmented (Mayisela, 2015). Another challenge is that senior management is often reluctant in embracing innovative ideas and tend to fixate on conventional thinking (Mayisela, 2015).

Scholars have communicated a common message that management within the organisation plays a key role in sustaining a culture of entrepreneurship. The role of managers from the top level down to the first level has specific functions that facilitate the implementation of entrepreneurial behaviour (Seshadri & Tripathy, 2006; Bloodgood, Hornsby, Burkemper & Sarooghi, 2015). Management as a support function creates a suitable environment for employees to adopt an entrepreneurial mindset and conduct. Research from Gallup, a performance management consulting company, indicates that higher levels of engagement are strongly related to higher levels of innovation (Brian & Brim, 2019). Organisational inertia might also derive from senior managers' preconceptions about the appropriate business model or paradigm. When a given paradigm has worked well in the past, managers might have trouble accepting that it is no longer appropriate.

The previous studies mentioned above tend to overlook the issue of management attaching CE levels to educational background or higher qualifications. The more an individual or

employee acquires high-level qualifications in education, the more entrepreneurial or innovative they are regarded than employees with lower levels of qualifications. However, this might not always be true, Bloodgood et al., 2015) argue that opportunity recognition influences the adaptation of ideas into entrepreneurial activity or innovative practices. Furthermore, they posit that the level of maturity of individuals' prior knowledge also influences opportunity recognition. Management should furthermore promote corporate entrepreneurial activities and create an ideal work environment through open communication and networking supported by resource management practices (Castrogiovanni, Urbano & Loras, 2011). Moreover, Bloodgood et al. (2015) reveal that management support is critical in enabling entrepreneurial activity to transition its efforts into innovation.

Seshadri and Tripathy (2006) are of the view of that CE is inextricably linked with leadership, and this is further corroborated by Karol (2015) that companies rely on entrepreneurial leaders to facilitate innovation to stay relevant in a rapidly changing environment. Corporate entrepreneurial behaviour is evident in organisations that adopt a vision, architecture and processes that are entrepreneurial in nature. The findings of many scholars have therefore established conclusive evidence that management support in an entrepreneurial context influences CE within organisations.

### **2.3.2 Organisational structure**

An entrepreneurial organisation needs to structure itself in a way that maximises the exploitation of new opportunities. According to Robbins, Judge and Campbell (2010), an organisational structure is important because it defines how jobs are formally divided, grouped and coordinated. Morris et al. (2008) state that hierarchical levels in traditional structures which assign responsibility for entrepreneurial activities to employees without delegating adequate amounts of authority also represent constraints on CE. Many levels of approval in a traditional business have the potential to stifle innovations, especially at operational level (Lotz, 2009). Clark (2010) recommends that organisations review existing policies and programmes to support and facilitate entrepreneurial and innovative growth. CE is understood to be driven vertically in the organisation from the top down (Rigtering & Weitzel, 2013). In the opinion of Demirci (2013), CE is both a top-down and bottom-up approach. Bureaucratic organisational structures present another challenge to CE; corporate entrepreneurs prefer flatter hierarchies, wider dimensions of labour, a wider span of control and decentralised organisational structures. Demirci (2013) outlines a positive correlation between semi-formalisation and entrepreneurship. He suggests that a

lack of clearly defined tasks and objectives can result in role ambiguity and employees will seek out support and direction rather than focusing their efforts on creativity and process innovation and improvement. Burns (2013) confirms that the underlying logic of a traditional business structure is geared towards a hierarchical process that directs work activities.

Companies that nurture organisational structures and values and encourage entrepreneurial activity are more likely to grow compared to those that do not. Kuratko et al. (2015) suggest that major innovative breakthroughs are more likely to occur within structures that are closely aligned with an organic structure. Rigid and conservative organisational structures often have a stifling effect on entrepreneurial behaviours. In addition, a bureaucratic organisational structure prevents the detection of problems outside of work. This is because in such organisations, employees tend to focus on their departments' problems and fail to see the bigger picture. Thus employees should be encouraged to look at the organisation from a holistic perspective. Burn (2013) agrees that entrepreneurial behaviour within an organisation is positively correlated with performance when structures are more organic rather than mechanistic.

Sebora and Theerapatvong (2010) say that there is a possibility that firm size might affect the relationship between organisational performance and entrepreneurial attitude. Large organisations use rigid rules and procedures to administer their operations, which in turn could impede entrepreneurial behaviour by employees, leading to less innovation (Morris et al., 2008). A grey area which is overlooked by studies is the issue of job rotation within the structures of the organisation which can also facilitate entrepreneurial behaviour. Birkinshaw and Duke (2013) acknowledge that organisations are to a certain extent engineered systems characterised by “boxes and arrows”, accountabilities and key performance indicators.

### **2.3.3 Autonomy/work discretion**

Lekmat and Chelliah (2014) explain that employees working with discretion would work with the freedom to explore, giving rise to ideas and opportunities. Affording this level of discretion should not be a luxury, but a necessity in order to drive innovation from the initial idea through to implementation. Employees should be granted an environment of safety and freedom to experiment with new ideas without the fear of being reprimanded by senior management in case their innovative ideas do not yield expected results. There is therefore a need to foster communication between management, employees and co-

workers to allow each staff member to feel that innovation and entrepreneurship are the task and responsibility of each and every employee (Kuratko et al., 2014). According to Ireland et al. (2006), work discretion refers to top level managers' commitment to tolerate failure, provide decision-making latitude and freedom from excessive oversight and willingness to delegate authority and responsibility to middle and lower level employees.

According to Kuratko et al. (2014), employees with discretion over how to perform their tasks tend to often recognise CE opportunities as they are encouraged to engage in experimentation. However, work discretion is usually constrained by the budget limits that the organisation puts in place. By so doing, the organisation seeks to reduce the errors or any risk-taking activity that might constrain their budget in the event of the innovative idea not being fruitful. Kuratko et al. (2014) recommend that individuals be encouraged to recognise and develop ideas and opportunities at their own discretion, to engage in risk-taking and experimentation with the support and mentorship of their superiors. Companies should understand and accept that risk tolerance means that entrepreneurial ventures may fail and that these entrepreneurial failures become an opportunity to learn and adapt in terms of future entrepreneurial endeavours. Cho and Lee (2018) advocate that employees be given freedom to make decisions and that management must have a tolerance for failures. The idea of adopting a tolerance for failure is not the norm in organisations, but it is certainly needed if insight is to be gained.

Academic literature suggests that employees can learn to be entrepreneurial and achieve levels of success, provided they are afforded multiple opportunities to learn (including the ability to learn from failed ventures), and in so doing they are able to build an entrepreneurial base (Toft-Kehler, Wennberg & Kim, 2013). This must include a tolerance for failure and the possibility that the innovation might not bring the growth that was envisioned. Employees who have limited autonomy would potentially negatively affect the performance of the organisation (Demirci, 2013). Organisations need to give freedom to their employees to make decisions about working processes (Kuratko, 2014). Freedom at operational level tends to be constrained by the systems used and the work content. Kuratko et al. (2014) and Adonisi and Van (2012) maintain that companies need to be flexible and proactive to react to changes in their environments, internally and externally. Research shows that flexible, informal environments and working climates enhance and promote entrepreneurial actions, creativity and the flow of communication, information and ideas between employees, teams, departments and management. Vargas-Halabi et al. (2017)

argue that attempting to bend the rules requires the employee to have the company and its clients' best interests in mind.

#### **2.3.4 Resource/time availability**

According to Hisrich and Kearney (2012), resource availability is defined as the time provided to design an appropriate workload to ensure that employees have the time needed to pursue innovation and structure their work. Gupta and Srivastava (2013) say that the time employees are given to work on their own ideas is of the utmost importance to CE and beneficial to the organisation. For an organisation to promote CE at operational level, resources have to be at the disposal of the employees. Hisrich, Peters and Shepherd (2008) agree that the implementation of CE should be underpinned by resource availability, including time in order to facilitate the implementation of the experiment or research to produce innovative goods and services. Kuratko et al. (2014) are of the view that employees should be afforded the time for entrepreneurial activity as part of their work schedule to generate ideas and take advantage of opportunities. They add that employees are entitled to resources for innovation activities in order to encourage them to experiment and take risks. Resources might be available within the organisation, but if they are not properly allocated among the operational level employees, CE might also be constrained. De Jong and Wennekers (2008:7) identify resource availability as one of the important factors that could encourage CE. Time and physical resources are necessary to facilitate the individuals in the organisation to engage in innovative activities. In an entrepreneurial work environment, employees are allowed to be creative and experiment to the extent of their work time (Scheepers, Hough & Bloom, 2007). In addition, when organisations loosen restrictions, employees are encouraged to produce innovative things.

Thus, organisations must moderate the workload of people, avoid putting time constraints on all aspects of a person's job and allow people to work with others on long-term problem solving. The majority of scholars argue that giving employees time to be innovative and entrepreneurial promotes an entrepreneurial culture (Ghosh, 2013). Demanding routines, workloads and day-to-day schedules might leave the employee with little or no time to act entrepreneurially. Their focus is on problem solving, paperwork, outputs and achieving the goals set for their job level. This might create the perception that entrepreneurial initiatives are out of reach, because employees do not have time to investigate or spot opportunities or threats that might be developed into innovative products (Ghosh, 2013).

#### **2.3.5 Rewards/reinforcement**

For employees to feel valued they are influenced by the extent to which rewards and reinforcement systems recognise their efforts, commitment, innovative entrepreneurial actions and risk-taking. A reward system is a system used to motivate employees to engage in innovative behaviour that will support the realisation of CE activities. Giannikis and Nikandrou (2013) found that human resource practices that include rewards and compensation provide an organisation with a competitive advantage by creating cultures of creativity and innovation. Gogia and Soni (2017) believe that successful organisations must provide rewards for outstanding performance because entrepreneurship relies on individuals who think and behave as risk takers. This is in line with Lekmat and Chelliah (2014) that employees need to be motivated through a form of reward and recognition. The corroborating evidence from literature and the case study findings make reward and reinforcements an imperative not only for management, but for human resource practitioners as well. Ultimately, though, the driving force behind rewards and reinforcements must rest with senior management for it to be pervasive within the organisation.

Bhardwaj et al. (2011) point out that monetary awards should remain a part of the reward system to prevent the most productive and influential innovators from leaving the organisation. In contrast to this, some employees are not motivated by monetary rewards, but rather factors such as job enrichment. Hisrich et al. (2008) describe an effective reward system as one that encourages entrepreneurial activity by considering the goals, feedback, emphasis on responsibility and results-based incentives. According to Morris and Kuratko (2002), rewards take on many different forms such as financial, status and power, career and personal development, as well as psychological motivators such as self-actualisation and esteem, and social rewards such as friendships and a sense of belonging.

Rewards and incentives could motivate employees to innovate, take risks, act entrepreneurially and participate in projects to reach not only the company's goals, but also their own goals to enjoy success and growth, personally and financially (Kuratko et al., 2014). Employees should be encouraged to produce service innovation ideas through reward systems or workshops that are designed specifically around creating attention (Watanabe, Fukuda & Nishimura, 2015).

### **2.3.6 Human capital/workforce**

Undoubtedly, human capital is strongly linked with the innovation process. In recent literature, definitions of CE are characterised by employees initiating, taking risks, being

proactive and coming up with novel ideas (Bolton & Lane, 2012; De Jong, Parker, Wennekers & Wu, 2015). The competencies of individual employees, specific to the pursuit of CE, are fundamental to companies' ability to nurture and sustain innovation and new venture creation. CE is not an isolated factor that contributes to business innovation, but it is the result of the collective efforts of members of an organisation (Smallbone, Welter & Ateljevic, 2014). Entrepreneurial behaviour by employees must be considered important for the implementation of any corporate entrepreneurial strategy (Peltola, 2012). Organisations' entrepreneurial outcomes are influenced by the employees' positive or negative interpretation of the organisation's entrepreneurial strategy and the respective opportunities presented (Davidsson, 2015).

Operational level employees can be encouraged to be entrepreneurial through training and reward programmes that emphasise enhancing their knowledge, skills and abilities in support of CE (Mehta & Gupta, 2014). Moreover, entrepreneurial behaviour has to be embedded with an aim to foster CE among operational level employees. Individual competencies involve the knowledge required to achieve a given outcome, the skills to implement that knowledge and the personality characteristics required to motivate the implementation of the knowledge and skills to achieving a desired outcome (Han & Park, 2017). CE is based on the readiness of employees in a large company to assume entrepreneurial behaviour and communicate with the bureaucratic organisation they are working for in order to overcome different barriers to develop new products and services (Burns, 2013).

When it comes to understanding the process of opportunity recognition, there remains a gap in the academic understanding of how and why business ideas originate with particular individuals and not with others (Douglas, 2013; Mitchell & Shepherd, 2010). Initiatives by companies, in support of entrepreneurial activity by employees, may therefore not show the desired results. Byrne, Delmar, Fayolle and Lamine (2016) suggest four areas that organisations should focus on to break down organisational boundaries and facilitate innovative behaviour. The first area is encouraging entrepreneurial activity by using financial incentives instead of stringent rules and procedures. The second area is proper control of human resource policies. Managers in the corporation need to remain in positions long enough to familiarise themselves with an industry or a particular division. The third area of importance is to have faith in entrepreneurial initiatives. The final area is to bet on people instead of analysis. To create something new within a corporation, it is critical that

the employee who is promoting the idea have an in-depth knowledge of the corporate vision, mission and strategy (Acur, Kandemir & Boer, 2012).

According to Zahra (2015), one of the most significant contributions of CE behaviour is found in the organisational learning process that strengthens employees' ability to analyse markets and formulate new products. Zahra (2015) explains that the creation of knowledge within organisations is stimulated through pockets of discussion forums known as entrepreneurial hubs. This creates a platform for generating heterogeneous information and thus the potential to convert this information into a practical form. Entrepreneurial hubs serve as a means to generate new knowledge that can then be used in innovative ways to either enter new markets or improve the organisational position in existing markets.

Promoting entrepreneurial activity at company level requires significant ongoing effort and focus from employees, irrespective of their level in the organisational hierarchy. The organisational strategies, culture and the system by which employees are rewarded should be correctly aligned to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the entrepreneurial strategy decided by senior management (Ireland et al., 2009; Burgess, 2013). Abstein and Spieth (2014) concur by stating that organisations most certainly cannot innovate without employees who exhibit innovative work behaviour. Increased and encouraged employee participation leads to an improved record of turning ideas into successful innovative initiatives (Sarooghi et al., 2015). The study of Irawanto (2015) found that employee engagement gives them a sense of belonging, thereby enhancing creativity. Furthermore, scholars such as BarNir (2012) and Bhatia and Khan (2013) posit that involving employees in a project from the beginning is one of the strategies that triggers entrepreneurial activity. Globally, large corporates have understood the need to incorporate their employees in responding to market needs and demands (Bain & Company, 2015).

It has been observed by some scholars that organisations that empower their employees are more likely to get the best out of them, which will invariably trigger innovation and commitment, which in turn will have a positive and direct impact on job performance (Elnaga & Imran, 2014). Empowerment compels employees to be motivated and enthusiastic in utilising their distinctive capabilities and creativity towards organisational survival (Sharma & Kaur, 2011). Employee empowerment is one of the strategies that organisations use to drive innovative thought that fosters creative abilities (Lee, Magnini & Kim, 2011).

### **2.3.7 Organisational boundaries**

Management and employees need a vision and a clear map of the route they need to take to reach their goals and the company's financial profit margins. They operate in highly dynamic and complex environments and need structures, policies, processes and resources to be planned and available for individuals or teams to champion their entrepreneurial ideas (Fontana & Musa, 2017). Innovative outcomes should be structured and planned, encouraging individuals to be productive in following the norms, values, rules and regulations of the company (Kuratko et al., 2014). It should be made clear that innovation and entrepreneurship are not just the responsibility of management, R&D departments or the innovation champions and are not necessarily restricted by organisational boundaries and red tape.

Hornsby, Kuratko, Zahra (2002), Kuratko et al. (2014), Adonisi, and Van Wyk (2012) found that companies need to be flexible and proactive to react to changes in their environments, internally and externally.

Managers must manage, influence and measure antecedents or dimensions to develop strategies and organic structures, such as the CE strategy and the entrepreneurial strategic vision. They further need to develop staff members and to reinforce, encourage and promote entrepreneurial behaviour and innovative actions (Fontana & Musa, 2017). Research emphasises the need for CE to be embedded in a company's structure, systems and all individuals to encourage innovation (Ireland et al., 2009). This means that companies have to exploit opportunities that already exist, while discovering new opportunities, and execute them into new ventures, products or services to increase growth, profitability, success and survival (Covin & Slevin, 1991; Kuratko, Ireland & Hornsby, 2001).

### **2.3.8 Organisational culture**

In order to change and create an environment favourable to CE, the culture of entrepreneurship needs to be infused from the top down. Top management or strategic management level needs to create an organisational environment that emphasises CE. This means that policies established need to encourage transformational policies that discourage bureaucracy (Zahra, Neubaum & Hayton, 2016). However, Rigtering and Weitzel (2013) emphasise that there should be the right level of adequate trust between employees and management to instil an entrepreneurial culture.

Culture has been noted as a key element in fostering entrepreneurial activities in an organisation and organisations that practise CE are more successful than the ones that do not (Morris et al., 2008). Organisational culture, as a soft component of organisational development, encompasses a system of values and standards, as well as a set of appropriate motivational factors that encourage its effective implementation. Entrepreneurial culture has to be inculcated from the operational level employees and spread to the other spheres of the organisation rather than only to be concentrated at higher levels. However, the existence of an organisational culture that encourages innovation provides conditions for the application of CE. A culture that is averse to risk almost by definition discourages employees from acting in an entrepreneurial manner (Morris et al., 2008). Due to the presence of a risk-averse culture, a firm will tend to possess a lower level of CE.

In order to establish and incorporate values of entrepreneurial organisational culture into the corporate environment, it is necessary to develop appropriate systems of motivational factors, both tangible and intangible. Tangible factors are essential elements of a supporting system and within the organisations they most frequently represent a starting point. Awards for exceptional commitment and loyalty of employees and associates at all management levels through higher salaries, bonuses and distribution of profits currently are the most common forms of motivation and reward. However, it must be understood that there are numerous intangible factors which can stimulate employees: interesting work, opportunities for personal advancement and further development, more responsibilities, new challenges, fair treatment, pleasant working environment, flexible working hours and the possibilities of working at home (Paunović, 2014). Entrepreneurial culture implies a positive attitude and openness to change. The most successful and promising organisations build a culture that welcomes changes as opportunities (Lockhead, 2008), not as threats.

Venter, Rwigema and Urban (2008) differentiate between entrepreneurial culture and corporate culture. They define corporate entrepreneurship culture as the polar opposite of a conservative corporate culture. The corporate culture is one that celebrates caution and conformity, convention, protocol, rules and procedures. Entrepreneurship should be encouraged in an organisation by creating an appropriate entrepreneurial culture and fostering an entrepreneurial climate (Venter et al., 2008). However, other scholars such as Chen, Podolski and Veeraraghavan (2017) argue that national culture is relevant for business outcomes since private organisations interact with their local environment through employees, customers and suppliers, i.e. their surroundings. In their study, they showed

that organisations in countries which are characterised by individualism were more innovative than organisations in high uncertainty-avoidant countries.

A favourable company culture encourages employees to try out new ideas, even if they fail. The belief is that mistakes can be learned from. “The culture that allows individuals to bring new ideas and tolerate risk is a key element of sustainable business performance” (Wang, Shieh & Wang, 2008). However, this viewpoint tends to be avoided by some organisations as it might be costly to the company in terms of budget and resources. Entrepreneurship culture encourages learning through information sharing, commitment and accountability (Morris et al., 2008). Understanding the key values of these cultures and recognising the key powerful elements within them can lead to successful innovations. Entrepreneurial firms are more prone to having a market-driven culture by constantly updating, improving and changing business processes, products and services that eventually create more value for customers (Agca, Topal & Kaya, 2009). Kuratko et al. (2014) maintain that to sustain a culture of innovation, CE is needed.

A meaningful level of entrepreneurship cannot be sustained over time unless entrepreneurship is reflected in the core values of the firm (Morris et al., 2008). Culture has many elements, but there are some aspects that are more conducive to entrepreneurial culture than others. The following are the elements that form part of the entrepreneurial culture (Morris et al., 2008):

- Focus on people and empowerment;
- Value creation through innovation and change;
- Attention to the basics;
- Hands-on management;
- Doing the right thing.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

Academic literature regarding the contextual nature of entrepreneurial activity remains scant, resulting in inappropriate policy actions and insufficient support within many organisations (Smallbone et al., 2014). Policy makers within the organisation need to understand the entrepreneurship processes and they must be clear on what they are attempting to achieve in any policy support of entrepreneurial activity. Entrepreneurial activity is now widely perceived as an important source of economic growth and employment creation (Bullough & Renko, 2013). The literature agrees that CE is a positive

organisational mechanism. Various authors emphasise that it is vital to the performance and survival of organisations explaining why researchers and practitioners alike have increasingly started paying more attention to understanding and practising the process of CE (Barringer & Bluedorn, 1999; Kuratko & Audretsch, 2013; Basu & Wadhwa, 2013; Covin & Slevin, 1991; Zahra, 2015). There is indeed overwhelming agreement in the literature advocating greater understanding of CE as it has become a necessity for the survival and continued growth of organisations. Moreover, researchers in CE confidently conclude that the presence of successful CE in organisations contributes to both tangible outcomes, such as increased growth performance and profitability, and intangible outcomes, such as knowledge sharing and the development of skills.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Research Design and Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The research methodology utilised in the study is described in this chapter. The research methodology specifies how the study was conducted to reach the stated objectives. Research methodology focuses on the entire process of gathering data and the methods used to gather this data in addition to focusing on the kinds of tools that must be used and how they should be used (Babbie & Mouton, 2012). The importance of research design cannot be overemphasised since it encompasses the research paradigm, research approach, sampling, data collection methods, research instruments and ethical issues. Through the what, why and how line of questioning, the researcher endeavours to expose a phenomenon in terms of what takes place, why and how it happens (Myers, 2013). The method in which data was collected, analysed and interpreted is discussed. The ethical aspects and the researcher's method in maintaining and conducting a study governed by research ethics are also addressed.

It is important to outline what is meant by research design, which is the focus of this chapter, and on the information that addresses the specific research questions and the most appropriate strategies for obtaining that information. The researcher must therefore not only be involved, but must play a fundamental role in data production and the construction of realities (Lichtman, 2006). The aim of this study was to elicit the perceptions and experiences of operational level employees.

#### **3.2 Research philosophy**

Research is known as an original investigation undertaken in order to contribute to knowledge and understanding in a particular field (Myers, 2013). In addition, researchers need to understand the grounds of their knowledge, especially with reference to the trustworthiness and scope of the knowledge that they obtain. Research philosophy refers to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge, for example objective or subjective (Saunders, Lewis, Thornhill & Bristow, 2015). Ontology refers to the worldviews and assumptions in which researchers operate in their search for knowledge (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011) and the nature of reality, for example exploring operational level employees' contribution to CE and the related characteristics. When researchers conduct

qualitative research, they are embracing the idea of multiple realities (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, qualitative researchers conduct a study with the intention of reporting on these multiple realities.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), epistemology concerns what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study. However, Myers (2013) defines epistemology as referring to the assumptions about knowledge and how it can be obtained. With the epistemological assumption, qualitative research means that the researcher tries to get as close as possible to the participants being studied. This is how knowledge is known, through the lived experiences of participants (Creswell, 2015).

### **3.3 Research paradigm**

To enable the researcher to be aware of and make explicit their assumptions regarding their worldview, an understanding of the ideas contributing to worldview is necessary (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Researchers need to critically reflect on these ideas, as assumptions arising from this reflection can influence the research. A paradigm is defined as a way of looking at or researching phenomena, a view of what counts as accepted or correct scientific knowledge or a way of working (Cohen et al., 2011). In addition, De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2011) view paradigms as patterns by which scientists study the subject of their research, within the discipline of their interest. Babbie (2013) states that paradigms are fundamental frameworks through which researchers organise their observations and reasoning. A research paradigm is the underlying set of beliefs about how research elements are pieced together to make meanings of research discoveries. There are three main paradigms: positivism, interpretivism/constructivism and emancipatory critical theory (Cohen et al., 2011). Research questions in qualitative methodology focus on individuals, on how they interact socially and how they view themselves within their environment (Lichtman, 2006). This study was qualitative rather than quantitative, since the research was underpinned by the interpretive paradigm.

### **3.4 Interpretive paradigm**

Owing to the nature of the stated research questions, this study, which was qualitative in nature, was located within the interpretive paradigm. Myers (2013) states that in employing an interpretive paradigm, researchers view people and the meaning they attribute to the world, as well as their perceptions, as fundamental data sources. For the researcher to make explicit how their own assumptions based on their worldview influence the process of their research, it is necessary for them to develop an understanding of the ideas contributing to

these views. This means that the researcher and the researched (participants) interact to interpret and expose the meaning of their interaction. Interpretivism advocates that it is necessary for the researcher to understand differences between humans in our role as social actors. Crucial to the interpretivist philosophy is that the researcher has to enter the social world of research subjects and understand the world from their point of view (Saunders et al., 2015). Consequently, this study was located in the interpretivist research philosophy, which assumes that reality is a social construction and therefore subjective in nature and multiple, as interviewees in the study interact with reality (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). The research question indicates that the researcher was interested in meaning and sought to understand people's meaning, in this instance, of the contribution of operational level employees to CE within the organisation. Interpretive approaches rely heavily on naturalistic methods, which include interviewing, observation and analysis of existing texts. These methods in turn ensure an adequate dialogue between the researchers and those with whom they interact in order to collaboratively construct a meaningful reality. In this case, knowledge is subjective and socially constructed, not discovered (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The overall plan for connecting the conceptual research problems to the pertinent (and achievable) empirical research is known as the research design.

### **3.5 Research design**

Research design is the blueprint to answer the questions posed by the researcher during the study and to control the challenges that may surface during the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2017). The most appropriate research design used in this instance was a qualitative case study because the research was exploratory, as recommended by Myers (2013). An exploratory case study was more appropriate in this study as this type of study seeks to determine what is happening and asks questions to establish why it happens. In this instance, the study sought to determine how operational level employees contribute to CE within the organisation and what factors could hinder the promotion of CE at this level.

Qualitative research is a social enquiry that focuses on the sense that people make of the world (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Clur (2015) and Creswell (2014) agree that qualitative research is an exploration of the understanding people attach to human challenges. According to Saldana (2016), each person has an understanding of what the truth is from an individual point of view. Moreover, Clur (2015) points out that qualitative research is based on people's perceptions and experiences with the aim to describe the personal reasons and meaning for their behaviour. Therefore, interviews and observations bring out the relationship between the researcher and the participant (Saldana, 2016). Qualitative

research was used in the current study to explore the contribution of operational level employees to CE.

The features of qualitative research include:

- An in-depth understanding of the world of the participants through their experiences and perceptions (Polit & Hungler, 2013);
- A small sample size that is purposively selected on particular criteria (Creswell, 2015);
- Data collection methods that require close contact between the researcher and the participants (Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton-Nicholls & Ormston, 2014);
- Intense researcher involvement, as the researcher attempts to understand the participants' perceptions and experiences;
- Thick and rich descriptions (Creswell, 2015);
- A detailed and comprehensive study (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014).

The assumptions of qualitative research mentioned by Clur (2015) are as follows:

- The researcher is the main instrument for data collection and analysis and the study is thus subject to the beliefs of the researcher.
- The research includes fieldwork, the researcher chooses suitable participants and collects data until data saturation takes place.
- The process is inductive and conclusions are drawn from the data collected from the participants.

### **3.6 Case study**

The case study was considered to be viable for this research, as it is necessary to study the phenomenon in its natural setting and the researcher can ask "how" and "why" questions, so as to understand the nature and complexity of the processes taking place. A case study inquires deeply a research topic or phenomenon within its context and usually refers to studies that are qualitative in nature and that aim to provide an in-depth description of a single or small number of cases (Yin, 2014). Case study research is concerned with the complexities and specific nature of the case in question (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

Furthermore, the case study approach provides the focus that is required, emphasises depth of study, is based on the assumption that reality can only be understood through social constructions and interactions and that the context in which the phenomena under study are situated is complex. These facets of case study strategy fit perfectly with the aim of the main objective of this research. A single case study was used for this study because it enabled the researcher to explore how operational level employees contributed to CE and the challenges they faced. Secondly, the approach produced detailed descriptions of the phenomenon, thereby increasing the robustness of the findings. Thirdly, it allowed the fieldworker to engage with the participants independently through an interview. The following advantages of case studies are drawn from Baxter and Jack (2008):

- Case study data is drawn from people's experiences and practices, and is therefore strongly rooted in reality. In this study, participants' experiences and views were used to construct their reality about the phenomenon under study.
- Case studies allow for generalisation from a specific instance to a more general issue.
- They explore alternative meanings and interpretations.
- Case studies can improve a data source, from which further analyses can be made. These analyses can thereafter be archived for further research work.
- Case studies build on actual practices and experiences, they can be linked to action and insights contribute to changing practice.
- Data contained in case studies is close to people's experiences, it can be used more persuasively and is more accessible. This factor proved particularly beneficial to the present study, since participants were willing to participate and did not need to be persuaded to share their views.

When deciding whether to use the case study approach or not, there are a number of factors to consider. If there is a need to focus on contemporary events or phenomena in a natural setting, clearly the case study is advantageous. However, if there is a need for control or manipulation of variables, then the case study would not be appropriate. It is important to clarify that need should relate to the nature of the problem rather than the (in)ability of the researcher(s) to undertake research with a particular methodology. Exploratory studies are generally better served by single cases, i.e. where there is no previous theory. A single case can also be used to test an existing, well-formed theory (Yin, 2014).

### **3.7 Population**

A population is the total group of individuals with whom the research is concerned and to whom the research finding can be applied (Wiid & Diggines, 2013). Polit and Hungler (2013) agree with the definition of Wiid and Diggines, and Salkind (2012) narrows population down to a portion of the larger group. The research study took place within the South African context, specifically in Gauteng, in the Johannesburg metropolitan area. The researcher chose Gauteng because it is South Africa's commercial and industrial hub encompassing the principal city of Johannesburg which has the highest number of long-term insurance companies compared to other provinces and is highly competitive. Johannesburg is also the country's largest metropolis and financial heart of the southern African subcontinent (Rogerson, 2012).

The researcher identified one large long-term insurance company in this study as it was more accessible since the researcher is an employee within the company and is very familiar with the organisational structure. Interviewing colleagues raises the issue of objectivity. Implementing a case study within one's place of employment has the comforting advantage of access to subjects. However, such scenarios bring with them problems that, if not managed properly, may hinder the research and endanger relationships between the researcher and the participants in the research project. The concern is that the researcher could be influenced by prior knowledge of fellow colleagues' views and could bring such knowledge to bear when interpreting transcripts of the interviews. To minimise this influence, a research assistant/fieldworker was appointed for the purposes of collecting data only, that is, conducting interviews on behalf of the main researcher, to mitigate the risks of subjectivity or bias. The research assistant signed a confidentiality agreement and agreed that all information (whether or not recorded in documentary form, or stored on any magnetic or optical disk or memory) about the interviews remained confidential.

The population of the study consisted of all the permanent employees (540) at this particular organisation. As the study followed a qualitative approach, the size of the population made it impractical and uneconomical to involve all the members of the population in the research study, and therefore a sample was drawn.

### **3.7.1 Sampling**

A sample is a portion of the population that is representative of the entire population (LoBiondo-Wood & Haber, 2013). Maree (2010) and Salkind (2012) agree that a sample is a smaller group drawn from the population. According to Patton (2015), a sample is the selection of participants from the population and involves decisions about who, where, what and the social process that will be considered. Additionally, a sample should be representative of the population so that conclusions that add value to the study may be extracted (Engel & Schutt, 2017). A sampling frame is a list of all members of the total population from which the sample is drawn (Saunders et al., 2012). The sampling frame of the study consisted of all permanent operational level employees working in the Call Centre, Policy Replacement, Policy Servicing, Claims, Quality Assurance and Premiums Administration departments. The reason for targeting only this segment was to acquire a thorough understanding of CE activity at this level.

### **3.7.2 Sampling criteria**

Sampling criteria are characteristics that the population should possess to be included in the study, and these criteria are essential to answer the research questions (Patton, 2015). The following criteria applied in this study:

- Employed at operational level;
- Must be between the ages of 18 and 65 years;
- Grade level 06;
- Must be permanently employed;
- Experience of 3 years or more.

### **3.7.3 Purposive sampling**

Judgment/purposive sampling, which is one of the non-probability sampling methods, is appropriate for qualitative studies and was used in this particular study. Sampling in qualitative research involves non-probability theory and is generally thought to be purposefully chosen to acquire cases that are laden with rich information (Patton, 2015). Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) note that non-probability sampling is used when it is not possible to determine who the entire population is or when it is challenging to gain access to the whole population. Moreover, Babbie (2016) perceive purposive sampling as the selection of the sample based on knowledge of the population and the context of the study. They recommend purposive sampling in view of its

practicality, usefulness and suitability for a pilot study. This type of sampling was chosen as it was difficult to ascertain the number of operational level employees within the organisation and the classification of an operational level employee varies.

#### **3.7.4 Sample size**

In qualitative research, the size of the sample is not mathematically determined (Yin, 2014a). In other words, there is no prescribed number of participants to be included in the study. According to Guetterman (2015), the insights that arise from qualitative studies are related to the richness of the data, rather than to the size of the sample. Since qualitative research is not dependent on the size of the sample, the question often arises how a qualitative researcher would know when to conclude the process of data collection. Fusch and Ness (2015) advise that data saturation should serve as a guide for the sample size of a study. Saunders et al. (2012) also recommend continuing to collect qualitative data until saturation is reached. According to Davis (2013), data saturation can be described as the point at which no new information can be obtained. Creswell (2015) proposes that 5 to 25 interviews should be conducted, whereas Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) prescribe 12 interviews. Data saturation was obtained after the 13<sup>th</sup> interview. Sample size usually depends on the qualitative design being used (Creswell, 2014).

#### **3.7.5 Piloting the interview guide**

A pilot study was conducted to test the interview guide and make changes where appropriate. The pilot study consisted of two interviews with participants similar to those in the main study in order to test the interview procedure and to identify researcher biases and make changes where appropriate, as advocated by Marshall and Rossman (2011). Another interview was conducted with a peer in the field of entrepreneurship. This was done to verify and validate the interview questions prior to using them in the study. The researcher also asked the participants for feedback to identify ambiguities and difficult questions, as suggested by Chenail (2011). The pilot study assisted in refining the data collection plans and the procedures to be followed (Yin, 2016). An observation from the pilot study was that there were certain terms that needed clarification or to be simplified and other questions were vague. This feedback from the pilot study assisted the researcher in fine-tuning and rephrasing some of the questions for better understanding.

### **3.8 Data collection**

Data collection is a series of interrelated tasks with the intention of collecting rich information to provide answers to the research questions (Burns & Grove, 2013). Jordaan (2014) and Creswell (2015) concur with this definition and Jordaan further states that data collection is the systematic and precise gathering of data that is relevant to the purpose, objectives and questions of the study. Bryman and Bell (2015) perceive the process of data collection to be one that may be taken from either a primary or secondary stance. Primary data may be gathered by the researcher through interviews, interview guides and other forms of assessment, and secondary data can be gathered in the form of literature, documents and articles published by researchers in the field (Bryman & Bell, 2015). For the purpose of this study, data was collected through semi-structured interviews. According to Compton-Lilly, Zamzow, Cheng, Durón, Goralski-Cumbajin, Quast and Hagerman (2015), semi-structured interviews are a common method to collect data in qualitative research. They entail the use of prepared questions guided by identified themes in a consistent manner interposed with probes designed to elicit more elaborate responses (Qu & Dumay, 2011). The purpose of the semi-structured interview was to collect facts, gain insight into and understand the opinions, experiences and behaviours of operational level employees.

#### **3.8.1 The interview as a research technique**

An interview is a means of data collection in which one individual, referred to as the interviewer, asks questions of another individual, referred to as the participant, either face-to-face or telephonically (Polit & Hungler, 2013). According to Strydom (Strydom & De Vos, 2011), interviews are one of the most common data collection techniques used in qualitative research. Another definition of an interview emerges from Brinkmann and Kvale (2015), who posit that an interview conducted within a qualitative research framework assists the researcher in making sense of the participants' perceptions and experiences. Bryman and Bell (2015) note that qualitative interviewing is a less structured and more flexible form of interviewing and that the interviewer adapts the questions and reacts to the interviewee. Research makes use of a variety of interview styles, ranging from unstructured, structured to semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were used and interviews were conducted individually and face-to-face using an interview guide.

### **3.8.2 Interview guide**

An interview guide is a list of predetermined questions formulated by the researcher (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Jamshed (2014) says that an interview guide contains core and related questions that are linked to the main research question. Saunders et al. (2012) have a similar view to Brinkmann and Kvale, and also recommend that the interview guide be structured in such a manner that flexibility and fluidity can be incorporated into the questions being asked. There is no prescribed number of questions to be included in the interview guide (Jordaan, 2014), although it is recommended that the guide include descriptive, structural, comparative and evaluative questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2015).

### **3.8.3 Semi-structured interviews**

Interviews were audio-recorded to ensure an accurate account of the conversations and to avoid losing data as not everything can be written down during the interview. Prepared questions guided by identified themes were used. The purpose of the semi-structured interview was to collect perceptions of and gain insight into the experiences and behaviour of operational level employees. Data collection depended mainly on data saturation. Data saturation is reached when there is enough information to replicate the study (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Walker, 2012), when the ability to obtain additional new information has been attained and when further coding is no longer feasible (Guest et al., 2006). The concept of data saturation is considered as important because it addresses whether a study is based on an adequate sample to demonstrate content validity (Francis, Johnston, Robertson, Glidewell, Entwistle, Eccles & Grimshaw, 2010). Participants were made aware of what the researcher required of them as well as the possible benefits to participants and/or their businesses. The researcher shared the purpose of the research project, stated how the researcher believed the participants would be able to help the study and how the participants would benefit in return, and provided assurances about confidentiality and anonymity, as recommended by Rowley (2012).

### **3.8.4 Transcription of data**

Transcription is the process in which a researcher takes data from the spoken text, which may be structured, unstructured or narrative interviews, to written format so that it can be analysed (Stuckey, 2014). Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid and Redwood (2013) advise that transcriptions be detailed in order to capture the features of the conversation, such as emphasis, speed, tone of voice, timing and pauses, all of which are essential for interpreting the data and for providing the researcher with a deeper understanding of the phenomena

under investigation. The time spent in transcription is not wasted as it informs the early stages of analysis and enables the researcher to develop a far more thorough understanding of the data through having transcribed it. Furthermore, the close attention needed to transcribe data may facilitate the close-reading and interpretive skills needed to analyse the data (Stuckey, 2014)). Accuracy and an improved level of understanding of the data were achieved through the transcriptions, and this led to better data analysis.

The researcher transcribed all 13 interviews verbatim. Evaluation of each transcription was done to assess its correctness through the correction of transcription errors and member checking. Member checking is a process that enables participants to check and confirm the information they provided during the interviews (Harvey, 2015). Transcription of each interview took an average of 75 minutes. The trustworthiness of the transcriptions was improved through the correction of transcription errors. A few typographical errors were noted and duly corrected by the researcher.

### **3.9 Data management and analysis**

Once data was collected and transcribed, it was deemed fit for analysis. The reason for understanding the data gathered is to explore underlying associations and meanings (Babbie, 2013). Data analysis is defined as the process of making sense of the data that has been collected (Creswell, 2015). Furthermore, Babbie (2013) and Creswell (2015) agree that data analysis creates order, meaning and structure in the vast amount of data gathered. The data analysis process begins with coding. This study used opening coding of data reduction.

#### **3.9.1 Coding**

Coding is one of the crucial phases in thematic analysis and is used to categorise data with similar meanings. It involves labelling each data unit with a code that represents the meaning of the extract (Saunders et al., 2015). In addition, coding is used as a systematic process to condense large sets of data into smaller more analysable segments through creating themes and sub-themes (Augustine, 2014). Ravitch and Carl (2016) agree with Augustine that coding is a process where data sets are broken down into analytical units.

Open coding, which was used to code the data from this study, involves reading through the data and creating tentative codes for segments of data (Creswell, 2015). It involves line-by-line coding, where the researcher is tasked with reading the entire text from start

to finish, obtaining an overall impression and understanding of the data (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2014). The researcher first had to obtain a sense of the whole by reading through the transcriptions. A single interview was selected and to arrive at the underlying meaning in the information, the question was asked, “What is this about?” Preliminary thoughts were written down. This was done for all the interviews. These thoughts were collated into groups to become topics. Thereafter, topics were clustered together to form initial major topics and unique topics. The topics were abbreviated as codes and the codes written down next to the appropriate segments of transcribed data. This preliminary organising scheme was repeated several times to see whether new codes emerged. The researcher’s review of the literature chapters and discussions with peers and experts greatly contributed to the coding process.

The strength of open coding is that it builds directly from the raw data and the process ensures the trustworthiness of the study (Creswell, 2015). However, open coding can be time consuming and tedious and if a significant idea is neglected, the researcher may have to restart the coding process (Saldana, 2016). To mitigate this, the researcher consulted relevant literature and spoke to experts on how to approach this type of coding. Despite the complexity of open coding, it was deemed most suitable for this study as it enabled the researcher to make sense of the data.

### **3.9.2 Thematic analysis**

Thematic analysis was conducted on the data transcribed and coded by the researcher. It involves looking at the data from different perspectives with the objective of identifying ideas in the transcript that will assist the researcher in making sense of and interpreting the data (Maree, 2010). However, Creswell and Poth (2017) argue that thematic analysis entails more than just extracting ideas from a transcript. They are of the view that this type of analysis explores themes, sub-themes and patterns that are both obvious and hidden within the transcript.

The goal of thematic analysis is to identify themes, that is, patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and to use these themes to address the research or something about an issue. A good thematic analysis interprets and makes sense of it much more than simply summarising the data (Clarke & Braun, 2013). In addition, Jordaan (2014) argues that the purpose of thematic analysis is to condense data and offer fresh insights into the phenomena, while Salaberrios (2016) shares the view of Jordaan that thematic analysis creates knowledge and decodes the phenomena.

Thematic analysis is integrated into qualitative studies, using either an inductive or a deductive approach. An inductive approach involves the use of documents and recordings to identify themes (Bryman & Bell, 2015). In a research study such as this, compiling themes by means of a qualitative inductive approach was useful and content analysis was therefore used to channel the inductive process. Howitt and Cramer (2014) confirm that there is not a single standardised approach to conducting thematic analysis. Different researchers can therefore do things differently, as long as certain quality criteria for thematic analysis are adhered to.

Braun and Clarke (2006) provide a six-phase guide that is a very useful framework for conducting this kind of analysis that the researcher followed. The phases are as follows:

- Familiarisation with the data – The researchers immerse themselves and become intimately acquainted with their data, reading and re-reading the data and listening to audio-recorded data at least once, if relevant, and noting any initial analytic observations. In this study, the researcher familiarised himself with the data by listening repeatedly to the audio-recorded data while transcribing.
- Labelling – Coding involves generating labels for important features of the relevant data to the main research question guiding the analysis. The researcher codes every data item and ends this phase by collating all the codes and relevant data extracts. This was done in this study.
- Searching for themes – A theme is a coherent and meaningful pattern in the data relevant to the research question. The researcher started formulating themes based on the research objectives and questions. The researcher ended this phase by collating all the coded data relevant to each theme.
- Reviewing themes – This involves checking that the themes “work” in relation to both the coded extracts and the full data set. The researcher should reflect on whether the themes tell a convincing and compelling story about the data and begin to define the nature of each individual theme and the relationship between the themes. In this study, themes were reviewed to check the correlation between coded data and themes.
- Defining and naming themes – At this stage, the researcher defines and names themes after a detailed analysis of data, thereby identifying the “essence” of each theme and constructing a concise and informative name for each theme.

- Writing up – This phase involves weaving together the analytic narrative and vivid data extracts to tell the reader a coherent and persuasive story about the data and contextualising it in relation to existing literature.

Thematic analysis is chosen as a technique for analysing data because of its flexibility to be used across a range of epistemologies and research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is suited to a wide range of research interests and theoretical perspectives and is useful as a basic method because of the following (Braun & Clarke, 2006):

- It works with a wide range of research questions, from those about people's experiences or understandings to those about the representation and construction of particular phenomena in particular contexts.
- It can analyse different types of data from secondary sources such as media to transcripts of focus groups or interviews.
- It works with large or small data sets.
- It can be applied to produce data-driven or theory-driven analyses.

### **3.10 Measures of trustworthiness of study**

Rigour in qualitative research is a way to establish trust or confidence in the findings or results of a research study and is useful for establishing consistency of study methods over time. Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Thomas & Magilvy, 2011) proposed a model of trustworthiness that addresses credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

#### **3.10.1 Credibility**

Credibility allows others to recognise the experiences contained within the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility refers to conducting the research in such a manner that the likelihood of the findings being found credible is improved. The credibility of the findings depends on the richness of the data gathered (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Krefting, 1990). To ensure credibility, the researcher recorded the interviews to ensure a true reflection, as notes may have been incomplete and memory failure may have been experienced.

#### **3.10.2 Transferability**

Transferability refers to the ability to transfer research findings from one sample to another or the extent to which findings are applicable to other contexts or other participants

(Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, Lincoln and Guba suggest that researchers provide sufficient contextual information about the fieldwork and research setting to allow readers to connect the findings to their own thinking and assumptions. To establish transferability, the researcher provided sufficient detail about the context of the research so that readers can judge the applicability of the findings to other settings. Furthermore, the researcher kept field notes that ensured transferability in that all aspects related to the research process were documented.

### **3.10.3 Dependability**

When another researcher is able to analyse the raw data and come to the same conclusions, dependability is established (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability is consistency in the researcher's choices, decisions and analysis across the time limits and circumstances of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2015). Lincoln and Guba (1985) recommend that an audit trail be used to achieve dependability. Ritchie et al. (2014) support this. It is also advocated that reflexivity by means of keeping a diary be considered. Reflexivity is the process by which the researcher carefully scrutinises their role in the study (Roddy & Dewar, 2016; Krefting, 1990). To ensure dependability, the researcher had to clearly articulate the purpose of the study and research methods used, and how the participants were chosen and why.

### **3.10.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability is the objectivity of the study (Salkind, 2012). Lincoln and Guba (2013) write that confirmability is the extent to which the findings are acknowledged by the participants and not viewed as the researcher's thoughts or motivation. Anney (2014) supports this view and adds that the data of the study, and not the preconceived notions of the researcher, gives rise to the findings of the study. Hadi and Closs (2016) argue that confirmability enables other researchers to arrive at similar findings by engaging in a similar research process. In this regard, the researcher used an independent co-coder to do coding. After the coding, the researcher and co-coder met to discuss the codes and the themes that emerged from the coding process.

### **3.11 Ethical considerations**

Jordaan (2014) and Bernard, Wutich and Ryan (2016) describe ethics as sensitivity to the rights of others. Yin (2016) explains that research ethics focuses on the moral and conscientious manner in which the research is concluded, from the research design, method of data collection to analysing and reporting. Moreover, Salkind (2012) notes that a researcher needs to adopt an ethical mind-set when undertaking research. This entire study was guided by all the ethical principles below.

#### **3.11.1 Ethical clearance**

Creswell (2015) speaks of ethical clearance as the approval obtained by an ethical body to proceed with the study. The required consent was obtained from the Department of Entrepreneurship and Ethics Committee as well as from the College of Economics and Management Sciences (CEMS) Research and Ethics Committee at UNISA before embarking on this research study. This was done to ensure the ethical compliance of the research activities. An ethical clearance certificate was received from the CEMS Research and Ethics Committee at UNISA to proceed with the research study. Furthermore, the UNISA Code of Ethics for Research and the UNISA Ethics Research Policy guided this study.

#### **3.11.2 Informed consent**

Informed consent is the process of providing information to the participants about the rationale for the study, its methods and possible risks and options so that the participants understand this information and can make a choice about whether to participate in the study or not (Bryman & Bell, 2015; Hesse-Biber, 2011). The Consent to Participate letter and Research Participant Information Sheet were sent electronically to the operational level employees by the researcher using the university email account to remain anonymous to the participants. This was done before the start of the interviews to inform the operational level employees of the nature and the purpose of the study. Additionally, in this set of documents, they were informed that they would not be subjected to any risks and that their participation was voluntary. They were also guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality and the option to liaise with the researcher or the research supervisor if they had any queries.

#### **3.11.3 Anonymity and confidentiality**

The researcher kept the identity of participants anonymous and all the information collected during the study was treated with confidentiality. The names of the participants were not recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect the data to participants.

Participants were informed about the confidentiality of the interview and that the interview was recorded and the recordings were to be transcribed. The interviews were conducted in a room designated only for meetings. After the interview, the researcher ensured confidentiality by keeping the audio recordings secured, using a security password to open the recorder. The researcher also ensured that no unauthorised person had access to the recordings and ensured that all the data records were kept confidential.

According to Rowley (2012), maintaining confidentiality means ensuring that particular individuals can never be linked to any data they provide. He states that protecting participants' confidentiality also requires researchers not to disclose personal characteristics that could allow others to guess the identities of people who played a role in research. The researcher ensured that the interviews were scheduled at a convenient time for the participants.

### **3.12 Conclusion**

The research design and methodology for this study were described. In accordance with the aims of the study, a qualitative research design by means of a single case study was followed to explore the contribution of operational level employees to CE. The research methodology process followed in respect of sampling, data collection and analysis was also described. Thematic analysis, the selected strategy to analyse the data, was outlined. Thematic analysis enabled the researcher to become intimately involved in the data, which made the experience more enriching. The ethical considerations were also highlighted. Lastly, trustworthiness was ensured. The next chapter, Chapter 4, presents the findings of this study. The themes and sub-themes that emerged from the study are presented, along with verbatim quotes from the participants.

## Chapter 4

### Research Findings

#### 4.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 provided the background to and motivation for the study. The literature on the organisational variables that influence CE was reviewed in Chapter 2, and Chapter 3 contained an explanation of the qualitative research methodology and processes used to undertake this study. The research findings based on the data analysis done are presented in this chapter. The chapter begins with a brief outline and discussion of the participants, after which an overview of the identified themes is given. The rest of the chapter provides a detailed description of the findings under each theme, supported by direct quotes from the interview transcriptions, followed by a literature control and critical interpretive discussion under each theme.

#### 4.2 Profile of the participants

The researcher had chosen 27 possible participants to be interviewed but in the end, the researcher interviewed only 13, as this was the data saturation level. Participants worked in different departments, namely Policy Replacement, Call Centre, Policy Servicing, Claims Assessment, Premiums Administration and Quality Assurance. Pseudonyms were given to each participant at sample selection. The participant number was attached to the department, such as PR1 denoting Policy Replacement participant 1, CC3 denoting Call Centre participant 3 and so on.

The demographic particulars of the participants are provided in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Profile of the participants**

Participant	Department/Area	Age	Education Level	Experience	Race	Gender
PR1	Policy Replacement	35	Bachelor's degree	6 years	African	Male
PR2	Policy Replacement	38	Bachelor's degree	3 years	African	Female
CC3	Call Centre	26	Matric	5 years	African	Female
QA4	Quality Assurance	27	Matric	5 years	White	Male
PS5	Policy Servicing	30	Diploma	6 years	African	Female

CC6	Call Centre	47	Matric	7 years	African	Female
CC7	Call Centre	29	Matric	7 years	Coloured	Male
CA 8	Claims Assessment	25	Matric	4 years	African	Male
CA 9	Claims Assessment	29	Matric	5 years	Coloured	Female
QA10	Quality Assurance	37	Diploma	4 years	Indian	Female
PS11	Policy Servicing	32	Matric	6 years	African	Female
PA12	Premiums Administration	26	Bachelor's degree	3 years	Indian	Male
PA13	Premiums Administration	34	Matric	5 years	African	Male

#### **4.2.1 Department/area**

Thirteen participants were drawn from six departments of which two participants were drawn from each department except for the Call Centre, which was represented by three participants as it had the highest number of employees. All these departments fall under the Client Services division. The participants from all the departments were approachable and willing to share their perceptions and experiences.

#### **4.2.2 Age**

Six participants were between the ages of 20 and 29, another six between the ages of 30 and 39 and 1 participant was between the ages of 40 and 49. No participants were under the age of 25 or over the age of 50. This shows a combination of young and old participants for the study, which upholds the trustworthiness of this study in respect of knowledge and experience. It was established that younger employees tend to display more favourable attitudes than older employees in terms of CE. In view of this, the participants presented the argument that younger employees envisaged a career path within the organisation whereas older employees found no need to learn and develop as they had given up hope of a change within the organisation.

#### **4.2.3 Educational level/qualifications**

Eight participants had matric, two had a diploma and three had a bachelor's degree. It was clear that those who had higher qualifications demonstrated more in-depth theoretical knowledge of the concept of CE than those with lower levels of education. Participants who had matric seemed to

have a basic knowledge of the concept of CE. Against this information, it can be argued that while higher education provided a sound theoretical platform for engaging in CE, it was not the only determinant within the operational level. Participants with only matric were also able to define CE from their own perspective and stated how they viewed it within the organisation according to their own understanding. An observation was made that all participants, irrespective of qualification level, conversed well during the interview. In essence, based on the qualification profile of the participants, higher education is essential for an in-depth understanding of CE.

#### **4.2.4 Population group**

Eight participants were black Africans, one was white, two were Indian and two were coloured. Participants from all the population groups seemed to acknowledge the importance of CE in any business. The diverse ethnicity of the participants contributed towards the trustworthiness of this study through the representation of a variety of cultures, experiences and values. Participants in most departments seemed to have similar views on the challenges they faced when it came to CE. They also shared similar thinking on lack of management buy-in and the work environment that stifled creativity, among other things.

#### **4.2.5 Gender**

Seven participants were female and six were male. Both gender groups shared similar sentiments with regard to the concept of CE and were keen to contribute to the study.

#### **4.2.6 Experience**

Two participants had a minimum experience of 3 years and 2 participants had a maximum of 7 years' experience. The average years of experience of most participants interviewed was 5.

### 4.3 Report on research findings

A total of six main themes emerged from the data analysis as indicated below.

**Table 4.2: Main themes of study**

<b>Main Themes</b>
<b>Theme 1</b> Lack of organisational definition and characterisation of CE
<b>Theme 2</b> Lack of or limited involvement by operational level employees in CE
<b>Theme 3</b> Absence or lack of management support for CE initiatives by operational level employees
<b>Theme 4</b> CE not assimilated into organisational culture
<b>Theme 5</b> Compliance as an excuse for encouraging creativity
<b>Theme 6</b> CE Internal barriers to CE surmountable

The views of the participants are confirmed or contrasted with the existing literature and then a critical interpretive discussion follows at the end of each theme.

#### **4.3.1 Theme 1: Lack of organisational definition and characterisation of CE**

The operational level employees' understanding of CE was deduced from their descriptions and responses. After the researcher had established a rapport with all the participants and collected the biographical details to ensure that they were the correct people to interview, the researcher discussed aspects related to how CE was defined and perceived by the operational level employees

within their respective departments. Their awareness of CE at their level or in their departments was then determined.

After analysing the operational level employees' responses regarding their perceptions of the definition of CE, four common categories were identified:

- (i) CE was seen predominantly as an innovation activity.
- (ii) CE was seen as creativity.
- (iii) CE was seen as entrepreneurship within the organisation.
- (iv) CE was seen as a way of renewing and growing the business.

The researcher identified the appropriate words from the operational level employees' responses which identify their definition of CE. In table 4.3 below, extracts of verbatim quotes of the operational level employees are given. The most common descriptors within these verbatim quotes of eight of the participants deal with the fact that they saw CE as an innovative activity. The participants emphasised that CE was an innovative way of doing things and was seen as being part of entrepreneurship. This involved employees engaging in the creation of new products, services and technologies/processes and therefore growing the organisation. The CE description by the majority of the participants suggest that CE has to do with innovation, creativity and growth within an established organisation. Participants PR2, CC3, PS5, CC6, CA8, CA9, PA10, PS11, PA12 and PA13 emphasised that CE exists within established business. Participants CC3, CC6, CA8, CA9 and PA12 further elaborated on the fact that operational level employees saw CE as taking place within an existing or established business.

**Table 4.3: Extracts of participants' responses regarding definition of CE**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Key Extract identified in Definition of CE</b>	<b>Alignment of quotes with identified categories</b> <b>1 = Innovation</b> <b>2 = Creativity</b> <b>3</b> <b>=Entrepreneurship</b> <b>4 = Growth</b>

PR1	“I think corporate entrepreneurship is a process in which individuals within an organisation identify and pursue innovative opportunities to grow the organisation”	<b>1,4</b>
PR2	“CE has to do with innovative activities where employees create a new organisation or renew the existing organisation by introducing a new product or process innovation by creative ways”	<b>1,2</b>
CC3	“CE is entrepreneurship happening within an established business”	<b>3</b>
QA4	“Enhancement or changing the process in order for it to be more efficient and better for the business”	<b>1,2</b>
PS5	“CE has to do with the creation of new business or products within an existing organisation or creating value adding activities that will grow the firm”	<b>1,4</b>
CC6	“CE is the presence of entrepreneurial initiatives within an established organisation”	<b>3</b>
CC7	“It is very difficult to define as you we not that exposed to certain concepts or ideologies since you are only dealing with routine stuff but I think it has to do with entrepreneurship”	<b>3</b>
CA8	“Corporate entrepreneurship has to do within innovative activity within an established organisation”	<b>1</b>
CA9	“Corporate entrepreneurship is growing business within an already existing company”	<b>4</b>
QA10	“CE is an innovative way of introducing new products, processes and business within an already existing organisation”	<b>1</b>
PS11	“CE is when an employee brings in creativity and innovation within the company that adds value”	<b>1,2</b>
PA12	“CE involves an entrepreneurial individual who identifies an innovative opportunity within an existing company that will renew the company”	<b>1,3</b>

PA13	“CE is defined as a way in which way in which employees within the organisation participate in innovation activities taking place within the organisation to grow the firm”	1,4
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The findings indicate that most of the participants perceived CE as an innovative activity, creativity or entrepreneurship taking place within an existing organisation. This is in line with the literature by most scholars. In addition, the participants’ definitions of CE correspond to the definitions in the literature, such as by Vargas-Halabi et al. (2017), who define CE as a process in which an individual or group of individuals within the framework of an existing organisation identify, pursue and encourage innovative opportunities and create a new organisation, renewing the organisation or introducing product and process innovations. In support of this, the key definition of Vanacker et al. (2017) is that CE entails formal or informal activities aimed at creating new businesses in established companies through product and process innovations and market developments. Based on the highlighted definitions in the literature, it seems that innovation is the central underlying theme in most definitions given by most participants. It can confidently be deduced that innovation is the single common theme underlying all definitions of CE.

The participants’ awareness of how CE is defined within their organisation was determined.

**Table 4.4: Definition of CE in participants’ organisation**

Participant	Verbatim Quote
PR1	“I am not sure exactly how CE is defined within the organisation but I know somehow it should be defined”
PR2	“In my organisation, I do not think it is defined, I think am not sure whether it’s because of the position I am in or am not in that space or environment. I feel it has not been defined”
CC3	“Well, I am not sure with regard to the company, I have never come across any mentions of CE within the company unless it is defined behind closed doors”
QA4	“I would use an example, in my on workplace, if I see processes not working efficiently and I have a way of making it working efficiently, I can always bring it to my manager and have us enhance or change the process in an innovate way in order for it to be more efficient and better for the business”
PS5	“Personally, I don’t think it is defined or I am just not aware of how it is defined by the company”

CC6	“No it’s not defined, if it was defined, most probably I would be aware of it somehow”
CC7	“I think it is very difficult to define unless you are on another hierarchical level within the organisation”
CA8	“As for being defined in my company, I wouldn’t be so sure”
CA9	“I wouldn’t know about CE being defined in our company”
QA10	“Mmmh....not really sure how it is defined within this organisation”
PS11	“I can’t say exactly how it is defined but I believe there is some definition of it somehow”
PA12	“I wouldn’t know how it is defined”
PA13	“As for the company’s definition with regard to CE, I have no idea at all”

#### **4.3.1.1 Critical interpretive discussion of Theme 1**

All the participants mentioned their unawareness of the organisation’s definition of CE, except for participant QA4. This participant clearly stated the organisation’s definition using an example, though it was a bit vague and the participant could not clarify further when asked so by the researcher. Participants indicated their unawareness of the organisation’s definition of CE but indicated their own personal understanding of the concept.

Participants PR1, CC3, CA8, CA9, PA10, PA12, and PA13 were not sure or aware if CE was defined within their business units. However, participants PR2, PS5 and CC6 mentioned that CE was not defined within the organisation. Only three participants, Q4, CC7 and PS11, stated that CE was defined within the organisation but were not sure of how it was defined exactly. In terms of defining CE, the main findings are that the operational level employees understood the concept of CE and therefore were appropriately positioned to provide feedback on whether CE was present or not within the operational level.

#### **4.3.2 Theme 2: Lack of or limited involvement by operational level employees in CE**

The operational level employees were asked to provide feedback on their roles and activities with regard to CE. An interesting observation among most of the participants is that they were more eager to talk about their lack of or limited involvement when it came to initiating CE. Furthermore,

the findings indicate that the majority of operational level employees identified with their roles instead of the activities undertaken with regard to CE. This is deduced from their descriptions and responses in the table below.

Participants indicated how they saw themselves participating in the process of CE within the organisation. Most participants were not exactly sure how they fit into the whole process of CE.

**Table 4.5: Roles and activities of participants in CE**

Participant	Verbatim Quote
PR1	“Actually we are not involved in the initiation of the CE process but we are just involved in the implementation part. The communication only reaches us to do this or do that after everything has been deliberated by management”
PR2	“I think corporate entrepreneurship starts from idea development up to the process it gets implemented, we as operational level employees we are not engaged in the first stages of the CE process but management only engages us in the last stages. So basically we are not aware how the idea came about, actually the process in itself”
CC3	“I feel our involvement is only to absorb information from our management which instructs us how to implement the said formulated innovative idea from elsewhere”
QA4	“We don’t get full exposure in the CE process but rather it comes into the picture once it has been formulated or implemented”
PS5	“All I know is that we only involved in performing our daily tasks which are routine based, any entrepreneurial initiative activity taking place, we are not involved till it is communicated to us to action it”
CC6	“I think in that whole process, we are primary implementers. We just action whatever is communicated to us”
CC7	“Our role is just to implement the corporate entrepreneurial strategy nothing else, we are not involved in the formulation or initiation of it”
CA8	“My role sometimes is to provide feedback to management if the implemented CE initiative is progressing well or not since we are directly in the operational level”
CA9	“Sometimes my role is to provide support to higher ranking officials with providing relevant first-hand information on corporate entrepreneurship at operational level which might assist them in reporting”
QA10	“We only involved in the actual implementation of technology or in the production of the organisation’s products”
PS11	“My role is to make a commitment to the corporate entrepreneurial strategy and to make sure my daily operational tasks are aligned to this”

PA12	“Mostly I feel we are not involved or in some cases our involvement is very limited, entrepreneurial initiatives do not take place at our level, that platform seem not to exist where we can initiate such”
PA13	“I can’t exactly tell, we are only instructed what to do, CE formulation or initiation happens in other areas and not in our area. Only that innovative idea which has been approved, gets to be implemented in our area. The formulation and the process of CE, we are not involved, only involved in the last past”

#### **4.3.2.1 Critical interpretive discussion of Theme 2**

The findings of the current study seem to indicate that there was no employee engagement when it came to CE initiatives or in the formulation phase, but that operational level employees were involved in the implementation phase only. Limited employee engagement in innovative initiatives results in little or no entrepreneurial activity among operational level employees. The findings of the current study are in line with the literature. Irawanto (2015) found that employee engagement gives them a sense of belonging, thereby enhancing creativity. Furthermore, scholars such as BarNir (2012) and Bhatia and Khan (2013) found in their study that involving employees in a project from the beginning is one of the strategies that triggers entrepreneurial activity. However, in this study there was a lack of employee engagement and therefore a lack of entrepreneurial initiatives at operational level.

#### **4.3.3 Theme 3: Absence or lack of management support for CE initiatives by operational level employees**

Not all employees perceive management support the same way. Those on higher levels, such as middle and senior management, might perceive a lot more support from executive management. They have more contact and discussions in meetings and correspondence with and are closer to top management or the executive than the lower levels of employees (Hornsby & Covin, 2014). However, this study focused on how operational level employees perceived management support at their level.

Employees might have a perception that entrepreneurial activities are the responsibility of management. It is usually management’s task to facilitate, promote, communicate and develop enabling conditions, innovations, processes, actions and reward systems. They further need to provide resources and support for innovative and entrepreneurial actions in the department or company.

**Table 4.6: Role of management in creating entrepreneurial environment**

Participant	Verbatim Quote
PR1	“I feel the management does not involve us in most of the activities. Most of the things get decided in the management meetings and we are just told of the outcome. Clearly management does not take our interest at heart, I feel the communication is top-down or one way”
PR2	“Ooh well with regard to that, management hardly consults us in any of the entrepreneurial initiatives that we might have. There is no platform created to bounce of ideas”
CC3	“The only support we get from management is on how to handle client queries or on escalations but nothing whatsoever with regard to any entrepreneurial activity. Management should create a platform for us consultants to bounce off our innovative ideas we might be having. As it is, there is no platform that exists and we are not engaged in these type of activities”
QA4	“If only direct management whom we report to could at least engage us or create some sort of a platform where we brainstorm innovative ideas. At the moment that is not happening”
PS5	“I think there is no management support with regard to CE especially by middle management level, I think our middle level managers lack the drive to run with the vision and values of the top management. Our direct managers lack the zeal to motivate, guide or mentor us with in the context of innovative initiatives. The only focus of our line managers is quality of our work and productivity. If only there could be an improvement by the middle managers to facilitate CE then the scenario would be different”
CC6	“Aaargg...the focus of management should be redirected from chasing numbers to at least encourage and motivate us to be entrepreneurial or innovative. Even though you might have an innovative idea in your head, the current environment or culture is not accommodating to such hence it kills our innovative spirit up to a point where we no longer care about innovation except to adhere to the standard operating procedures”
CC7	“The challenge we face is that our management is so reluctant in embracing innovative ideas. They seem unwilling to accept or accommodate new innovative

	ideas because they want to maintain the status quo as long as metrics are met with the existing methodology”
CA8	“Actually there is no management support with regard to CE as we are so focused in pleasing the management by meeting our daily targets so there is no room for us to manoeuvre around or toy around with entrepreneurial initiatives”
CA9	“It's the opposite of support as the management actually create internal barriers that limit aspiring employees who come up with innovative initiatives....guess this might be because of fear that we might become more powerful than them or something”
QA10	“I think unconventional thinking is actually often regarded as foolish or trying to be clever and met with resentment by managers so we do not even bother with an entrepreneurial initiatives which might pop up in our heads”
PS11	“I feel the vision and the mission with regard to innovation is there from our top management but the issue is with the middle management who fail to drive the vision to the lower levels. There is exclusion of employees at our level, I think innovative activities only come from certain individuals or business units in higher hierarchies. There is actually limited nurturing and information sharing activities”
PA12	“Management support is limited, I feel there is more room for improvement. I think management should create some sort of a system of positive reinforcement to encourage entrepreneurial activity at our level”
PA13	“More can be done by management to actually improve the innovativeness of employees at my level. I cannot exactly say which strategies to undertake but I feel management is not doing enough to create a conducive environment for entrepreneurship within the operational level”

#### 4.3.3.1 Critical interpretive discussion of Theme 3

The findings of the study show a lack of management intervention in facilitating CE at operational level as indicated by participants PR1, PR2, CC3, QA4, PS5, CC6, CA8, CA9, QA10 and PS11. Participants felt that their direct or line managers were not doing enough to create an entrepreneurial environment. Only two participants, that is PA12 and PA13, stated that there was management support at operational level, but it was minimal and improvement was needed. Most participants emphasised the importance of management support for CE to take place at their level. The available literature confirms the findings of the present study and acknowledges the critical role of middle management, as mentioned by participant PS5. Kuratko and Audretsch (2013)

report that middle-level managers serve as a hub in driving entrepreneurial initiatives as they are in tune with strategic imperatives of the organisation and simultaneously have to understand resource constraints. Since middle management plays a central role in entrepreneurial activities and is considered the level at which entrepreneurial opportunities are given the best chance to flourish, this level forms a significant point of interest (Kuratko & Audretsch, 2013). However, the findings of this study reveal that middle management failed to create a conducive climate for the organisation to embrace innovative activity. The findings also reveal that the operational level employees were willing and had a drive for entrepreneurial activities at first, but that this attitude disappeared as management failed to ignite the fire or inculcate the entrepreneurial spirit in the employees, as stated by participant CC6. The willingness and drive for entrepreneurial initiatives of employees is in line with the literature by Damanpour (1991), Floyd and Lane (2000), Hornsby et al. (2002), Ireland et al. (2009), Kuratko et al. (2001) and Kuratko et al. (2011) suggesting that every employee should have the willingness and innovative spirit to be able to institute or create ideas. The morale and attitudes of employees towards their workplace and company are affected by the conditions in the workplace, as well as the perceived support they experience.

#### **4.3.4 Theme 4: CE not assimilated into organisational culture**

The researcher discussed aspects related to how a CE climate impacted the participants within their respective departments.

Participants PR2, CC3, CC6 and CC7 seemed to feel that there was no CE culture within the organisation. However, participants PR1, CA8, CA9, Q10, PS11 and P13 felt that a CE culture was present in the organisation in other hierarchies but not at operational level. Participant CA8 thought that the organisation was selective or discriminatory with regard to CE as there were certain departments or hierarchical levels where CE activities were involved. Only two participants, Q4 and PA12, stated that a CE culture was present in the organisation though there was room for improvement.

**Table 4.7: Presence of entrepreneurial culture at operational level**

Participant	Verbatim Quote
PR1	“Yes the culture only exists at a higher level, the vision from the top management to incorporate an entrepreneurial culture is there but there is inability of middle level management to foster this particular vision to the lower or operational level”
PR2	“I would say the culture is not there, we are not given the platform because sometimes I would expect a company to set up innovative workshops say annually or quarterly to have employees brainstorm innovative ideas”
CC3	“It does not exist, if it does, I am not aware of it therefore that needs to be cultivated really”
QA4	“It’s getting there, more can be done to improve the entrepreneurial culture, and management have now added my workspace app, an innovative initiation which encourages development and growth”
PS5	“The culture does not promote free thinking, we wait for instructions from management, and the leadership style here is autocratic in my personal view”
CC6	“I think they are not implementing this culture in our organisation instead of creating an atmosphere of entrepreneurial culture, management puts emphasis on productivity only”
CC7	“Uum, I feel as if it’s not there, I feel as if you are just here to collect your paycheque, I don’t mean that in a bad way, it’s not something that is at the people’s forefront minds”
CA8	“I think it’s selective or discriminative...there are certain departments or levels where an innovative initiation is considered or cultivated. As for our business unit, I do not think this culture is present from the look of things”
CA9	“Aaargh...the culture is disintegrated in that not everyone is involved in this innovation thing. The culture in our business unit is all about meeting set targets and adhering to the strict rules and regulations”
QA10	“Strangely the vision is there for innovation but the culture does not emulate that. I feel the culture is not entrenched and instilled on the employees at the peripheral levels. I think there is a breakdown between the top management, middle management and us somehow”

PS11	“I think the culture is not uniform for the organisation as a whole, I do like to believe that at our level, the entrepreneurial culture does not exist but at a higher level it does exist”
PA12	“The culture is fairly good, I can’t complain much about it, and ideas do flourish though there is room for improvement”
PA13	“I do like to believe that elements of innovation are there in the organisational culture but there is more room for improvement if everyone is engaged or included in the process of CE. As it is, I feel there only take up innovative ideas from certain levels”

The findings of the current study show that there was a degree of unwillingness or lack of interest in participating in innovative activities and this resulted in negative attitudes towards CE. It was unlikely that the participants would have shown positive attitudes towards CE as they felt excluded by management in the whole process and some felt resentful. There is evidence that operational level employees lacked interest in CE, which could be a result of a number of factors. The verbatim words of participant CC6, CC7 and CA8 indicate that the organisation’s environment was bureaucratic.

**Table 4.8: Attitudes of participants towards CE**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Verbatim Quote</b>
PR1	“Ooh well, the environment is not so flexible, we are so occupied with our work that we do not have time to focus on any entrepreneurial activity/innovation”
PR2	“We do not have that freedom as I have mentioned before that we do duties as per our job description and we try by all means to adhere. Entrepreneurial activities are not a priority to us as there are more important things to think about like making sure that I reach my targets before I knock off”
CC3	“I can’t say I have faced any challenges, it’s not like I have tried to be innovative myself to say I want to help the organisation grow in a certain way. To be honest, it’s not like I love my work”
QA4	“I would say, my brain is always active trying to improve it, in the last year, I have probably had my manager help me change 3 processes, and so it’s about 3 in 12 months”

PS5	“Uuumh, from my side I think since some of us aren’t inclined toward corporate entrepreneurship, I don’t feel safe trying to do any initiation with regard to that and I don’t even know how to go about it in the first place”
CC6	“Here, you are expected to do your work, meet your targets and adhere to the standard operating procedures and if you don’t, you are marked down by the quality assurers so I have no time to think of any innovative activities as there are a lot of things occupying my head”
CC7	“I don’t think they encourage it because there is a set protocol, standard operating procedure or rules and guidelines to be followed, so you won’t bother yourself about being innovative because when you come up with ideas to improve the business, no one approves it as there are many processes to be followed and regulations, I feel those processes and regulations are a hindering factor as they are more bureaucratic”
CA8	“The environment that we in, is so tense that you won’t even have the time to think about innovation or creativity, what we focus on is on reaching our daily targets of processing claims and other stuff”
CA9	“The issue is there isn’t that drive from management to initiative CE, so we come to do what we are paid to do and leave, I do not care about any entrepreneurial activities taking place”
QA10	“The things is, if you do not have the passion of what you do, you do not care about any initiations with regard to innovations, I do not have the passion of the job I am currently doing”
PS11	“It doesn’t, we are expect to comply with the set standards of operating, failure to do so you are marked by quality assurers therefore having a low rating”
PA12	“I brainstorm once in a while”
PA13	“The concept of corporate entrepreneurship wasn’t not even introduced or presented to us. We just observe other departments”

#### 4.3.4.1 Critical interpretive discussion of Theme 4

Participants PR1, PR2, CC3, PS5, CC6, CC7 and QA10 mentioned that an entrepreneurial culture did not exist at all within the organisation. On the other hand, some participants stated that an entrepreneurial culture was present within the organisation but did not infiltrate to the operational level; it was only concentrated at certain levels/hierarchies as confirmed by participant PS11. Participant PS5 alleged that the culture “does not promote free thinking, we only wait for

instructions from management”. In support of this, participant CC7 revealed: “I don’t think they encourage it because there is a set protocol, standard operating procedure or rules and guidelines to be followed, so you won’t bother yourself about being innovative because when you come up with ideas to improve the business, no one approves it as there are many processes to be followed and regulations, I feel those processes and regulations are a hindering factor as they are more bureaucratic”. The literature corroborates the findings of the current study. Yildiz (2014) confirms that where leadership is autocratic and authoritative, issues of flexibility and independent thinking are non-existent; in such an environment, innovation and creativity are left to the management, who are thought to be superior. However, participants QA4 and PS12 differed from the views of other participants in that they believed that an entrepreneurial culture was present but that there was room for improvement. It was clear from the interviews that a CE climate existed at other hierarchical levels of the organisation apart from the operational level. The participants emphasised that the organisation was bureaucratic and that there were lengthy approval processes and a number of rules and guidelines to be adhered to. Furthermore, the participants claimed that the environment was so tense that they did not have time to think about innovative or entrepreneurial activities, as their focus was to meet their daily targets as revealed by participant CA8. It could be argued that the participants’ main focus was on adhering to the standard operating procedures and meeting their targets, as revealed by most responses from the interviews. In summary, the findings reveal that there is a lack of entrepreneurial climate at operational level.

#### **4.3.5 Theme 5: Compliance as an excuse for encouraging creativity**

Through this theme, it became apparent that a host of internal factors pose a challenge to facilitating CE at operational level.

Participants from all different departments experienced internal barriers of some sort within their specific areas. Participants PR2, CC6 and PS11 indicated that operational level employees faced internal barriers in the form of being required to adhere to the standard operating procedures, rules and policies. Non-compliance led to employees being reprimanded. Participant PR10 experienced similar internal barriers such as the requirement to meet daily targets or set by management. Furthermore, participants CC3, PS5 and CC7 emphasised the issue of lengthy approval processes that caused the structure to be bureaucratic. Participants QA1, CA9 and PA12 indicated that there was a lack of management support, which hindered CE facilitation. Participant Q4 identified a lack of rewards as the internal barrier. PA13 stated that operational level employees faced exclusion from the whole process of CE; they felt they were not engaged.

**Table 4.9: Internal barriers to CE within the operational level**

Participant	Verbatim Quote
PR1	“We are just instructed on what to do. Our workload is just too much and the targets that we must meet are difficult to attain. I think from the top management, it is very clear what they want but with our line management, there is no encouragement or support”
PR2	“creativity is very minimal as we are assigned duties and expected to align with the requirements of our job description nothing more nothing less, lately my line manager tries to source out ideas from us”
CC3	“Uum, when it comes to structure, I think there are many levels of hierarchy, approval and processes so I feel discouraged to even come up with an innovative idea”
QA4	“I don’t think enough is done yet to promote creativity whereas in other organisations rewards would be offered for initiatives for creative ideas”
PS5	“Personally, I think the hierarchical structure of our organisation is tall as there are a number of stages to be passed through before an idea is approved which is discouraging to us and tiring to keep up with the follow ups”
CC6	“Here, you are expected to do your work, meet your targets and adhere to the standard operating procedures and if you don’t, you are marked down by the quality assurers”
CC7	“I think there are a lot of barriers which prevent us from initiating innovative ideas as there are many set protocols, SOPs or rules and guidelines to be followed, so as employees we don’t even bother about being innovative because when you come up with ideas , no one approves it as there are many channels to be followed and regulations, once again, these processes and regulations are an obstacle as they are more bureaucratic”
CA8	“The environment that we in is so tense that you won’t even have the time to think about innovation or creativity, what we focus on is on reaching our daily targets of processing claims and other stuff, the work load is just too much”
CA9	“The issue is there isn’t that drive from management to initiative CE, so we come to do what we are paid to do and leave”
QA10	“In my opinion I think the culture at this moment does not emphasise or focus on CE, it’s all about sales, stats, numbers, etc.”
PS11	“It doesn’t, we are expect to comply with the set standards of operating, failure to do so you are marked by quality assurers therefore having a low rating”

PA12	“When you approach the management with an idea, sometimes you don't get feedback on how far the idea went in terms of it being approved or rejected”
PA13	“You only observe introduction of new processes or products, surprisingly we wouldn't know who initiated that particular idea, and I guess mostly it's either management or IT. We only get to apply the process, product or technology that was formulated elsewhere in our daily tasks, no sort of engagement or whatsoever”

#### **4.3.5.1 Critical interpretive discussion of Theme 5**

Through the interviews, it emerged that the participants were required to strictly adhere to standard operating procedures and any deviation would lead to resentment by supervisors or management. This, however, limits employees in using their innovative and creativity skills. Furthermore, the participants spoke about their frustrations regarding the workload and targets that they said were just too much, as explained by participant CA8. These findings of the current study are in line with what Kuratko et al. (2014) posit, namely that demanding routines, workloads and day-to-day schedules might leave the employee with little or no time to act entrepreneurially. Moreover, the focus is on problem-solving, paperwork, outputs and achieving the goals set for a particular job level. This might create the perception that entrepreneurial initiatives are out of reach, because employees do not have time to investigate or spot opportunities or threats that might be developed into innovative products.

#### **4.3.6 Theme 6: CE internal barriers to CE surmountable**

Through this theme, it emerged that a host of internal drivers influence CE at operational level. The participants outlined some of the drivers, which they felt could facilitate CE at their operational level.

Participants in most departments indicated that a number of internal factors would enable CE at operational level, such as employee engagement, supervisor-employee relationship, brainstorming sessions, innovative/entrepreneurial development programmes, shortening the approval process and inculcating a culture of creativity by relaxing most of the restrictions within the operational level.

**Table 4.10: Internal drivers of CE at operational level**

Participant	Verbatim Quote
PR1	“I feel that most of us if not all in the operational level are excluded from the initiatives which drive CE. We are not included in any forums/platforms where innovative ideas are presented or brainstormed. If only the management could improve the employees’ engagement within our level when it comes to such, I think there could be an improvement in CE initiatives contribution from the operational level”
PR2	“As mentioned earlier on, there are no brainstorming sessions, at least if we could have a platform where we brainstorm the ideas that we have, I think it could improve the CE level within our department. As it is, I feel we do not have a role that we play with regard to CE”
CC3	“Personally, I think if we could have some sort of a relationship with our supervisors or management where they would understand us rather than them only focusing on productivity levels or monitoring whether we adhere to the standard operating procedures of the department instead of supporting us”
QA4	“I think if there could be some sort of a significant incentive paid especially a financial reward to someone who may have brought up an innovative idea. An improvement in the reward system of is outmost importance as it is known to be one of the most important motivators”
PS5	“If only management could shift their focus from only emphasising in us meeting the daily targets and enforcing that we adhere to strict policies and rules to at least inspire us to be creative by maybe introducing innovative/entrepreneurial development programmes to boost innovative idea development”
CC6	“My wish is for the organisation to relax the rigidity in the operational level, our environment is so tense, and we feel very restricted in a number of ways. Approval processes should also be shortened as currently the approval processes are lengthy. I can say the structure is very bureaucratic”
CC7	“An overhaul of the whole organisational culture is required that’s according to my personal view. Our management needs to inculcate culture of innovation among us”
CA8	CE will only improve when we feel we are part of the greater organisation, as it is, some of us feel excluded. We only at work to meet our daily targets to please

	the management and go home, nothing else. I think improvement will be seen when management start to engage us as employees in some of the CE initiatives”
CA9	“I think it would be a great idea for the management to promote brainstorming sessions where we play around with ideas that are of an innovative nature”
QA10	“Ooh well, I think the middle and lower management’s inability to drive the value of the company which revolves around innovation needs to be somehow improved. An improvement is needed in cascading this value of the organisation to lower levels”
PS11	“I think if there is a solid relationship between us and our supervisors where we could get to share or bump ideas with them at any time. I also feel our supervisors need to be proactive and encourage us to generate ideas that could help us and the organisation rather than them focusing on us meeting periodic targets”
PA12	“If we get to a point where failure to innovate is not reprimanded but recognised as an effort or initiation by our management, I think it will lead to an improvement in CE”
PA13	“Management need to publicly celebrate and reward an employee who has initiated a brilliant innovative idea. This will encourage and allow other employees to see what it looks like in action. In addition, this will promote free thinking, autonomy and innovation”

#### 4.3.6.1 Critical interpretive discussion of Theme 6

Through the interviews, most of the participants cited employee engagement, brainstorming sessions, relationship with management and rewards as the main internal drivers of CE within the operational level in the organisation. Participants PR1 and CA8 believed that they were excluded from the initiatives which drove entrepreneurial activity. The participants agreed that an improvement in employee engagement would lead to CE improvement at operational level. It was also acknowledged that brainstorming sessions are of the utmost importance, as mentioned by participants PR2, PS5 and CA9, who suggested that management could create a platform for them to bounce off innovative ideas. However, an observation made in this study is that operational level employees do not have brainstorming sessions as they are kept busy by their demanding workload and they focus more on chasing the targets set by management. Apart from brainstorming sessions, participants CC3, QA10 and PS11 proposed that an informal or social relationship between management and employees would have to be fostered in order to drive CE initiatives at operational level. This is in line with Zahra and Filatotchev (2004), who advocate that a social

relationship between employees and management generates a supportive and collaborative network, driving internal innovation performance as a result. It was clear that participants appreciated the importance of this relationship and would be willing to foster it if the platform to do so were created. Participants Q4 and PA13 suggested that an improvement in the reward system would facilitate CE at operational level. As much as there are certain awards won by employees periodically, transparency and the criteria for nominating and winning them were lacking. Employees were awarded for their performance in meeting and exceeding the required targets. Innovation awards were normally won by people in the technical departments, such as IT, R&D and higher level departments.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

There were five main themes with sub-themes. Verbatim quotes were included to support the themes and sub-themes that emerged. A literature control was conducted to confirm the findings that arose and this was followed by a critical interpretive discussion. The data revealed that the entrepreneurial climate within the organisation in almost all the departments was not conducive enough for facilitating entrepreneurial initiatives.

The summary, recommendations, conclusions and limitations of this study are presented in Chapter 5 and recommendations are made for possible future research.

# **Chapter 5**

## **Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The first four chapters of this dissertation covered the research orientation, literature review and the methodology followed to obtain the data and findings. The main objective of Chapter 5 is to interpret the findings to arrive at conclusions. The conclusions result in specific recommendations for the management in the selected long-term insurance organisation. Additionally, the strengths and limitations of the study are identified.

### **5.2 Summary of the study**

A synopsis of each chapter of this study is provided below:

#### **Chapter 1**

The chapter introduced the study and provided a concise description of all the sections of this study. The key focus of Chapter 1 was the introduction and background to the study. The problem statement and research objectives of the study were formulated. It was established that although studies have been conducted in this field, a qualitative study on the role and contribution of operational level employees to CE in the long-term insurance sector in the South African context was lacking. Additionally, the importance of this study was mentioned through the problem statement.

#### **Chapter 2**

In this chapter, CE was discussed. The main aim of Chapter 2 was to review the literature on CE in terms of the firm's internal environment and the challenges that accompany it. The chapter also presented previous literature on the antecedents of CE. The discussion revealed that CE is important in organisations as it leads to competitive advantage and innovative employees who then contribute to improved business growth and financial performance. The literature indicates that while some organisations view CE as a pillar for growth and sustainability, others perceive it as least important. It emerged that several challenges in the form of limited freedom, bureaucratic structure and lack of management support discourage CE in organisations.

#### **Chapter 3**

The objective of this chapter was to explain the methodology that was used to carry out this study. The research paradigms and research design were explained. The research design is the blueprint of the research study which considers the procedure followed to answer the research questions.

Chapter 3 detailed the method used to gather the data for this study and the process applied to transform this data into findings and subsequently conclusions. An exploratory design within a qualitative research framework was found to be appropriate to answer the research questions and to provide a thick and rich description of the role and contribution of operational level employees to CE within an organisation. The target population was suitable to provide answers to the questions contained in the interview guide. The data was analysed using thematic analysis and this made it possible to draw themes.

## **Chapter 4**

This chapter was dedicated to the presentation of the findings of this study. Six themes and eight sub-themes emerged from the data and were discussed in Chapter 4. This discussion revealed that an entrepreneurial climate does not exist in most operational level departments. It was found that most operational level employees were not involved in the CE process, especially in the idea development or initiation stages. Additionally, there seemed to be no employee engagement at operational level with regard to CE. Management support was also lacking, as management focused on performance evaluations. Quantifiable metrics were employed to track how well employees were performing. Employees tended to feel that the management's focus was on ratings and meeting the set daily targets, which stifled their creative ability.

### **5.3 Revisiting the research objectives**

The primary and secondary objectives of this study were as follows:

#### **5.3.1 Primary objective**

To explore the role and activities that operational level employees play in contributing to and implementing corporate entrepreneurship with the organisation.

#### **5.3.2 Secondary objectives**

1. To explore the role played by management in creating and facilitating corporate entrepreneurship at operational level.
2. To explore how the antecedents of corporate entrepreneurship influence entrepreneurship at operational level.
3. To explore the corporate entrepreneurship challenges faced by operational level employees in a long-term insurance organisation.
4. To explore alternative approaches to improve corporate entrepreneurship among operational level employees.

5. To make recommendations for entrepreneurial initiatives or interventions at operational level in the long-term insurance organisation in South Africa in order to contribute to corporate entrepreneurship.

## **5.4 Reflecting on the findings of each research objective**

### **5.4.1 Lack of organisational definition and characterisation of CE**

In order to answer the central question of the study, which explored how operational level employees contribute to CE within the organisation, it was necessary to first ask questions on how CE is defined from an organisation's perspective and individual employees' perspective.

The main findings were that operational level employees acknowledged the presence of CE within the organisation but indicated a lack of full exposure of employees at operational level. They lacked knowledge of how exactly to contribute to CE as they were not given any platform to do so and felt disengaged from the whole process. Operational level employees are primary implementers of the corporate entrepreneurial strategy and also provide feedback to management on whether the implemented CE initiative is progressing well or not at their level. Generally, the CE climate among operational level employees surveyed seemed to be non-existent or its significance was extremely limited.

### **5.4.2 Absence or lack of management support for CE initiatives by operational level employees**

The findings of the current study indicate a lack of management support. It was found that most operational level employees were not involved in the CE process, especially in the idea development or initiation stages. Additionally, there seemed to be no employee engagement at operational level with regard to CE. Management support was lacking as management focused on performance evaluations. Quantifiable metrics were employed to track how well employees were performing. Employees tended to feel that the management's focus was on ratings and meeting the set daily targets, which stifled their creative ability.

### **5.4.3 Influence of antecedents of CE at operational level**

A number of organisational factors were identified as influencing CE, ranging from management support, organisational structure, reward systems, time availability, work discretion, organisational culture to resource availability.

- **Management support** - The findings of this study established conclusive evidence that management support in an entrepreneurial context influences CE in an organisation.

However, in this study, a lack of support, especially by middle management, in facilitating CE was deduced.

- **Organisational structure** - The research findings concluded that the organisational structure was bureaucratic as the structure was tall and had too many processes, regulations and reporting channels.
- **Reward systems** - Incentivising employees and recognising employee efforts are important to drive entrepreneurial behaviour within the organisation. The findings indicate that work performance was celebrated and rewards were linked to work performed as in meeting the set targets and completing the tasks assigned. Basically, rewards were attached to rating or metrics rather than to any entrepreneurial initiative.
- **Time availability** - The conclusion was drawn that there was insufficient time to act entrepreneurially or initiate any innovative ideas as the workload acted as a barrier to the development of new ideas. Operational level employees were more focused on reaching their daily set targets.
- **Work discretion** - Work discretion advocates that employees must be given the freedom to make decisions and that management must have a tolerance for failures. Findings from the study indicate that there was no work discretion at operational level as employees were expected to adhere to set protocols, standard operating procedures or rules and guidelines. Deviation or non-adherence led to penalties or reprimand from management.
- **Organisational culture** - It is evident that an entrepreneurial culture was present within the organisation but did not cascade or infiltrate down to operational level; it was only concentrated at the middle to higher levels of the hierarchy.

#### **5.4.4 CE internal barriers to CE surmountable**

The operational level employees faced a host of internal barriers ranging from a lack of management support and employee engagement, a rigid and bureaucratic work environment and emphasis on adherence to protocols, standard operating procedures and meeting of set targets. Lastly, unclear reward systems were a barrier to CE.

#### **5.4.5 Alternative approaches to improve CE among operational level employees**

The operational level employees suggested a number of alternative approaches to inculcate or cultivate a culture of innovation, such as shortening approval processes, job rotation, introducing innovative development programmes or brainstorming sessions with management. In addition, the management shifting focus from monitoring and tracking employees to inspiring and motivating them and improved feedback systems were suggested.

#### **5.4.6 Recommendations for entrepreneurial initiatives or interventions**

Among other recommendations, it is advised that employees need to know they are valued and trusted within the organisation. Operational level employees feel the need to be engaged or included in the entrepreneurial initiatives taking place within the organisation rather than being side-lined. Management should strive to do away with traditional appraisal/evaluation systems of tracking and monitoring employees whether they adhere to standard operating procedures and meet set targets. They should focus more on motivating and inspiring employees to stretch their skills, which may shift the corporate culture in a positive direction. Furthermore, management should also strive to practise role changing within the organisation. Employees staying in stagnant roles for a lengthy period can be stifling to creativity. Role changes may help employees bring more value to the company, especially if the roles are matched to their skills and passion. However, role changing should not be overdone as too many changes in a short period can have the opposite effect.

#### **5.5 Key research findings per theme**

##### **5.5.1 Theme 1: Lack of organisational definition and characterisation of CE**

The following conclusions were drawn:

- The majority of the participants had a general understanding of the concept of CE. The description by the majority of participants suggested that CE has to do with innovation, creativity and growth within an established business.
- Participants who had higher qualifications such as a bachelor's degree demonstrated a deeper understanding and theoretical knowledge of CE than their counterparts with lower qualification levels.
- Participants who had a matric qualification seemed to have a basic knowledge of the concept of CE and lacked a thorough understanding.
- The majority of the participants seemed not to be aware of the organisation's definition of CE. They simply lacked knowledge of how CE was defined within their organisation. However, participants described their personal understanding and how they perceived it.

##### **5.5.2 Theme 2: Lack of or limited involvement by operational level employees in CE**

The following conclusions were arrived at:

- The findings indicate that the majority of the operational level employees identified with the role instead of the activities that are undertaken with regard to CE. This may be interpreted to mean that operational level employees value their role as opposed to the activities they undertake toward CE.

- Not all participants in all departments are involved in the initiation or first stages of the CE process and they are therefore disengaged or excluded from the idea development and CE process. They are only involved in the implementation phase. There seems to be lack of exposure on the part of operational level employees.
- Findings from the current study suggest that the role of the operational level employees is to implement the corporate entrepreneurial strategy and are therefore the primary implementers.
- Participants in all the departments viewed their role as providing a supportive role to officials or management with relevant first-hand information on the implementation of CE strategy at their level. The provision of feedback to management was found to be one of the key roles established in the current study.

A minimal number of participants argued that their roles in terms of CE were not clearly defined as they were not aware of their roles in contributing to CE. The presence of CE in the organisation does exist but it seems to be very limited at the lower levels. This is evident in the non-engagement or exclusion of operational level employees, especially in the initiation phases of CE.

### **5.5.3 Theme 3: Absence or lack of management support for CE initiatives by operational level employees**

The subsequent deductions were made:

- It seems that the top management or executive does clearly articulate the importance of innovation in the value statement of the organisation, but a breach or breakdown is experienced at the middle management level where the middle or line managers fail to drive, endorse, guide and instil the entrepreneurial culture at operational level by providing the needed tools and mentorship.
- Management employs quantifiable metrics to track employees to determine whether they have reached specified targets. These traditional appraisal systems undermine creativity as employees focus on their ratings over innovative initiatives. These findings are contrary to Kuratko et al. (2013), who assert that middle level managers work as change agents and promoters of innovation as facilitated by their organisational centrality. They contend that middle level managers endorse, refine and shepherd entrepreneurial opportunities and identify, acquire and deploy resources needed to pursue those opportunities.
- Management has failed to establish or foster a concrete relationship between themselves and the operational level employees, resulting in a lack of trust between the two parties.

- It seems that the key performance indicators established by management prevent failure and therefore employees are afraid to take risk as they fear management's resentment.
- Management overlooks employee engagement in initiating entrepreneurial activities.

#### **5.5.4 Theme 4: CE not assimilated into organisational culture**

The subsequent deductions were made:

- A negative entrepreneurial climate was observed in most departments. The presence of a CE climate within the organisation is not uniform, as indicated by different hierarchical levels. A lack of an entrepreneurial climate at operational level is evident by the presence of a number of restrictions, an emphasis on adherence to policies and rules and generally an autocratic environment.
- The CE climate needs to be cultivated at operational level. The values of the organisation do state the importance of innovation, but the culture does not put this into practice, especially at operational level. A disintegrated culture exists in that CE is likely to be experienced at other organisational hierarchical levels but not operational level.
- No comprehensive strategies are available in departments to indicate how management encouraged learning and fostered favourable attitudes towards CE.
- Participants showed a degree of unwillingness or lack of interest in participating in innovative activities and this results in negative attitudes towards CE. The participants are unlikely to show positive attitudes towards CE as they are excluded by management from the process of CE, thus creating a negative CE climate.
- A negative CE climate was observed at operational level. The participants indicated a lack of management support and training and skills development programmes to facilitate CE. However, the existing climate sets a protocol regarding the ways of doing things and enforces rules and guidelines to be followed, creating an uncondusive climate.
- Operational level employees are put in a box by limiting job descriptions. Requirements to strictly adhere to job descriptions reduce the creativity or innovation of employees.

#### **5.5.5 Theme 5: Compliance as an excuse for encouraging creativity**

The conclusions listed below were extracted from Theme 5:

- Participants in all the departments experienced similar internal barriers to CE and are therefore the main hindrance to facilitating CE within the organisation.
- The major internal barrier cited by participants in all the departments was the emphasis on the adherence to standard operating procedures and on meeting targets, the bureaucratic structure and lack of management support.

- Top-down communication or one-way communication is experienced at operational level, which prevents the free flow of communication between the employees and the management. Communication is mainly in the form of instructions, orders, reprimands and provision of reports.
- Little emphasis is given to rewards and reinforcement as a barrier to or enabler of CE.
- Participants also experience difficulty in participating in CE as their main focus is on meet their daily targets which are overemphasised by management. Furthermore, participants have to adhere to strict policies and rules, and failure to do so leads to employees being reprimanded.

### **5.5.6 Theme 6: CE Internal barriers to CE surmountable**

The following specific conclusions were drawn:

- Internal factors which might enable or drive CE include employee engagement, supervisor-employee relationships and brainstorming sessions.
- Operational level employees in all the departments were not engaged in entrepreneurial initiatives by management and they were also dissatisfied with the lack of management support. Participants suggested that if there was an improvement in these areas, this could drive CE.
- Reward systems should not be based only on meeting set metrics or targets, but also on entrepreneurial initiatives.

### **5.6 Recommendations pertaining to the research findings**

Possible recommendations that management may take note of when facilitating and implementing CE at the selected long-term insurance organisation are made. The case study offered substantial evidence that suggests that management, especially middle level managers, should be more involved in facilitating and driving entrepreneurial initiatives to the lower levels of the organisation. The middle level managers act as a buffer between top management and lower level employees in the facilitation and implementation of corporate entrepreneurial strategy and thus operate at a functional and operational level. It is suggested that their involvement would improve the facilitation of CE at operational level at the selected long-term insurance organisation.

Management must create a work environment that helps employees understand the kinds of entrepreneurial behaviours that are expected and accepted, combined with their own ability to act in an entrepreneurial way. All employees, in particular middle management, should have an appetite for always wanting to change the way things are. Having a vigilant discomfort for the

status quo is important for management. The organisational antecedents are means for better understanding the environment of the organisation and for determining whether all managers exercise their thoughts, behaviours and actions around these antecedents which are conducive to an entrepreneurial climate within an organisation.

Recommendations for the organisation to create and support the antecedents of an entrepreneurial climate at operational level at the selected long-term organisation are as follows:

- **Management support**

Management support must be improved to eliminate the impression that there is a lack of support. It is the responsibility of all managers, both top and middle, to be able to assess the entrepreneurial climate at operational level periodically. Management should review and improve historical or traditional appraisal systems such as quantifiable metrics as the only measurements for tracking the performance of operational level employees. These historical systems sometimes undermine performance as employees focus only on their ratings over entrepreneurial initiatives.

Improved feedback systems should focus on mentoring and teaching operational level employees how to give and receive feedback. The focus should shift from managing talent to creating an optimal culture where talent can thrive. The goal is to create a workforce with independent judgement, high levels of expertise and problem-solving skills and the ability to deploy technology and increase collaboration.

- **Appropriate rewards and reinforcement**

The recognition and reward of successful innovative ideas should be given openly and should be publicised throughout the organisation. Recognition should be tailored to the needs of the employees so that everyone is motivated to pursue the reward. The reward must be given soon after the achievement and the relationship between the reward and the achievement should be clearly understood by the employees, especially at operational level. It is very important for the employees to equate the rewards being offered with the innovative behaviour that is expected and achieved. Highly creative and innovative output should have very distinctive rewards to enhance the recognition for the reward.

- **Discretionary time and work**

Autonomy in the workplace is determined by the degree of supervision necessary to do one's own work. Free time to pursue innovative ideas is marginally aligned with management's vision and strategies. Therefore, operational level employees should have the appropriate freedom to use

some time for entrepreneurial initiatives and the work environment should be conducive enough to explore new ideas. This degree of autonomy encourages entrepreneurial behaviour from employees.

- **Flat organisational structure**

It is commonly accepted that entrepreneurship flourishes where there are fewer layers or levels in the structure of an organisation. The general orientation should be towards a more horizontal and less vertical design. With a decentralised, flexible structure that can react quickly to the changing environment, an organisation has the ability to be less bureaucratic and more responsive to the innovative initiatives.

- **Tolerance for risks, mistakes and failure**

Employees should be educated about positive ways of taking calculated risks and the benefits of being proactive. This encouragement will stimulate new idea generation and creativity within the organisation. Employees must be able to experiment with new ideas, take moderate risks and enjoy an environment that absorbs failure when trial and error are allowed.

- **Continuous and cross-learning**

Cross-functional interaction and cooperation must become a priority, but the clash of ideas from interfunctional interaction should also be encouraged. Processes must be put in place to facilitate extensive and rapid communication among parties at all levels and in all functions. There should be less formalisation of roles and positions within the organisational structure. Management should try to introduce role changing as this helps employees bring more value to the organisation while feeling happier in a role matched to their skills; however, this should not be overdone. Furthermore, employees must be encouraged to always improve themselves, to identify opportunities and to solve problems through collaboration and knowledge sharing.

## **5.7 Strengths of the study**

This study has several strengths. The participants were interviewed in a booked meeting room of their organisation with minimal disruptions. This allowed them to feel comfortable and in control and it made it possible for them to be viewed in their work environment. The participants were obliging, approachable and keen to share their perceptions and experiences. In addition, the researcher did not allow preconceived ideas to influence the findings and conclusions of the research study. However, in spite of the strengths, certain limitations of the study were noted.

## **5.8 Limitations of the study**

- The disadvantages of case studies (Baxter & Jack, 2008) are firstly that the complexity of a case study can make analysis difficult. As a researcher probes deeper into a phenomenon, an array of responses may be given and this may complicate the subsequent analysis. Secondly, while contextualising aspects of a case may strengthen the case study, it is difficult to establish where the context begins and ends. Since the present study involved operational level employees, on occasion the data was unintelligible and the context was difficult to determine. This meant that the operational level employees sometimes did not produce meaningful responses, presumably due to failure on their part to employ the correct terminology, or due to their erroneous interpretation of the question posed to them.
- The study cannot be generalised to the broader population. There is considerable debate that surrounds the generalisability of qualitative studies with small sample sizes. These studies are deemed to be subjective in nature and therefore not applicable to the wider population.
- The study made use of a purposive sampling method, with a small sample size, which may not be characteristic of operational level employees.
- Only operational level employees in the long-term insurance sector in Johannesburg formed part of the sample of this study. Other types of businesses, sectors and urban regions were not considered.
- Only operational level employees formed part of the sample of this study. The perceptions and experiences of other employees were not taken into account.

## **5.9 Managerial implications of the study**

- Management must assess the entrepreneurial intensity and climate for CE periodically to identify gaps and take corrective action.
- The introduction of entrepreneurial development programmes is one of the best methods to instil CE and innovation in the organisation.
- CE should be integrated throughout the entire organisation and not only focus on just on specific business units or hierarchical levels.
- Feedback systems should be improved to focus more on mentoring. The focus is to shift from managing talent to creating an optimal culture where talent can thrive.
- CE strategies need to be initiated at micro-level. This entails the “nitty-gritty” innovative activities. When CE initiatives are discussed at this level, senior management can gauge if the employees understand the CE strategy of the department and how they can promote the achievement of this strategy.

- The case study offered substantial evidence that suggests that the middle managers should be more involved in facilitating the CE strategy of the selected long-term insurance organisation. Their involvement would improve the facilitation of the CE strategy, which would aid in the adoption of the strategy by operational level employees within the department.

#### **5.10 Recommendations for further research**

- A quantitative or mixed methods research study on the topic should be done to enable a broader analysis of CE at operational level.
- Other sampling methods and a larger sample size should be used to allow similarities and differences to be identified, which could be beneficial for all learning and development stakeholders.
- Other types of businesses, sectors and urban regions should be included to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic.
- The perceptions and experiences of top and middle level employees should also be incorporated to enhance the credibility of the study.

#### **5.11 Conclusion**

The study found that the prevailing level of CE could be classed as very low within the operational level, with antecedents such as management support, organisational culture and work discretion being areas for improvement. Overall, CE does exist within the organisation, but does not penetrate to the operational or lower level employees. Effective brainstorming sessions would encourage operational level employees to participate in entrepreneurial initiatives within the organisation. There is a need to maintain a culture that encourages flexibility throughout the organisation. Employee engagement coupled with management support are essential for shaping a progressive entrepreneurial culture. A positive culture will stimulate favourable attitudes to CE. It is hoped that the findings of this study will serve as a motivation and guideline for other industries and businesses in South Africa to assess their entrepreneurial intensity and CE climate in an attempt to instil CE and innovation at operational level.

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## APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

**Title: Exploring operational level employees' contribution towards corporate entrepreneurship within a long term insurance company based in Johannesburg.**

There are many definitions of corporate entrepreneurship (CE). For the purposes of this study we define it as that part of innovation where you need entrepreneurial thought and action. CE can be thought of as that subset of a firm's innovation efforts where uncertainty and risk are high and human initiative and persistence, often individual, is essential. For a company as a whole this means unfamiliar, "far from core" activities such as new products, markets, geographies, technologies or business models. CE, however, is not limited to external or market interactions. It can also include actions to improve manufacturing and other processes or develop or improve other internal tools, even if not formally sponsored or sanctioned by management. Furthermore, "Corporate" is not limited to a particular legal form, but rather, any large organization whose primary activities are scaling, exploiting and execution.

### **Introduction/Background**

1. Please state/describe your position in your organisation?
2. What is your age?
3. What is your highest level of education/qualification?
4. How long have you been working in this organisation?

### **Corporate entrepreneurship**

1. How is corporate entrepreneurship defined in your company, if it is defined at all?
2. Why is it important to your firm?
  - How does it link to or support a business strategy or intent?
  - How widely is this importance known or accepted?
3. How long has the firm been engaged in efforts to become more entrepreneurial?
4. What challenges have you encountered in initiating innovative methods?
5. How would you describe the existing structure, systems, and processes in terms of facilitating corporate entrepreneurship?
  - Do you think the organisational culture impedes corporate entrepreneurship or not? Why do you say so?

### **Management Support**

1. How does management encourage behaviour such as creativity, flexibility, risk taking and problem solving?
2. How does the organisation encourage the development of one's own idea for the improvement of the organisation?
3. How often do you brainstorm innovative ideas with management?
4. As an operational level employee, how often do you come up with innovative ideas on your own?

### **Work Discretion**

5. How does the organisation provide the chance to be creative and try your own methods of doing the job?
6. How does the organisation provide freedom to use your own judgement?

**Rewards/Reinforcement**

1. What rewards are attached to initiating a successful innovative idea?

**Organisational Culture**

1. How do you perceive the organisational culture in the company in terms of innovation?
2. Anything in particular that you think illustrates the entrepreneurial/innovative culture in the organisation?
3. Is the culture of your organisation encourage entrepreneurial initiatives? Please justify?

## APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER



21 August, 2018

Research and Ethics Committee  
Preller Street  
Muckleneuk  
Pretoria,

Dear Members of the Research and Ethics Committee:

### **Permission to Conduct Research at Sanlam Sky's Contact Centre and Policy Servicing Department**

I am writing to formally indicate my awareness of the research proposed by Fidel Isheanesu Mugunzva (43135552) a student at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I am aware that the student intends to conduct his research by administering semi structured interviews to our Policy Servicing and Contact Centre employees.

I hereby grant Fidel Mugunzva permission to conduct his research at our department.

The conditions of the approval are as follows:

- I. The researcher (Fidel Isheanesu Mugunzva) will make all the arrangements concerning the research, interviews as well as adhere to normal ethical guidelines regarding the confidentiality and privacy of participants
- II. Interviews are not conducted during working hours except on breaks, lunch time or before employees start their work shift or after work shift
- III. The period of investigation is limited to one month from the time the researcher commences his first interview
- IV. Upon completion of the research, a full report must be provided to the Sanlam Sky Solutions.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me on 0113597884 or email [MelvinN@sanlamsky.co.za](mailto:MelvinN@sanlamsky.co.za).

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melvin Namadzunda".

Melvin Namadzunda  
Head: Contact Centre and Client Care

## APPENDIX C: ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

### UNISA DESTTL ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 23 November 2018

Dear Mr Fidel Isheanesu  
Mugunzva

ERC Reference # :  
2018\_CEMS\_DESTTL\_011  
Name : Fidel Isheanesu  
Mugunzva  
Student #: 43135552

**Decision: Ethics Approval from  
November 2018 to November  
2021**

**Researcher(s):** Fidel Isheanesu Mugunzva  
43135552@mylife.unisa.ac.za

**Supervisor (s):** Prof Edward Rankhumise  
rankhumiseem@tut.ac.za

**Co-Supervisor(s):** Ms Sami Winnet  
samiw@unisa.ac.za

**Working title of research:**

**Exploring operational level employees' contribution towards corporate  
entrepreneurship within a long-term entrepreneurship organisation in  
Johannesburg**

**Qualification:** MCom Business Management (Entrepreneurship)

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa DESTTL Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for three years.

*The low risk application was reviewed by the DESTTL Ethics Review Committee in November 2018 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The decision was approved on the 20th of November 2018.*



University of South Africa  
Pretoria Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 393 UNISA, 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
www.unisa.ac.za

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the DESTTL Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date (11/21). Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2018\_CEMS\_ESTTL\_011** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

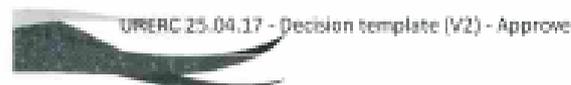
Yours sincerely,



Signature  
Acting Chair of DESTTL ERC  
E-mail: [esttl\\_erc@unisa.ac.za](mailto:esttl_erc@unisa.ac.za)  
Tel: (012) 429-4298



Signature  
Executive Dean : XXX  
E-mail: [mogaimt@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mogaimt@unisa.ac.za)  
Tel: (012) 429-4419



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## APPENDIX D: FIELDWORKER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT



### FIELDWORKER AND/OR RESEARCH ASSISTANT CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I, Andre Gordon, hereby agree to:

1. Abide by the confidentiality requirements of this study, as approved by the Research Ethics Committee of University of South Africa, by ensuring that the identities and information of the participants are not revealed during and after the course of study;
2. Keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format with anyone other than the Principal Researcher;
3. Keep all research information in any form or format securely stored while it is in my possession;
4. Return all research information in any form or format to the Principal Researcher when I have completed the research tasks;
5. After consulting with the Principal Researcher, erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the Principal Researcher (e.g. information stored on computer hard drive).

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

Prof. E Rankhumise

Phone: (012) 382 5267

E-mail: [RankhumiseEM@unisa.ac.za](mailto:RankhumiseEM@unisa.ac.za)

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee at University of South Africa. For questions regarding your rights and/or the ethical conduct of research, contact the Chairperson of Research Ethics Committee Ms. Nthabeleng Mmako at (012) 429 4298 ([estti\\_rerc@unisa.ac.za](mailto:estti_rerc@unisa.ac.za)).



Research Assistant or Fieldworker:

Andre Gordon

28/11/2018

\_\_\_\_\_

*A Gordon*  
\_\_\_\_\_

Print name

Signature

Date

Principal Researcher:

Fidel I. Mugunzva

28/11/2018

\_\_\_\_\_

*F Mugunzva*  
\_\_\_\_\_

Print name

Signature

Date



## **APPENDIX E: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

21 October 2018

**Title: Exploring operational level employees' contribution towards corporate entrepreneurship within a long term insurance company based in Johannesburg.**

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Fidel Mugunzva and I am doing research project under the supervision of Prof Edward Rankhumise, from Tshwane University of Technology and co-supervisor Ms Winnet Sami, a lecturer in the department of Business Management (Entrepreneurship). I have been accepted by the University of South Africa (UNISA) to pursue studies in the Master of Commerce in Business Management (Full Dissertation). We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled "Exploring operational level employees' contribution towards corporate entrepreneurship within a long term insurance company based in Johannesburg".

### **WHAT IS THE AIM/PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

The aim of this study is to explore the role that operational level employees play in the contribution and implementation of corporate entrepreneurship within the organisation. The research project proposed here aims to address the challenges faced by operational level employees in contributing to corporate entrepreneurship within the organisation and also to explore ways of facilitating CE at operational level.

I am conducting this research to find out the extent to which operational level employees participate in the process of CE and challenges experienced in doing so.

### **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?**

You are being invited to participate in this study due to your involvement in performing the day to day activities of a structured nature and deal with the unit of operation. By so doing you are engaged in the actual implementation of resources.

## **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY /WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH INVOLVE?**

You are invited to be interviewed about your experiences as an operational level employee with regard to the contribution of corporate entrepreneurship at your level. The study involves semi-structured interviews, depending on your role and involvement, you will be asked about your personal experiences with and thoughts about management support, organisational culture etc. in the context of corporate entrepreneurship. The duration of the interview might vary from participant to participant. It is generally expected to last between 15-30 minutes but can be shorter or longer on occasion.

## **CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY?**

Being in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. However, it will not be possible to withdraw once the interview questionnaires are submitted.

## **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

The study aims to consider the challenges and potential benefits of CE at operational level in more depth by providing a structured, comprehensive and theoretically embedded investigation of the current practices in the organisation. The participants might benefit from the study in that they will get to have a deeper understanding the concept of corporate entrepreneurship and get to contribute in the advancement of corporate entrepreneurship within the organisation and may also result in information that may help other organisations in future.

## **WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED INCONVENIENCE/RISKS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

The risks associated with participating in this project are expected to be minimal. Any potential risk would be related to your identification. As a result, your anonymity is my absolute priority. To ensure your anonymity, a number of tools will be employed. First, your participation in this study is confidential. Any personal details and information from the interviews, will be kept in a secure storage.

## **WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

Firstly, your participation in this study is confidential. Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your anonymity

is my absolute priority. Your answers will be given a fictitious code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including a transcriber, external coder, and members of the Research Ethics Committee. However, these individuals will maintain confidentiality by signing a confidentiality agreement. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records.

#### **HOW WILL INFORMATION BE STORED AND ULTIMATELY DESTROYED?**

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of 5 years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet at UNISA for future research or academic purposes. Electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable.

#### **WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

There is no compensation for participating in this study. However, your participation will be a valuable addition to our research and findings could lead to greater understanding of corporate entrepreneurship and the people in the field.

#### **HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Economic and Management Sciences, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

#### **HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Fidel Mugunzva on 0732666912 or 43135552@mylife.unisa.ac.za. The findings are accessible after the 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2019.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please also contact Fidel Mugunzva on 0732666912 or email 43135552@mylife.ac.za

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Professor Edward Rankhumise on 0123825267 or email [rankhumiseem@tut.ac.za](mailto:rankhumiseem@tut.ac.za) or Ms Sami Winnet [samiwt@unisa.ac.za](mailto:samiwt@unisa.ac.za)

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

Fidel I. Mugunzva



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