



DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
INYUVESI YASETHEKWINI YEZOBUCHWEPHESHE

**Development of a digital system for the implementation of
administration processes in community non-profit organisations
(NPOs) in eThekweni Municipality.**

by

Egashnee Moodley-Bhulaye

20604423

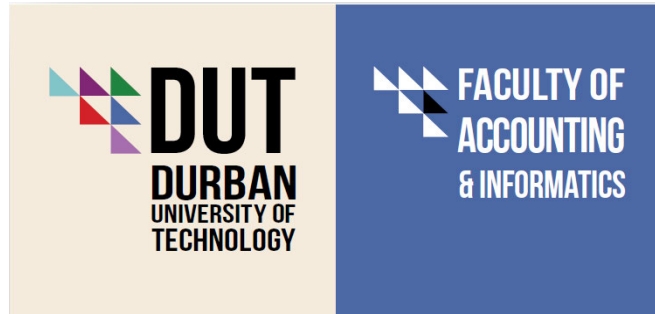
**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the
Doctor of Philosophy in Business and Information Management.**

**Faculty of Accounting and Informatics
Department of Information and Corporate Management,
Postgraduate Studies,
Durban University of Technology**

2026

Supervisor: Professor M. Rajkoomar (PhD)

Co-Supervisor: Dr M. Ngibe (PhD)



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Date

Co-Supervisor: Dr M. Ngibe

31/03/2026

Date

DECLARATION

I, *Egashnee Moodley-Bhulaye*, declare that:

- (i) The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
- (ii) This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Egashnee Moodley-Bhulaye

Signature: *Name of Student*

Date: 31/03/2026

DEDICATION

*Dedicated to my greatest blessing and motivation in life,
My son, Master Kiyaan Bhulaye.*

*May this milestone inspire you to chase your dreams fearlessly,
knowing that I will always be your biggest cheerleader.*

You can achieve anything!

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Aum Namah Shivaya

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Thank you!

ABSTRACT

During the COVID-19 pandemic globally, NPOs were under scrutiny with the administration processes. The administration process of non-profit organisations (NPOs) has been a topic of concern, as it has been found to hinder the effectiveness of NPOs in achieving the objectives and delivering services to communities in need. The increasing complexity of administrative tasks within NPOs in eThekweni Municipality necessitates the development of an innovative digital administrative system tailored to streamline administrative processes. Therefore, the main aim of the research was to explore the administrative processes used by NPOs based in eThekweni Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal and to develop a digital system for the NPOs administrative process to improve efficiency. An exploratory qualitative approach was employed. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Universal Design Principle formed as the conceptual framework for the research study, as guiding tool for the adoption of technology in NPOs based eThekweni Municipality. Purposive sampling was used to select the urban community NPO's within the eThekweni Municipality for this study. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 NPO owners and 6 managers. Thereafter, focus group discussion with 40 NPO administrative employees. The findings revealed that NPO staff collectively, identified a range of administrative challenges, including resource constraints, the complexity of regulatory compliance, inadequate technology infrastructure, and the need for streamlined processes. Furthermore, the study findings indicate that manual processes were prone to human errors, such as data entry mistakes, misfiling in record-keeping, which could compromise the integrity of information. In summary, the findings highlighted a clear recognition among NPO staff in eThekweni Municipality seek a digital transformation solution. By addressing the identified challenges and leveraging the insights shared by NPO staff, this study led to the development a digital system that enhances efficiency, fosters collaboration, and ultimately supports its mission of serving the community more effectively. The study recommends a tailor-made administrative digital system that the community NPO's can implement to ensure that the NPOs can assess performance, track compliance, and make informed decisions without manual administrative hurdles. Additionally, the implementation of the change management strategies to ease the transition to a digital system, communicating the benefits of the new system to all NPO staff members and involve them in the implementation process to foster buy-in and minimize resistance. The proposed digital system 'UbuntuSmart SA' not only has the potential to streamline operations but also to empower

staff, improve job satisfaction, and enable the NPO to adapt to an evolving operational landscape.

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LIST OF TERMINOLOGY

Digital system: *A set of integrated software tools and technologies (like databases, applications, or platforms) designed to automate and manage tasks electronically.*

Administration processes: *The routine, back-office tasks essential for an organisation's operation, such as member management, financial record-keeping, meeting scheduling, document filing, and reporting.*

Community NPOs (Non-profit organisations): *Locally-focused, mission-driven groups (like charities, clubs, or advocacy groups) that operate not for profit, relying often on volunteers, donations, and grants to serve a specific community.*

eThekwini municipality: *The metropolitan administrative area that includes and governs the city of Durban and its surrounding regions in South Africa.*

Digital transformation: *The overall process of moving from manual, paper-based operations to using digital technologies to improve efficiency and effectiveness.*

Process automation: *Using software to handle repetitive tasks (e.g., sending reminders, generating invoices) with minimal human input.*

Stakeholder engagement: *Actively involving the people who will use or be affected by the system (NPO staff, volunteers, board members) in its design and implementation.*

Change management: *The planned approach to supporting individuals and organisations in adapting to the new digital system and altered work processes.*

Centralized database: *A single, secure digital repository where all organizational data (members, finances, activities) is stored and can be managed.*

Digital record-keeping: *Creating, storing, and managing documents and records (e.g., meeting minutes, compliance forms) in electronic format.*

Access controls & user roles: *System settings that determine what different users (e.g., administrator, treasurer, general member) are allowed to see and do within the system.*

Integration: *The ability of the new system to connect and share data with other existing tools (e.g., Audio to text, email platforms).*

Data security & privacy: *Measures (like encryption and secure logins) to protect sensitive NPO and beneficiary information from unauthorized access or loss.*

Digital divide: *The disparity in access to, or comfort with using, digital technology and the internet among different NPOs and their members.*

Resource constraints: *The typical limitations faced by community NPOs, including limited funding, unreliable internet access, and a lack of dedicated technical staff.*

Sustainability (of the system): *Ensuring the digital system can be maintained, updated, and funded for the long term, not just initially implemented.*

Local context: *The specific social, economic, and infrastructural realities within eThekweni Municipality that will influence how the system is adopted and used*

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CMMI:	Capability Maturity Model Integration
DOI:	Diffusion of Innovation Theory
DUT:	Durban University of Technology
EDMS:	Electronic Data Management System
FRC:	Faculty Research Committee
HANIS:	Home Affairs National Identification System
IREC:	Institutional Research Ethics Committee
KZN:	Kwa-Zulu Natal
LSS:	Lean Six Sigma
MFA:	Multi-factor Authentication
NPO:	Non-profit organisation
POPIA:	Protection of Personal Information Act
SARS:	South Africa Revenue Services
TAM:	Technology Acceptance Model
UDP:	Universal Design Principle
UTAUT:	Unified Theory of Acceptance
WCA:	World Changers Academy

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

In the era of rapid digital transformation, Non-profit organisations (NPOs) play a pivotal role in addressing various societal challenges, ranging from poverty alleviation and education to healthcare and environmental sustainability. NPOs are organisations that operate independently of government institutions (Masefield. et al 2020:4). NPOs are usually formed by individuals or groups of people with common interest or aims. According to Lewis, Kanji and Themudo (2020:4) the primary objective of NPOs is to promote social, economic and political change in various parts of the world. The history of NPOs can be traced back to the 19th century and 20th centuries, with organisations such as Women's Christian Temperance Union founded in 1873 and the International Red Cross founded in 1863, when humanitarian organisations were formed to promote human rights and social justice (Götz 2020:8). However, the term NPO only gained popular usage after the establishment of the United Nations in 1945 (Lewis, Kanji and Themudo. 2020:5). The UN Charter included provisions for the establishment of NPOs, also referred to as civil society organisations, to promote sustainable development, peace and human rights.

In 1970s and 1980s, NPOs were increasingly involved in development activities, responding to the failures of many developing country states in providing basic services to communities (Lewis, Kanji and Themudo. 2020:26). Since then, NPOs have become a significant force in international development, playing a complementary role in supporting governments to address social, economic and environmental challenges (Tshiyoyo 2022:32). NPOs cover a diverse range of sectors including education, health, human rights, environmental conservation and disaster relief (Schiff et al 2020:1). They play a vital role in addressing global challenges and promoting social justice, especially in developing countries where the governments may lack the capacity, resources or political will to address these issues (Demir and Budur 2019:174).

In South Africa, NPOs are instrumental in improving community welfare and contributing to sustainable development (Tshiyoyo 2022:33). According to Nwauche and Flanigan (2022:120), NPOs are expected to function in a manner that serves the communities that they work. Demir and Budur (2019:175) emphasized that the specific functions of an NPO, may vary depending on its areas of focus, but generally, NPOs are expected to:

- Identify the requirements of the community.
- Develop and implement programs that address the needs of the community.
- Mobilize resources which includes donations, grants and volunteer labour to fund and execute the community program.
- Build partnerships with other organisation internally and externally of the community to maximize resources, grasp a broader audience and achieve common goals.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the programs implemented for record keeping of project impact to the community.

Furthermore, Abiddin et al (2022:4386) indicated that there are several administrative aspects is required to be performed by the NPO owner, manager and employees. Administrative aspects include the following:

- Organising administrative and logistical tasks for meetings, activities and events
- Manage and monitor the availability of resources, donations, funding and equipment
- Updating policies and procedures within the NPO and stakeholders
- Ensuring timely payments for operational costs such as rent, utilities and any organisational membership
- Maintain and update database regularly
- Information and distribution of requests for community assistance projects
- Prepare reports and presentations with statistical data for each project assigned
- Ensuring that relevant data is confidential and only communicated to relevant stakeholders
- Maintain the NPOs filing system for admin documentation and ensure it is continuously up to date

As NPOs operate and cover various sectors, the organisational and administrative processes operate in a variety of methods, depending on the organisations specific goals and missions (Bruni and Kaczur 2022:443). Overall, the general goal of NPOs is to create a positive change in the community they serve. NPOs have also become influential actors in international politics, advocating for policy changes in the respective areas of focus (Götz 2020:9).

1.2 Contextual setting

This research study area is located in the KwaZulu - Natal Province, namely, the eThekweni Municipality District. KwaZulu-Natal is divided into one metropolitan municipality (eThekweni Metropolitan Municipality) with 26 regions or cities (eThekweni Municipality 2023). The eThekweni Municipality district is located on the east shore of South Africa in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and is the third largest metropolitan municipality in the country following Johannesburg and Cape Town (Department of Corporative Governance and Traditional Affairs 2022). For the purpose of this study, urban community NPOs in eThekweni Municipality would form the population for this study. On the next page in Figure 1.1, a map highlighting the different cities within the eThekweni municipality district in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

Figure 1.1: Map of eThekweni Municipality urban cities in Kwa-Zulu Natal



(eThekweni Municipality 2023)

1.3 Statement of the problem

Abiddin, Ibrahim and Aziz (2022: 8) highlighted that to obtain the NPOs objectives, majority of the roles, resources, distribution and responsibilities information of the diverse activities would have administered accurately in NPOs organisation. However, the administration process of non-profit organisations (NPOs) has been a topic of concern, as it has been found to have a significant impact on the effectiveness of these organisations in achieving the objectives (Alnamrouti, Rjoub and Ozgit. 2022:2). During the COVID-19 pandemic globally, NPOs were under scrutiny with regard the administration processes (Kim and Mason, 2020:332).

Rose-Ackerman (2021:20) emphasis that during the COVID-19 pandemic, NPO's received generous millions from government, private individuals and firms whilst at the end product 'others' have sought to take advantage of the NPO's funds to benefit for own usage, not affected communities. This was due to poor communication and administration of funds and resources within NPO's (Fuller and Rice.2022:2). On the other hand, many authors had found that due to mal-administration processes of the NPO's, it had brought upon threats into the organisation's reputation such as impersonation of NPO's officials for fake fundraising charities initiatives, counterfeiting of NPO's resources, fraudulent investment scams, fake online fundraising initiatives which include Email and SMS phishing attacks (Carnegie et al., 2021; Kober and Thamber, 2021; Santos and Laureano, 2022 ; Vasilyeva et al. 2021). This had resulted in NPOs in South Africa facing numerous challenges such as lack of transparency, fraud, difficulty in engaging beneficiaries and inefficient data management systems (Tshiyoyo 2022:40). These challenges hinder the effectiveness of NPOs in achieving the objectives and delivering services to communities in need.

Therefore, there was a need to develop a digital system for managing the administrative process of NPOs in South Africa that would streamline the operations, improve communication channels, enhance data management processes, and increase transparency and accountability (Zihindula, et al.2019:15). A digital system for administration processes would assist in identifying for fraud, embezzlement of funds and to recover misused funds (Rose-Ackerman. 2021:21). The implementation of technology aspect would highlight accountability of each administration process in the NPO (Ngo et al. 2022:2). The challenges in accountability have resulted in low levels of public trust and confidence in the work of NPOs in the country and it has negatively impacted the NPOs ability to mobilize resources to serve communities (Mvunabandi and Nomlala 2022:13).

Cavicchic and Vagnoni (2022) highlighted that accountability in NPO's represents an important challenge depending on what, how and to whom information and administration are reported upon. NPOs are mostly funded by international, national, and local institutions and private donations. Therefore, demonstrating the administration of the invested resources represents a high priority, especially in times of budget constraints. Rottkamp (2021) pointed out that governments are encouraging NPOs to embrace the digital transformation and to provide communities quality yet safe service delivery. For NPOs, the implementation of digital

transformation in the administration process presents a unique challenge due to the diverse stakeholders and social impact goals (Uddin and Akhter 2022).

After a systematic review of literature, the researcher had identified that there is a lack of research on the specific challenges and opportunities the NPOs face in the digital transformation journey. Therefore, this research study aimed to explore the administration processes used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality and to develop a digital system for the administrative processes.

1.4 Aims and objectives

The main aim of the research was to explore the administrative processes used by NPOs based in eThekweni Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal and to develop a digital system for the NPOs administrative processes to improve efficiency.

The following objectives that was addressed through this research study included:

- [RO1] To explore the current administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality.
- [RO2] To establish what digital technologies are adopted by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality.
- [RO3] To assess the factors that affect the administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality.
- [RO4] To develop a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs.

Research questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- I.** What are the current administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality?
- II.** How are the current digital technologies adopted by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality?
- III.** What are the factors that affect the administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality?
- IV.** What digital system could be developed to address the administrative efficiency for NPOs?

1.5 Significance of the study

The significance of the study was for the development of a digital system to be implemented in community NPOs for administration processes within the eThekweni Municipality. A digital system would automate and streamline various administrative tasks, such as record-keeping, reporting, and communication. It would reduce the manual paperwork, minimize errors and avoid time wastage, allowing NPOs to focus on the organisations core missions.

By centralising data, the system would enhance access to information, easier for NPOs to manage resources, track funding, and evaluate program impacts. A digital platform can facilitate a real-time data reporting, ensuring that NPOs maintain transparency with stakeholders, including donors, beneficiaries, and regulatory bodies. A digital administrative system would provide comprehensive audit trails and documentation that demonstrate compliance with legal and financial regulations, thus increasing accountability. It would also foster better communication and collaboration not only within the NPO but also with external stakeholders, including government departments and community members.

Furthermore, by integrating with digital administrative systems, NPOs can create networks that enhance resource sharing and collaborative efforts within the community. It would also serve as a platform for training NPO administrative employees on new technologies, thus building capacities and improving the overall NPOs competency. As technology evolves, NPOs would be in a better position to adapt to new technology, fostering a culture of innovation and continuous improvement.

In terms of when NPOs need to make an informed decision, NPO leaders would have access to real-time data and analytics evidence to more effectively during strategies and improved program outcomes. By using technology to optimise administrative processes, NPOs can direct more resources toward service delivery and community impact, enhancing sustainability. A digital system can enhance the credibility and professionalism of an NPO, making it more attractive to potential funders and partners.

By the development of a digital administration system that is tailored to the specific context and needs of local NPOs based in the eThekweni Municipality, the study would address the unique challenges within the region. Digital administrative systems would empower

community members by enhancing engagement and participation in decision-making processes, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility towards local initiatives.

1.6 Outline of the research methodology

This research study aimed to explore the administrative processes used by NPOs based in eThekweni Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal and to develop a digital system for the NPOs administrative process. An exploratory qualitative approach was employed. The target population for the study consisted of NPO owners, managers (semi-structured interviews) and NPO administrative employees (focus group discussions).

The main orientation of this study were aligned with the interpretivism paradigm, which emphasises subjective understanding, meaning, and interpretation of human behaviour. The approach was in line with the study's objective. Purposive sampling was used to select the urban community NPO's within the eThekweni Municipality for this study. The qualitative phase had to research instruments. Specifically, face to face semi-structured interviews were conducted with NPO owners and managers. On the other hand, focus groups were conducted with NPO administrative employees. The collected data was then analysed respectively with theoretical frameworks and existing literature.

1.7 Scope and delimitations of study

This study confined itself to NPOs within eThekweni municipality, in Kwa-Zulu Natal province. Gossel (2024:14) highlights that delimitations specify the boundaries of the study, detailing what is included or excluded, such as focusing on community NPOs within a specific geographical area or targeting particular administrative processes.

1.7.1 Delimitations

Delimitations are features which limit the scope and explain the boundaries within one's study (Kuada 2012: 123). The delimitations are in the researchers' control. Delimiting factors include the choice of objectives, the research questions, the variables, the theoretical framework adopted for the study and the population investigated. This study will be linked to NPOs owners, managers and employees based in the Kwa-Zulu Natal province.

1.8 Research Output

The research outputs of this study are presented below, which includes one publications:

Moodley Bhulaye, E., Rajkoomar, M., & Ngibe, M. (2025). Challenges in the Administrative Processes of Community-Based Non-Profit Organisation in Durban, South Africa. *Journal of Public Management and International Relations*, 1(1), 22–41. <https://doi.org/10.51415/jpmir.v1i1.1735>.

1.9 Structure of the thesis

This study is presented in six chapters, which are arranged in the following manner:

Chapter One: Introduction and background to the thesis

Encompasses the introduction and background to the study. The research problem is defined, and the chapter discusses the importance and the purpose of the study. The objectives and research questions are identified to guide the flow of the research.

Chapter Two: Theoretical framework

Provides the theoretical frameworks of the research study. It also explores the various frameworks when implementing digital transformation in an administration process.

Chapter Three: Literature review

Explores the history of NPOs, accountability of NPOs administration processes. It also introduces literature on implementing digital transformation challenges. The chapter would further unpack previous research conducted in the national and international context.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

Provides an overview and discussion of the research design and method utilised to collect data, outlining the specific methods used to gather empirical information. This chapter also looks at the design of the interview schedule and focus group discussion schedule used to collect data. Statistical techniques were used to analyse and process data.

Chapter Five: Presentation of findings

The information gathered from interviews and focus group are presented. The analysis and the interpretation are based on the data collected. The qualitative results are described through narratives and themes that emerged from a process of coding aligned to this study.

Chapter Six: Discussion, recommendation and conclusion of study.

The final chapter presents the research discussion of the study. The idea of prototype contribution to the research areas is introduced. Lastly, the recommendations and the conclusion and for the research study are presented.

1.10 Summary

This introductory chapter provided a context to the study and its research problem. The chapter presented the research problem, aim and objectives of the study and critical questions generated to address the objective, as well as the significance for the study. It provided a brief research methodology adopted; delimitations and research paradigm of the study were outlined.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a brief introduction to this study. The background, research problem, aims and objectives, significance of the study, the scope of the study, and the content of the chapters were also outlined. This chapter would discuss the theoretical framework for this study.

This research is conceptually anchored in established technology adoption and implementation theories. Theoretical frameworks provide a basis for understanding and analysing the processes involved in digital transformation for administration and information management. The study combines key constructs from the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) and Universal Design Principles (UDP), which provides a more comprehensive lens through performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and facilitating conditions. To address the organisational and contextual realities of NPOs, the framework structures analysis around the technological context and organisational context (Venkatesh 2021). This integrated theoretical approach ensures the investigation moves beyond individual acceptance to holistically examine the systemic factors influencing successful implementation.

This framework not only guides the research design but also shapes the analysis and interpretation of data. The researcher explored several key theories that are fundamentally aligned and coherent in the contributions to understanding technology adoption, implementation processes, and user experience.

2.2 Theoretical framework and research design

A well-defined theoretical framework is crucial to establishing a clear context for the study, guiding the research questions, and framing the analysis of findings. This framework comprises a set of interconnected theories that inform the study's objectives and methodologies, providing a foundation for understanding the phenomena under exploration.

Together, the theoretical framework and research design not only enhance the credibility of the study but also ensure that findings can contribute to both academic dialogue and practical applications in digital adoption and implementation. By effectively integrating theory and

method, the research aims to provide insights that are both strong and actionable. As with the digital transformation, it is a process that involves the use of digital technologies to transform various aspects of an organisation (Verina and Titko 2019:9).

Below is a detailed exploration of the key theories used in this research study. In terms of technology adoption, specifically within the context of administrative processes. Each theory was analysed in terms of its original purpose, core constructs and integration into a research study focused on technology adoption.

2.2.1 Unified Theory of Acceptance (UTAUT)

Akinuwesi et al. (2022: 119) highlighted that UTAUT framework is used for understanding individual's acceptance and use of technology in administrative processes. It was developed by Venkatesh et al in 2003 by integrating and extending several existing theories and models on technology acceptance (Venkatesh 2021: 645).

Venkatesh (2022:643) explains that the UTAUT is considered the best model to analyse the adoption of mobile application and Information Communication Technology (ICT), as it also comprises elements from the following theories:

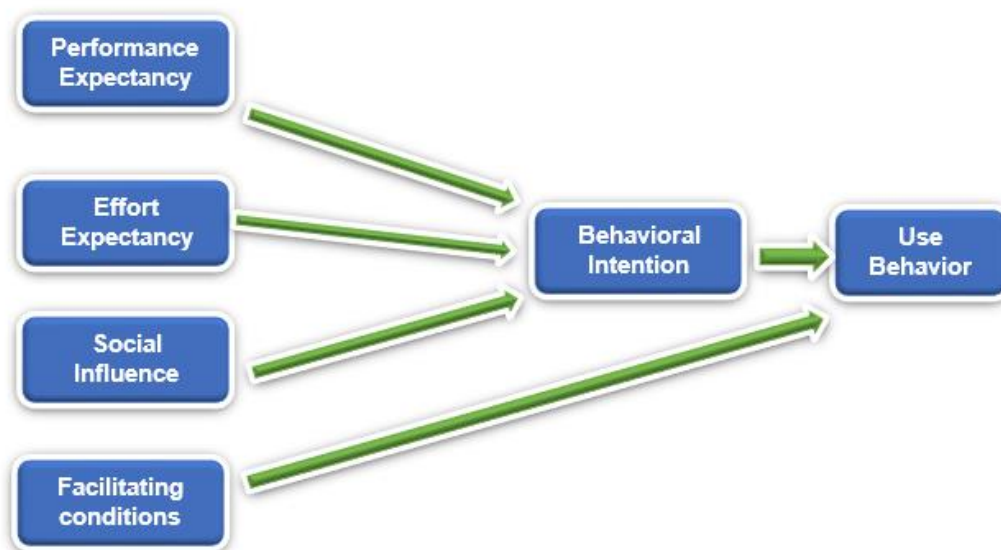
- **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM):** Proposed by Davis in 1989, TAM suggested that perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness significantly influence users' acceptance of technology.
- **Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA):** Developed by Fishbein and Ajzen, TRA posited that individual behaviour is driven by intentions, which are affected by attitudes toward the behaviour and subjective norms.
- **Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB):** An extension of TRA, TPB incorporated perceived behavioural control, meaning users' perceptions about their ability to perform a behaviour, as an additional determinant.
- **Diffusion of Innovations (DOI):** Rogers' DOI theory focused on how new ideas and technologies spread within social systems, accentuating attributes of innovations, communication channels, and the social system's influence.
- **Social Cognitive Theory:** Bandura's theory emphasized the role of observational learning, imitation, and modelling in behaviour acquisition, influencing the perception and acceptance of new technology.

- **Model of PC Utilization (MPCU):** This model bridged the gap between usage and acceptance of personal computers, focusing on factors like job relevance and output quality.
- **Motivational Model:** This framework emphasized intrinsic and extrinsic motivations in technology acceptance, engaging individual motives for using technology.
- **Combined TAM and TPB (C-TAM-TPB):** This model integrated elements of TAM and TPB, considering perceived risk, trust, and user acceptance.

The concepts investigated by the current research are covered by most of the eight listed models; hence, it is practical to implement the UTAUT model because it includes all the stated aspects. UTAUT is based on the information that people would have a more positive attitude while using a system which satisfies the process performance expectancy as well as the individual expectancies about the efforts and facilitates the work conditions with social support (Donmez-Turan 2019: 1383). This statement supports the idea of using the UTAUT model in research that observes the attitude of people toward the adoption of technology within an organisation processes; this contributed to the researcher choosing this model as an appropriate one for the current research.

Abbad (2021:7206) confirms that the UTAUT model holds four key constructs: the social influence, effort expectancy, performance expectancy and the facilitating conditions. Below is Figure 2.1 the UTAUT framework is shown and afterwards discussed.

Figure 2.1: Unified Theory of Acceptance (UTAUT) theory



The UTAUT framework identifies several key factors that influence individual's intention to use technology and the actual usage behaviour. Venkatesh (2021:646) discusses these factors include the following along with the alignment to the study's objective:

2.2.1.1 Performance expectancy

Extent to which individuals believe that using the technology will help to improve job performance and accomplish tasks more efficiently (Rumangkit et al.2023:2). The study's first objective was to explore the current administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekwini Municipality. In the interview schedule, NPO owners and managers were asked about the current administrative processes and whether the process performance was competent. Additionally, in the focus group with NPO administrative employees, participants were asked as to whether the current administrative processes were easier and efficient. The study's objective and questions aligned with this UTAUT construct, as described above.

2.2.1.2 Effort expectancy

The degree of ease associated with using the technology, including its perceived simplicity, ease of use and ease of learning (Abbad 2021:7206). This echoes on the importance of the user-approachability of technology, which would indicate the effort of technology role in the process. The study's second objective was to establish what digital technologies are adopted by NPOs in eThekwini Municipality. Specific questions were designed to collect data in this regard. Some of the questions focused on whether the NPO had adopted a digital technology and how effectively does it contribute to the administration process.

2.2.1.3 Social influence

Joa and Magsamen-Conrad (2022:1621) explain that the concept reflects the influence of others' opinions, expectations and support regarding the use of technology. It can include support from colleagues or other stakeholders (Kurniasari et al. 2023:95). In this case, the study's third objective was to critically assess the factors that affect the administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekwini Municipality. The study interview and focus group discussion questions focused on what challenges does the NPO experience with the current administration processes and the UTAUT model is very useful for research that includes an investigation into how people influence the adoption of technology by others (Donmez-Turan 2019: 1385).

2.2.1.4 Facilitating conditions

The construct facilitating conditions discusses to the extent to which individuals perceive that the necessary resources, support and infrastructure are available to facilitate the use of technology (Ursavaş 2022:112). In a study by Teng et al. (2022:6), it is proposed that the facilitation condition, which is one of the UTAUT constructs, plays a significant role in influencing how information technology is used and adopted. Zaim et al. (2024:2) also concur that as a construct, facilitating conditions discusses to the extent to which a person observes that there is an organisational and technical infrastructure that supports the use of the digital system.

The last objective of this study was to develop a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs. As part of achieving this objective, questions were formulated to assess if there are reasons or activities that encourage NPO owners, managers and the NPO to administrative employees adopt a digital system for the administrative process for services. Furthermore, participants were asked to describe what type of features and support is required to implement the adoption of the digital system. Additionally, participants were asked if there are any barriers to adoption of the digital system for administration process within their respective NPO.

Performance expectancy, effort expectancy and social influence are the three constructs suggested by the UTAUT theory as being the direct determinant of a user's intention to adopt technology and the user's behaviour towards the adoption of technology.

2.3 Comparison of theoretical frameworks aimed at digital technology adoption for administration processes

After reviewing the various theoretical frameworks for digital technology adoption within the context of non-profit organisations (NPOs) in South Africa, several models offer valuable insights. The most prominent among these frameworks include the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), Diffusion of Innovations (DOI), Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMI), Lean Six Sigma (LSS), and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). Each model provides unique perspectives and can guide the understanding and implementation of technology in administrative processes. On the next page, in Table 2.1, a comparison of theoretical framework aimed at digital technology adoption for administration processes is presented, thereafter discussed.

Table 2.1: Comparison of theoretical frameworks aimed at digital technology adoption for administration processes

Framework	Focus	Key Constructs	Strengths	Limitations	Relevance to NPOS in South Africa
TAM	Individual Acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived Ease of Use. • Perceived Usefulness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple and easy to understand. • Highlights user perceptions 	Limited scope; does not consider organisational factors or broader social influences.	Useful for identifying individual user motivations but lacks broader applicability to organisational adoption context.
DOI	Innovation Diffusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relative Advantage • Compatibility • Complexity • Trialability • Observability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addresses how innovations spread. • Highlights influence of social systems. 	Primarily focuses on dissemination rather than individual adoption processes.	Useful in understanding how technologies might spread through the NPO sector but lacks depth in user acceptance.
CMMI	Process Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maturity Levels Defined • Quantitatively Managed • Optimizing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a structured approach to assess process maturity and improvement 	Focused on processes; does not address individual technology perception or adoption.	Good for evaluating process readiness but may not directly address technology acceptance in a socio-economic context.

LSS	Efficiency and Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value Stream Mapping • Waste Reduction • Continuous Improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on optimizing processes. • Practical for improving administrative efficiency. 	Primarily process-oriented; may overlook user acceptance and motivation factors.	Can enhance efficiency in technology use, but does not delve into user adoption behaviour.
UTAUT	Comprehensive Acceptance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Expectancy • Effort Expectancy • Social Influence • Facilitating Conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synthesizes multiple models • Considers both individual and organisational factors. 	More complex due to the number of factors involved; may require extensive research to apply effectively.	Considers social, organisational, and user factors for adoption of technology.

While TAM focuses on perceived usefulness and ease of use, it does not adequately account for the social context or facilitating conditions conducive to technology adoption, which can limit its effectiveness when applied in diverse settings like NPOs in South Africa (Naatu et al.2024:4). Matsepe et al. (2022:3) highlighted that DOI is beneficial for understanding how innovations are spread, but it does not focus deeply on the individual's acceptance journey. It's emphasis on the attributes of innovations (relative advantage, compatibility, etc.) might not address specific organisational and user-level dynamics as effectively as UTAUT does.

On the other hand, CMMI provides a process improvement framework but is more relevant for assessing the maturity of processes than understanding user acceptance or design inclusivity (Alam et al. 2024:16). It may not directly address the immediate needs of NPOs that require user-friendly digital systems for a wide range of stakeholders. In contrast, LSS focuses on process improvement and operational efficiency, which can be beneficial in optimizing administration processes (Kumar et al. 2023:2561). However, it may overlook critical aspects of user inclusion, acceptance, and accessibility that are paramount in the development of a digital system for NPOs. Lastly, the UTAUT framework integrates elements from eight previous models, including TAM and DOI, to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding technology acceptance in an organisation. It identifies four key constructs: Performance Expectancy, Effort Expectancy, Social Influence, and Facilitating Conditions. This model accounts for both individual and organisational-level factors, making it more holistic than the other frameworks.

The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) therefore underpinned the current study. Mokgohloa et al (2020:1191) proposes that in South Africa, the public sector organisations can benefit greatly by adopting the UTAUT framework in the development of a digital systems for administrative processes. The researcher identified that by using the UTAUT framework to conduct the research study, NPOs in eThekweni Municipality would systematically understand and address factors that influence the acceptance and use of technology in the organisation administrative operations, leading to more effective implementation and utilisation of digital system.

Furthermore, several authors suggested that the key points to apply the UTAUT framework in order to develop a digital system for administration processes (Ayaza and Yanartas 2020; Mokgohloa et al 2020; Albanna et al 2022; Bansal et al 2022; Dash 2023) are highlighted below:

- Identify the specific administrative processes.

- Assess the current state of administrative processes.
- Conduct UTAUT interviews or surveys with staff members involved with administrative processes.
- Analyse and interpret data to identify strengths and weaknesses in administrative processes.
- Develop strategies and interventions based on the analysis of data.
- Measure and evaluate the effectiveness of the system.

2.4 Universal Design Principle

The universal design principle was used for the research design of the study. A universal design principle refers to a concept or guideline that aims to create systems, products or environments that are accessible, inclusive and usable for people of all abilities, backgrounds and age group (Roski, Walkowiak and Nehring 2021:3). Fogli, Arengi and Gentilin (2020:33582) highlighted that the principles of universal design were developed to ensure that everyone, regardless of physical or cognitive abilities, can fully participate and engage in various activities.

Duman and Asilsoy (2022:4) discuss the seven principles of ‘Universal Design’, as defined by the Centre for Universal Design at North Carolina State University, are as follows:

- **Equitable use:** the design should be useful and accessible to people with diverse abilities. It should provide the same means of use for all people, regardless of the physical, sensory, or cognitive differences
- **Flexibility in use:** design should accommodate a wide range of individual preferences and abilities. It offers options in methods in use and adapt to the participant skills, pace and preferences.
- **Simple and intuitive use:** the design should be easy to understand and use, without the need for extensive instructions or prior knowledge. It must be clear and consistent layout, minimizing the potential for errors.
- **Perceptible information:** design should consist of clear information to participants, regardless of sensory abilities. It should effectively convey relevant information through different modalities such as visual, auditory or tactical cues.
- **Tolerance cues:** design would minimize adverse consequences or errors due to unintentional actions or mistakes. Fail-safe mechanisms or features that prevent or reduce the impact should be inserted into the design

- **Low physical effort:** the design would require minimal physical effort to use, accommodating users with varying abilities and preventing fatigue or discomfort. Ergonomics and accessible features such as adjustable heights or easy to reach controls.
- **Size and space for approach:** Design must provide an appropriate size and space for individuals to approach, reach and use the product or environment comfortably, regardless of physical abilities or mobility devices.

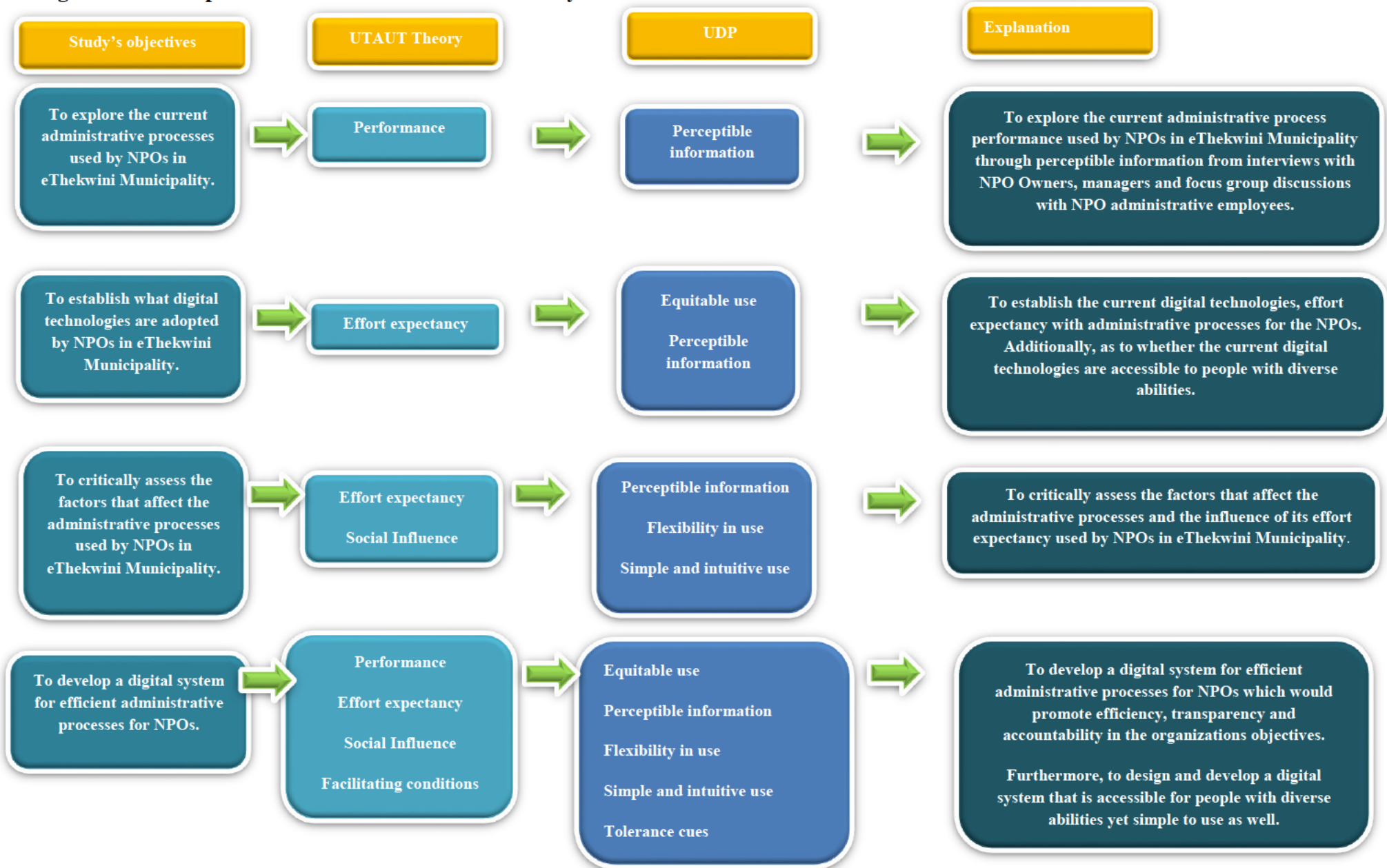
(Duman and Asilsoy 2022:4)

2.5 Justification of the research study's conceptual framework

Developing a digital system for the administration processes of a NPO in South Africa, choosing the appropriate theoretical framework is crucial for guiding the design, implementation, and adoption process. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), combined with the UDP, presents a compelling choice when compared to other frameworks.

On the next page, in Figure 2.2, the researcher developed the conceptual framework for the study, highlighting the key steps in which the UTAUT framework and UDP would assist in the development of a digital system for administrative processes along with aligning the framework to the research study objectives:

Figure 2.2: Conceptual framework for the research study



In Figure 2.2, the researcher presents how the research study objectives are aligned to the UTAUT Framework and UDP. The discussion of the alignment of the framework and the research study are discussed in 2.2.1.

By engaging local communities in the design process aligns well with both UTAUT and UDP, making users feel valued and included, thereby improving the likelihood of acceptance and successful implementation. This strategic alignment with local needs and the focus on sustainable adoption positions UTAUT and UDP as the optimal choice for guiding digital technology adoption in NPOs in eThekweni Municipality. NPO's can enhance the administrative processes through the successful implementation and use of digital system. In turn, it can lead to improved efficiency, accountability, transparency and effectiveness of the organisation operations, ultimately benefitting the communities they serve.

2.6 Summary

In conclusion, a theoretical framework for digital transformation for administration management can provide a structured approach to identify opportunities for implementing digital technologies to improve processes, products and services. The conceptual framework identified in Table 2.2, can be used to analyse, design, implement and measure impact of digital technologies in administrative.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to establish and unpack the elements that comprise the variables under investigation, which are digital systems and community non-profit organisations, by reviewing the literature on the subject. The concepts that guide this review are discussed below.

The idea of digital transformation has become crucial for many firms, regardless of industry, given how quickly technology is evolving. Digital transformation, as stated by Furr, Ozcan and Eisenhardt (2022:596), is the process by which organisations adopt digital technology on a large scale and across different boundaries to change how they operate and how they generate and provide value to customers and other stakeholders. Despite digital transformation being typically allied with high-tech applications in business settings, the saying also refers to NPO groups (Lenz 2022; Bellini and Raglianti 2023:167). Predominantly for non-profit organisations, which have always been limited by organisational environments and scarce resources, it is undeniably clear that they need to adjust to digitisation to continue being viable, credible, and influential (Ushaka Adie, Tate and Valentine 2024:43).

NPOs fill the gaps left by the government and other for-profit organisations, which makes them crucial to the implementation of social, economic, and environmental demands worldwide (Prysmakova and Pysmenna 2024:1536). However, the landscape in which non-profit organisations operate is changing at an incredibly rapid pace (Plaisance 2023; Pompper 2024). The donors' expectations, as stressed by Finkler, Calabrese and Smith (2025:20), are evolving in that they call for the money to be used in certain projects, in particular ways, and with demonstrable outcomes.

In a similar vein, non-profit service users, according to Richmond and Shields (2024), are progressively digitally prepared and interrelated, and they expect more individualised, expedited, and simple interactions. Therefore, non-profits are stuck in the process of improving communication, professionalising, and demonstrating the efficacy of their work, which can be substantially aided by digital transformation (Chappell and Rosenkrans 2025).

The change to digitisation in non-profit organisations involves more than just following trends; it also involves meeting present needs (Bruce 2025). As the world grows more digital and people interact online, businesses that do not adapt risk going extinct. NPOs can increase their

organisational capacity and results through digitalisation in a number of ways, such as increased outreach, program efficacy, and donor and volunteer satisfaction. The process of digitisation is not always simple, though; there are a number of issues. These include a lack of funding to support these changes and people's reluctance to adapt to new workplace practices (Cipriano and Za 2025; Kolabaeva 2025).

3.2 The conception of a Digital system

Before dealing with digital systems, which is one of the constructs under study, it is important to explain digitalisation in general first because the influence of this variable applies to all organisations and not just individuals or managers.

3.2.1 Digitalisation

Digitalisation, according to Matalamäki and Joensuu-Salo (2022:382), is a reflection of the growing use of digital technology in business and society as well as the corresponding changes in how connected people, organisations, and objects are. Digitalisation includes the different sociotechnical phenomena and processes of embracing and applying digital technology in broader human, organisational, and societal contexts (Vahvanen 2022; Demin, Mikhaylova and Pyankova 2023).

Karlilar, Balcilar and Emir (2023:2) posit that digitalisation is a type of mass social rebirth that reimagines the human experience. The way individuals communicate and work together is evolving due to digitalisation. Recognising the trend toward digitalisation in society is crucial because businesses cannot overlook the profound impact that digital innovations are having on the world (Karlilar, Balcilar and Emir 2023:5). However, the unpredictability of the pace made in technological changes is unprecedented.

Calderon-Monge and Ribeiro-Soriano (2024) observe that digital transformation will continue to accelerate in the years to come, challenging and altering the world as we know it in ways we cannot yet fathom. The advancements in digitisation are bringing about societal changes that impact people and organisations' way of life, how they manage their organisational operations or business activities, and how businesses and other organisations and business institutions provide public and other welfare services (Calderon-Monge and Ribeiro-Soriano 2024). Businesses that are not strategically positioned to keep up with the swift pace of digitalisation will find it difficult to withstand the organisational pressures that come with it, and as a result,

they are at a significant risk of disintegrating (Calderon-Monge and Ribeiro-Soriano 2024; Nešković 2024).

3.2.1.1 Digital transformation

The phenomenon of digital transformation has gained significance in the business world in recent years. The rapid and impressive advancements in communication and information technology have played a significant role in this revolutionary process. In consequence, these developments have enabled businesses to experience significant transformations in the core structure of their business operations, interactions with customers, and competitive tactics in the marketplace. It is significant to understand that digital transformation has become a requirement rather than just an option. In the business world, the inception of digital transformation marks a turning point that has caused a tectonic modification away from traditional representations and toward individuals or organisations that are distinctly focused on technology (Matalamäki and Joensuu-Salo 2022:384).

Karlilar, Balcilar and Emir (2023:3) refer to digital transformation as the process of utilising technology to facilitate new ways of thinking to go from the current level of digital maturity to the anticipated future state of digital maturity. This idea has to do with culture and organisational transformation. Understanding organisational culture is also essential to comprehending how organisations may promote change in a digital age. Businesses that successfully negotiate the digital transformation landscape stand to gain a great deal. These include increased operational effectiveness, significant reductions in production costs, and an accelerated time to market for goods or services. To promote operational efficiency, organisations must frequently update or replace outdated procedures with technologically connected ones to be more operative and automated (Karlilar, Balcilar and Emir 2023:6). Some of these methods to do this in governmental corporations, profit and non-profit organisations are through data analytics to make decisions, automating repetitive operations, or creating more effective supply chains (Karlilar, Balcilar and Emir 2023:7).

Omol (2024:241) describes digital transformation as the process of integrating digital technology into every aspect of an establishment or organisation and completely changing how establishments run their operations and provide value to their clients. Cloud computing, big data, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things (IoT), data analytics, and other contemporary apps and software are examples of digital technologies that are adopted as part of digital

transformation. These technologies are generally used by organisations to improve customer service and experience, gather and analyse data, and streamline corporate processes through digital platforms such as websites, mobile apps, and social media to offer services that are more individualised, quick, and simple to access. To accomplish this, it becomes essential to use behavioural analysis and client data (Omol 2024:246).

According to Inversini (2025:327), digital transformation has created new opportunities for businesses to establish stronger relationships with their clientele. Businesses can provide highly individualised services, obtain real-time feedback, and explore the nuances of customer preferences by utilising social media, mobile applications, and other digital platforms. In addition to strengthening client connections, this capacity creates the foundation for rapidly expanding corporate growth prospects. These digital touchpoints allow businesses to better understand the demands of their clients while also cultivating a culture of customer loyalty and involvement, which in turn propels the growth and diversity of their operations. It is an intentional attempt to use contemporary information technology to improve an organisation's overall performance, creativity, and efficiency, whether it be a business, government, or nonprofit. However, an organisation can suffer untold damage from their inability to adjust to the evolving effects of digital transformation. This effect can result in discouragement, lower service quality, confusion and misalignment, impaired work performance and efficiency, and needless expense increases (Inversini 2025:328).

The discussions from the views of scholars above revealed that investment in organisational digital transformation can pay off in the form of increased revenue, reduced costs, and enhanced operational efficiency. Organisations or businesses that adapt quickly might acquire a competitive edge and position themselves for success in the increasingly digital world. Businesses or organisations that wholly undergo digital transformation are more flexible when it comes to embracing changes and learning new technology (Wang and Zhang 2025:2). To develop more artistic resolutions, it is pertinent that organisations such as NPOs endeavour to collaborate with business partners or external parties to fashion more innovative results (Weber, Büttgen and Bartsch 2022; Tsou and Chen 2023; Vetrova and Ivanova 2025).

3.2.1.2 A Global Overview of Non-profit organisations (NPOs)

Non-profit organisations (NPOs) have a long and rich history that dates back several centuries. The concept of charitable and philanthropic organisations can be traced back to when religious

institutions and groups of support were established to assist those in need. However, the modern non-profit sector as we know it today has its roots in the 19th and early 20th centuries (Lewis and Diamond 2025). The Industrial Revolution in the 19th century brought about social and economic changes that led to the emergence of organised philanthropy and charitable organisations (Schuyt 2024). In the United States, for example, Vella (2025) agrees that the first organised non-profit organisations were established in the early 19th century to address social issues such as poverty, healthcare and education.

Correspondingly, in Britain, welfare provision went from a church-dominated system in the 17th and 18th centuries to a function performed by the government and the voluntary sector in the 19th and 20th centuries (Hornsby-Smith 2025). The voluntary sector adopted a complementary role to public provision by the government in the 1930s (Street 2024). This was until the ‘Third Way’ approaches of the Labour government promoted a more interactive relationship between the market, government and voluntary associations, which work together to solve social problems (Chaves-Avila and Gallego-Bono 2020).

The Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA), founded in 1844 in London, was cited as one of the earliest modern NPOs (Koshy and Devadas 2024). By offering spiritual, social, and practical support to young men from rural areas who were relocating to metropolitan areas, the YMCA met their urgent needs and established a model for widespread voluntary action in the face of urban difficulties. The YMCA provides its members with a place to call home, where they can gather and share their experiences, form friendships, and seek advice. Also, this association provides members with activities that empower them to take charge and feel a sense of accomplishment (Koshy and Devadas 2024).

NPOs have a very young history in Asia, having been influenced by their Western counterparts. NPOs, as stated by Nishino, Ishida and Yamaya (2023), in Japan grew quickly after the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake in 1995, which led to the establishment of the law to promote specified non-profit activities. The foundation for NPO policymaking was established when Japanese society embraced Western ideas about the value of NPOs in social development. The significance of NPOs was initially introduced to Chinese academics and policymakers in 1995 during the fourth United Nations Women's Conference in Beijing. Many NPOs, especially those devoted to women's rights and the environment, rose to prominence as a result of this conference

(Aoki 2024). In both instances, an incident that altered perceptions led to NPOs taking on the responsibility of attending to the needs of marginalised social groups.

Before colonisation, sophisticated indigenous polities and communal types of social interactions were characteristics of social development in Africa. African socioeconomic progress was hampered by European conquest, colonisation, and the slave trade, which externalised human resources to Europe and led to strife and the dissolution of many governments (John, Messina and Odumegwu 2023). Africans were denied the advantages of their participation in socioeconomic growth due to colonial dominance (Kajiita and Kang'ethe 2024). During this period, policy was designed to maintain the social structures of colonial control, and social assistance for the marginalised indigenous people was scarce (Opia and Matthew 2025). The social sectors were only accessible to the white colonists, who were a minority (Sah and Fang 2025).

Today, the Non-profit sector is a diverse and dynamic field that encompasses a wide range of organisations, from large international NPOs to small community-based groups (Cipriano and Za 2024). Kazanskaia (2025) specified that NPOs play a vital role in addressing social, economic, and environmental issues, advocating for policy change and providing essential services to communities around the world. The sector continues to evolve in response to changing social and economic conditions, technological advances and new global challenges, ensuring that non-profits remain a key force for positive social change and impact (Cipriano and Za 2025; Kazanskaia 2025).

3.2.1.3 Non-profit organisations (NPOs) in South Africa

NPOs are as described by Diab (2021), are organisations that work to better the lives and means of subsistence of those who are underprivileged or have not yet been able to understand their full potential in society. In South Africa, these organisations are organised and private in type since they are institutionally distinct from the government (Nkabinde and Mamabolo 2022). According to the South African NPO Act (No. 71 of 1997), a NPO is "a trust, company, or other association of persons established for a public purpose; and the income and property of which may not be distributable to its members or office-bearers except as reasonable compensation for services rendered". NPOs possess some institutional reality, non-profit distribution, self-governing, and voluntary, either in management of their affairs or in carrying out their operations (Mirzaei, Webster and Siuki 2021; Anttila 2025).

Non-profit organisations have a long history in South Africa. Since the mid-20th century, with the emergence of anti-apartheid organisations and the growth of civil society movements (Solomons 2022). Makofane and Selepe (2022) found that during the apartheid era, NPOs played a critical role in advocating for social justice and human rights in South Africa. Organisations such as the 'Black Sash', the South African Council of Churches and the End Conscription Campaign were instrumental in challenging the oppressive policies of the apartheid regime and mobilising support for democratic change (Sacks 2024). Following the end of apartheid in 1994, the non-profit sector in South Africa experienced significant growth as the new democratic government sought to address the legacy of apartheid and promote social development. Since the transition to democracy, the non-profit sector in South Africa has continued to expand and diversify with thousands of organisations working on a wide range of social issues (Buchholz 2024). NPOs in South Africa play a key role in providing services, advocating for policy change, promoting social cohesion and development in the country (Singh, Martins and Tefera 2022:5).

South Africa is still a very unequal nation, plagued by poverty and misery, and there are still obvious remnants of its authoritarian past. According to Odeku (2023), the years of segregation during the apartheid era are still the source of issues with inequality, social exclusion, and lack of integration. These socioeconomic problems continue despite the government investing a significant sum of money in social upliftment to address these causes (Rogerson and Rogerson 2023). Due to the ongoing demand for social development, non-profit organisations (NPOs) are seen by South African society as a source of social service delivery, development, and improvement, as well as a means of mobilising for social change. Despite their necessity, NPOs have not received the level of support from either the government or civil society that is necessary to ensure their continued existence (Sithole, Phesa and Sibanda 2024).

The government's social development budget, as stated by Maphumulo and Matlala (2025), is not supported by sufficient management systems or comprehensive policy frameworks, which contributes to the underfunding problem. The political priorities of modern South Africa have not been taken into account while modifying the financial norms. As a result, NPOs in South Africa may have unstable and fluctuating funding levels, which may have an impact on their sustainability and quality.

3.2.1.4 Legislation in South Africa

It is imperative to consider the laws and policies that establish the foundation for the NPO sector while evaluating the NPO landscape. The Income Tax Act (No. 58 of 1962), Section 21 of the Companies Act (No. 61 of 1973), the Non-profit Organisations Act (No. 71 of 1997), and the Section 18A Certificate are important laws and policies. Under these Acts, NPO politics are outlined. An NPO is defined by the South African Non-profit Organisations (NPO) Act (No. 71 of 1997) as a trust, business, or other group of people founded for a public purpose, the income and assets of which may not be distributed to its members or office-bearers other than as fair compensation for services provided (NPO Act, 1997). NPOs registered under the Companies Act (2008) are likewise covered by this Act.

In terms of the registration procedure, accountability controls, and other legal requirements, this legislative instrument was created to direct and regulate NPOs. This Act guarantees public and state accountability for non-profit organisations (Bissett, Steenkamp and Aslett 2023). The Act establishes the legal foundation for NPO good governance, including defined codes of good practice for South African NPOs that address management, fundraising, resource mobilisation, and leadership (Henna and Mdiniso 2024).

NPOs can register as public benefit organisations under Section 21 of the Companies Act (No. 61 of 1973) since they are acknowledged as organisations that were established for the public good (Mogotsi and Baron 2025). Accordingly, Marois (2025) emphasises that public benefit organisations are free from paying income taxes under the Income Tax Act (No. 58 of 1962), provided that they account for their income and expenses and present annual financial statements with their income tax return.

A non-profit organisation may not be obliged to file tax returns if it is registered as a public benefit organisation. Therefore, if a non-profit organisation is registered as a public benefit organisation, it may be excluded from paying taxes. Additionally, the South African Revenue Service (SARS) may grant Section 18A clearance to the NPO if it is registered as a public benefit organisation. In addition to encouraging more and/or ongoing financial support, this will enable the NPO to provide tax-deductible receipts to donors (Lestrade 2022; Sithole, Phesa and Sibanda 2024). Since they stand to gain from the deal as well, this encourages donors to provide financial support to non-profit organisations.

3.2.1.5 The underlying issues that affect NPOs

The NPO sector has a lot of structural problems, which make it challenging for them to gain the control or development they require to thrive, particularly during their early stages.

According to De Corte, Arys and Roose (2022), NPOs work hard to accomplish ambitious objectives with inadequate or very little funding. Individual contributors, corporations, foundations, government agencies, investments, and other possible sources may provide funding for the organisation, depending on its size, structure, and mission. Fundraising, however, is unexpected and highly competitive. Even if NPOs are successful in raising money, the funds frequently have complex conditions attached that limit how they can be utilised (De Corte, Arys and Roose 2022). Contributions are frequently made to NPOs with the agreement that either none of the funds be used for overhead or that only a small portion of the funds be used for overhead. Donations to charities can occasionally be made with a specific program or goal in mind. Therefore, to guarantee a variety of restricted and unrestricted funding sources, non-profit directors must discover a wide collection of fundraising channels while avoiding over-reliance on a single donor or funding source (De Corte, Arys and Roose 2022).

In relation to the issue of finance, Kober and Thambar (2023) note that forecasting and budgeting in non-profit organisations can be difficult due to a variety of restricted fund categories and unreliable funding sources, as known fund sources are not always guaranteed. To guarantee that expenditure is budgeted in a way that supports ongoing operations while continuing to support the goal, financial managers must be exceedingly cautious when projecting revenue for future financial quarters. Accurate income predictions and forecasting are critical components of non-profit budgeting (Kober and Thambar 2023). Therefore, you cannot predict how much money will be available to spend on programs until you know how much money your organisation will raise. To ensure that money is set aside and budgeted correctly, leaders administering must monitor the cash in several limited buckets while they predict their budget (Kober and Thambar 2023).

According to Holzer (2024), it can be hard for NPOs to manage their cash flow, which is the coordination of when funds come in and go out of their organisation. When the funding of NPOs is limited and somewhat unreliable, the situation can be odd because of erratic timing. For instance, end-of-year giving campaigns cause many NPOs to get a significant amount of their yearly earnings at the end of the year. Donations are welcome at any time, but if NPOs receive

the majority of the money in the last month of the year, it may be difficult to cover their expenses for the previous months of the year (Holzer 2024).

Jung (2024) notes that NPOs that receive grant funding are probably in charge of monitoring the search and application procedures, as well as the awards and their reporting obligations. Although grant management is difficult and complex, particularly for organisations that receive financing from several awards, grant funding is crucial to the functioning and success of charities. Missed deadlines, misappropriated use of funds, and non-compliance with standards can all be consequences of poor grant management. In the short term, this can harm NPOs by preventing them from making the most of their grant's potential. The organisation may suffer long-term consequences, including harm to its reputation and difficulty obtaining continuous grant financing (Jung 2024).

Leaders of NPOs must strike a balance between achieving their missions and maintaining their finances (Oyelola 2025). In addition to finding ways to carry out the goal while fostering financial strength, NPO leaders must rely on financial solutions that support the purpose. NPO jobs are inherently fulfilling; however, to increase operational effectiveness, boost donor transparency, and satisfy changing stakeholder expectations in a digital environment, NPOs must use a digital system (Zimmermann, Soares and Roca 2024; Tumpa and Naeni 2025). NPOs executives must be creative and equitable in their approach to awards, recognition, and salary while also being selective in their hiring methods, choosing staff members who share the organisation's goal and basic values (English, O'Neal-McElrath and Kanter 2025).

3.3 Digital system

NPOs have long been the backbone of social assistance and community resiliency (Alnamrouti, Rjoub and Ozgit 2022). Serving those in need for decades, they frequently do so with limited funding and a lot of operational demands. Their goals are still valid, but to adapt to the modern, digital-first environment, their methods and instruments must change. The demand on nonprofits to accomplish more with less has grown in recent years. In addition to operational inefficiencies being more difficult to ignore, traditional fundraising strategies and community outreach techniques have become less dependable. Social assistance and community resilience have always been anchored by nonprofit organisations (Ramdani, Raja and Kayumova 2022; Demin, Mikhaylova and Pyankova 2023). The goals are still as important as ever, but to succeed in the

digitally first world of today, their methods and instruments must change (Sarkis, Kouhizadeh and Zhu 2021; Gkrimpizi, Peristeras and Magnisalis 2023).

According to Guo and Lee (2023), a digital system uses binary code to process discrete data instead of continuous signals, which makes it extremely accurate and less prone to noise. Computers, cell phones, and telecommunications networks are typical examples of these systems, which are made up of hardware, software, and networks that store, process, and exchange information. Non-profit organisations (NPOs) benefit from digital systems in some ways, including increased outreach and donor engagement through digital platforms, improved operational efficiency through data-driven decision-making and streamlined workflows, and increased accountability and transparency to donors and beneficiaries through online reporting (Cipriano and Za 2024). Better resource management, improved internal communication and teamwork, and innovation to address changing donor and community demands are all made possible by digital tools, which ultimately help NPOs accomplish their missions more successfully (Guo and Lee 2023; Cipriano and Za 2024).

Amawate (2024) posits a digital system as comprised of hardware, data, and software that work together to transform data into information through processing activities. A digital electronic system has memory capabilities since it may also be utilised to hold or store discrete pieces. Almost all digital information-processing systems, including digital computers, are designed with the capacity to store information or data and process it using logical or arithmetic operations at their core. The series of actions taken on the data or information being processed determines how a digital system functions (Amawate 2024).

Nurdiani, Rahmawati, Pogo, and Bakar (2025) add that NPOs can prosper by using digital systems to improve communications to reach a wider audience, increase overall efficiency, and facilitate relationships with volunteers and donors. Change implementation inside a company might provide some difficulties. Leaders must divide the initiative into phases for effective change management to prevent staff from being overburdened by too many changes at once. Additionally, as different employees have different learning styles, think about utilising a variety of training techniques to meet the needs of your staff members. The results show how digital tools like social media and block chain can improve real-time transparency, but they also point out contextual and structural obstacles to their adoption. Promoting board diversity,

professionalisation, and cross-sector cooperation are important suggestions for bolstering governance structures (Nurdiani *et al.* 2025).

Change implementation about the use of digital systems, as stated by Osei (2025), in NPOs might provide many difficulties. Some examples include a lack of digital skills, a lack of funds, opposition to change, and the need to balance donor criteria and current mission-driven activities with new technologies. Osei (2025) suggests that leaders must divide the initiative into phases for effective change management to prevent staff from being overburdened by too many changes at once. Additionally, as different employees have different learning styles, think about utilising a variety of training techniques to meet the needs of your staff members (Osei 2025).

Indications from the view of the authors above revealed that a digital system is essential to satisfy evolving societal demands. For non-profit organisations to be relevant and give back to the community where they serve, they must adapt to the growing trend of people communicating and obtaining information through digital systems. To gain the trust of the public and donors, maintain funding, manage resources ethically, and advance the validity and efficacy of their goal, NPOs must embrace accountability and transparency (Eshet 2023). NPOs can exhibit integrity and appropriate use of contributions by being transparent about their financial data, operational procedures, and results. This builds trust with stakeholders and encourages sustained support (Siyal 2023; Joshi and Chawla 2024).

3.3.1 Accountability in NPOs

To run any organisation, even non-profits, accountability is essential. Serving the public interest is the goal of NPOs, which frequently depend on grants and donations from private citizens, foundations, and governmental organisations (Diab 2021). High accountability is required of non-profits since they are guardians of the public's trust and resources.

Accountability in the context of NPOs refers to their duty and obligation to behave in a responsible, moral, and transparent manner (Miller 2022). It entails answering to stakeholders, including donors, beneficiaries, staff, volunteers, and the general public, for the organisation's choices, actions, and resource utilisation. Financial, program and effect, governance and board, stakeholder, ethical, and legal and regulatory accountability are just a few of the crucial facets that make up accountability in non-profit organisations.

In view of Chu and Luke (2023), accountability in NPOs matters because is significant because donors want to be sure their financial contributions make a significant difference. NPOs accountability gives donors peace of mind that their money is being used wisely and productively. Further support and perhaps referrals to other possible donors are thus encouraged. Regulations and laws apply to NPOs. One of the most important components of accountability is adherence to rules and regulations (Chu and Luke 2023). Fulfilling these responsibilities shows prudent resource management and contributes to the preservation of the company's status in the law and reputation. To carry out their tasks, NPOs rely on the confidence and support of the general public. Assuring stakeholders and donors that their funds are being utilised sensibly and for the right reasons, accountability demonstrations increase openness and trust. Maintaining public confidence is essential to long-term viability and gaining continued support. Frequently, NPOs focus on humanitarian, environmental, or social issues. It is morally required of these groups to exhibit accountability because they seek to improve society. Accountability guarantees that NPOs' actions are consistent with their declared ideals and tenets (Chu and Luke 2023).

Accountability, as described by Duba and Lehohla (2025), is the process by which people and organisations submit to established authorities and are held accountable for their deeds. Clients, partners, members, funders, and the beneficiary groups they serve are all parties to which non-profit organisations must answer. NPOs depend on the public's trust to carry out their work and further their goals. The public's faith in benevolent NGOs is therefore crucial, and they can only do so by upholding moral standards, accountability, and transparency (Duba and Lehohla 2025).

Accountability is crucial for Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs) because it fosters ethical operations, improves reputation, ensures financial transparency and responsible resource use, builds and maintains trust with stakeholders (government, donors, and beneficiaries), and facilitates effective mission fulfilment. To secure continued funding and carry out their selfless aim, non-profit organisations (NPOs) must show that they are dependable resource users and devote themselves to their social mission by disseminating information, facilitating participation, and reporting on results.

3.3.2 Transparency in NPOs

Kraai, Ndevu and Matsiliza (2023) opine transparency as the practice of being open, truthful, and unambiguous in communication and decision-making, which includes disclosing information about a company's operations, is known as transparency. It improves operations by establishing

strong bonds of trust with both customers and staff, encouraging responsibility and moral conduct, facilitating better information flow for decision-making, increasing efficiency by making roles and procedures clearer, and eventually raising employee engagement and customer satisfaction. Being transparent goes beyond simply following the law. It is about empowering people. Public trust is not the only thing that organisations gain when they are transparent about their operations. They benefit from more active community members, more robust relationships, and long-term fundraising (Kraai, Ndevu and Matsiliza 2023).

Transparency, expressly at work, entails management being transparent about their objectives, staff members owning up to their faults and seeking assistance, and companies offering clear lines of communication and simple access to material (Jung 2024). Examples of transparency in the workplace include management being upfront about their objectives, staff members being honest about their mistakes and seeking assistance, and companies offering clear lines of communication and simple access to information. By giving clear, transparent information about decisions and actions, transparency encourages responsibility, builds confidence, and supports open communication. In personal, professional, and governmental contexts, it lowers ambiguity, enhances decision-making, and promotes moral behaviour, all of which result in improved relationships, teamwork, motivation, and overall efficiency (Jung 2024).

Transparency entails accountability, openness, and communication (Wunderlich, Hölig and Ellers 2025). Companies, organisations, governments, and communities all practice transparency. A transparent and equitable recruiting procedure guarantees merit-based selection, draws in talent that is in line with your organisation's goals, and builds trust and equity inside the company. First, standardise the organisation's hiring procedure to create a trustworthy staff. Bias, according to Wunderlich, Hölig and Ellers (2025), is reduced and fairness is promoted by using a systematic, recorded procedure for candidate screening, interviews, and selection. Additionally, this enables an establishment to share expectations with candidates in an open manner (Wunderlich, Hölig and Ellers 2025).

To gain stakeholders' trust, secure funding, and exhibit moral behaviour, non-profit organisations (NPOs) must be transparent about their operations, programmes, governance, and mode of communication. Providing chances for stakeholder engagement, establishing explicit conflict-of-interest procedures, sharing information on programs and their efficacy, and publicly releasing financial statements and yearly reports are all important approaches.

3.3.3 Communication in NPOs

Alfalah, Muneer and Hussain (2022) describe communication as a human activity that unites individuals from all walks of life. It is a way of sending information from one person to another that the recipient understands, so that the sender can respond and act on the information. Parties in communication can interact with one another from different cultural backgrounds and speak different languages through conversation, Alfalah, Muneer and Hussain (2022). Non-profit organisations (NPOs) use a variety of venues to reach the public. They reach out to the larger audience via their websites, email, newsletters, social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram, and conventional media like print, radio, and television. To convey their vision and activities, generate money, and recruit volunteers, they employ a strategic communications plan that helps them identify their target audiences, set objectives, and choose the best media (Alfalah, Muneer and Hussain 2022).

According to Dumlao (2023), communication is a collaborative activity in which two or more people exchange ideas, facts, feelings, and opinions, and each participant creates the meaning for the shared task. For NPOs to establish trust, motivate action, and promote alignment with their mission, they must use clear, engaging messaging that is suited to a variety of audiences, such as donors, volunteers, and employees. Important strategies include encouraging transparency, maintaining a consistent brand voice across many platforms, such as social media and email, employing storytelling and straightforward language, and providing an opportunity for feedback. NPOs may improve internal morale, increase fundraising, and eventually expand their charitable impact by making communication a priority (Dumlao 2023).

All organisational functions are activated and coordinated via communication, which is fundamental to how an organisation operates. When leaders or managers communicate job information to employees in a business setting, they must include facts, ideas, concepts, and opinions in addition to beliefs, attitudes, instructions, and even feelings. Ensuring that communications do not mislead the parties involved at any point during the communication process is the main goal of communication (Mugisho and Umumararungu 2024).

According to Hassan, Amin and Ghoneim (2024), communication is a cooperative activity in which the decoder shares thoughts, feelings, and opinions to get feedback. To convey a message from the originator to the recipient, this idea necessitates both intrapersonal and interpersonal

skills, such as speaking, listening, observing, inquiring, processing, analysing, and evaluating (Hassan, Amin and Ghoneim 2024).

The discussion above demonstrates that, regardless of a person's background, communication is the most crucial element that binds them together. By reading, writing, and exchanging information, people can communicate with one another. In an organisational setting such as NPOs, it is the tool managers utilise to unite people within the internal and external business settings (Mugisho and Umumararungu 2024). In NPOs administration, employee collaboration is greatly aided by communication, which serves as a conduit that unites all department members regardless of their backgrounds and allows them to freely communicate ideas, information, opinions, and beliefs as well as cultural customs.

3.4 NPO Administration

Evans and Knepper (2022) define NPO administration as leadership and organisational responsibilities in social service and NPO organisations. Non-profit administration refers to applying business, leadership, and creative abilities to support a non-profit organisation in its efforts to serve as many people as feasible and operate as efficiently as possible (Dicke and Ott 2023). In non-profit organisations, it is important to realise that the greatest approach to grow an organisation is to invest in its employees. Many NPO management abilities can be taught, while some are natural. It is the responsibility of non-profit organisations to give their employees the proper training opportunities so they can become more effective leaders for their cause. NPOs must give their personnel strong management skills. Examples of these include communication, delegation, strategic planning, public speaking, marketing, problem-solving and relationship-building skills so that they may (and should) develop within their own organisation to enable administrators, leaders, or employees to become modern leaders and streamline their processes (Fuller and Rice 2022; Thomas and Duffett 2025).

3.5 Administrative processes

Any organisation's administration is its quintessence. Administrative, as noted by Joensuu-Salo, Viljamaa and Varamäki (2022), is how verdicts are made, assignments are given and finished, data is collected and shared, and resources are distributed. In view of Bellini and Raglianti (2023), it is the method by which an establishment, organisation or institution completes tasks.

Examples of administrative processes include setting up meetings, processing bills and costs, keeping track of personnel and payroll, responding to customer questions and correspondence, keeping up with office supplies and equipment, and organising mail and document filing systems (Persada and Nabella 2023). These processes are necessary to maintain daily operations and organisational structure in a business (Salami, Tella and Badiru 2023). By guaranteeing that management decisions are impartial, equitable, and consistent, administrative processes contribute to the credibility of management activity (Choudhury, Kim and Ramkumar 2022; Mahmudin 2023).

However, in the global NPOs, insufficient resources, inadequate planning and management, poor leadership and communication, a lack of accountability and corruption, a lack of skilled workers and training, outdated infrastructure, low citizens' participation, and adverse effects from external political and economic circumstances are some of the main causes of poor administrative service delivery (Mampane 2023). NPOs in South Africa are not excluded from global issues, as outmoded, flawed, and unreliable administrative processes impair NPO service delivery.

Sutrisno (2023) observes that effective administration of operations and service delivery, as well as the maintenance of good governance, are hampered by a general lack of management expertise and competence, especially in smaller NPOs. Financial sustainability, which is essential for continuing service delivery, is hampered by an inability to raise enough start-up capital and a failure to prioritise funding as a critical strategic issue (Wansi and Burrell 2023). In addition to harming an NPO's reputation, noncompliance with administrative regulations can make it more difficult for the organisation to draw in contributors and obtain grants or support from the government. It is challenging to improve services and guarantee accountability due to the underdeveloped performance measurement, lack of analytics investment, and ambiguous performance goals (Feng and Greenlee 2024).

3.6 Non-Profit organisations in eThekweni Municipality

NPOs are essential in tackling social advocacy issues and problems for South Africa's marginalised population. The eThekweni municipality is no different, as the municipality's non-profit organisations (NPOs) work in a variety of fields, such as economic development, community development, youth empowerment, and environmental conservation.

Among these are Green Corridors, which is a recognised non-profit organisation that works with the municipality (Spivy 2023). In 2009, Green Corridors was founded as a registered non-profit organisation. The eThekweni Municipality and private players are partners with this body. An impact-driven, socially conscious organisation called Green Corridors desires to ensure that local communities flourish in harmony with their natural surroundings.

In eThekweni Municipality, Innovate Durban was also founded as an NPO, which is contributing to the development of the region. Established as a special-purpose organisation, Innovate Durban (RF) NPC is a registered non-profit organisation that supports innovators, innovation, and the innovation ecosystem through research, programs, and capacity building and skills development (as well as customised programs like design thinking workshops and sprints). Events and both physical and virtual platforms (Innovation Co-Lab) promote the organisation's programs and operations (Spivy 2023).

Additionally, there is Shepherd's Keep Home. This home is the type that offers abused, neglected, and abandoned infants a caring home (child welfare). Colin and Cheryl Pratley established SHEPHERD'S KEEP in 1998 in response to the then-existing HIV/AIDS orphan problem. The number of infants infected with HIV is minuscule at present. Even while ARV prophylaxis has significantly decreased the number of infants with HIV, the effects of parental infections, poverty, drug misuse, etc., are still widespread (Ajibola 2024).

Due to economic challenges, the number of babies who have been abandoned, orphaned, abused, and neglected has unfortunately increased rather than decreased. Unemployment, COVID fatalities, despondency, extreme poverty, and the rise in late-term abortion attempts, which frequently leave new-borns physically or intellectually impaired, have all contributed to the alarmingly high rates of abandonment. Since its founding, Shepherd's Keep's goals have been constant, and its commitment to achieving them has never wavered. The following ideals and ideas guide Shepherd's Keep: abandoned babies' unconditional affection; honesty in the organisation's operations; staff dedication and quality of care; and a commitment to the community's and abandoned babies' ongoing improvement (Below 2024).

In addition to established NPOs, a body called iLambu Global works (Dlamini 2023). A non-profit organisation based in South Africa, iLambu Global works to empower youth by fostering innovation and knowledge sharing to combat climate change and accomplish the Sustainable

Development Goals of the UN. To promote digital innovation for sustainable solutions, the organisation links South African entrepreneurs and students with peers from across the world, especially through its Next Generation Digital Action program in partnership with the Technical University of Denmark (Dlamini 2023). Furthermore, iLambu Global promotes local impact through events like their food drive for hunger relief and participates in community-based projects like the Youth Water Investment Hackathon at the AU–AIP Africa Water Investment Summit (Dlamini 2023).

Prominent among the contributors of NPOs to the eThekweni Municipality in South Africa is World Changers Academy (WCA). The goal of the eThekweni Municipality, South Africa-based non-profit World Changers Academy (WCA) is to empower youth by offering leadership development and life skills courses (John and Cox 2018). WCA focuses on high school students and young people in the 18–35 age range. WCA offers life skills seminars at libraries, community halls, and other locations in many, primarily impoverished, urban and rural communities in and around the city, in addition to its full-time, residential leadership programs at its leadership centre on the outskirts of Durban (Luxton 2022).

NPOs are leading the charge to solve the most important challenges facing the communities of eThekweni Municipality, from healthcare, education, and unemployment, particularly among young people, to poverty and inequality. NPOs are essential in bridging the gaps left by inadequate or unavailable government resources. NPOs frequently act as rays of hope in a setting characterised by socioeconomic inequality by providing resources and support to underserved areas. These organisations play a crucial role in promoting equitable development and advancing progress, whether they are supplying healthcare services in rural areas, fighting for human rights, or giving young people jobs. In eThekweni Municipality, NPOs' emphasis on community empowerment is among their most important achievements. NPOs collaborate with locals through a variety of programs to pinpoint problems, create long-term solutions, and increase capacity for sustained growth.

A possible route to economic development is the partnership between corporations and non-profit organisations. They may create long-lasting change and open the door to a more affluent and inclusive future by coordinating tactics and utilising resources.

3.7 Summary

Digitalisation of NPOs is the process of incorporating digital systems (tools and technologies) into their daily operations. To accomplish their objectives, organisations need to be able to make data-driven decisions, engage stakeholders more successfully, and streamline procedures. By focusing on areas where digital adoption can have the biggest impact, NPOs with limited resources can begin their journey toward digital transformation by deploying digital solutions gradually.

The procedure can be made easier to handle by utilising affordable technologies for NPOs. NPOs with a high level of digital maturity have successfully incorporated digital tools and technologies into their programs. They frequently have clear digital transformation strategies, effective data management systems, and digital capabilities for the workplace. They are distinguished from NPOs that have not attained the same degree of digital maturity by this. When the NPO sector successfully implements digital transformation, it can result in better stakeholder involvement, more effective fundraising, cost savings through streamlined processes, and a greater impact on the organisation's mission. The next chapter will focus on the methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The methodology for the study is described and justified in this chapter, based on the research topic and objectives given in Chapter One, and supported by the review of the theoretical frameworks and literature covered in Chapters Two and Three. The research design, research philosophy, population, sampling, data collection approaches, research instruments, pilot testing, data analysis, reliability and validity issues are all discussed.

4.2 Research Design

Research design incorporates a strategy or plan that connects theoretical study problems with empirical research in a comprehensive manner. Flick (2014) explains that the research design includes determining the necessary information, selecting appropriate data collection and analysis methods, and outlining how the data will be utilised to address the research questions. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2014), the research design acts as a blueprint for attaining the research objectives and providing answers to the research questions. Pandey and Pandey (2021) describes the research design as a guides the path and approach taken to accomplish the research objectives, creating a framework for systematic and structured data collection and analysis for the research study. A well-designed research study aligns all its foundations to promote effectiveness and productivity of the study (Dannels 2018). It ensures that all components of the study work together flawlessly to achieve the desired outcomes.

A research design is an inclusive strategy that connects theoretical study problems to practical empirical research. Sekaran and Bougie, (2016) highlighted that a research design determines the necessary information, data collection and analysis methods, and how the collected data will be utilised to address the researcher's research questions. In this study, a qualitative approach was employed. Specifically, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion (qualitative). The target population for the study consisted NPO staff. Specifically, data was gathered from NPO owners and managers (semi-structured interviews) and NPO administrative employees (focus group discussions) representing the urban community NPOs. The selection of this research design was based on its potential to address the research questions effectively and overcome any research challenges by generating usable data for analysis, ultimately aiding in resolving the research questions.

4.2.1 Exploratory research

An exploratory research approach was used in this study aimed to answer questions such as ‘What’ and ‘Who’ and aim to analyse specific phenomena within an organisation or environment, (Business Research Methodology, 2021). The purpose was to find out what is trendy and find new insights about the occurrence (Regent Business School, 2012). Exploratory research in this study is firstly to define and explore the research problem based on the occurrence, secondly, face to face interviews and focus group discussion was conducted with participants who have practical experience with the occurrence to be studied and can contribute to the study by being competent (Kothari 2004).

4.3 Research Philosophy

It is important to provide a broad description of the various research philosophies, highlighting each role in improving research hypotheses, expertise, and the research environment (Žukauskas, Vveinhardt and Andriukaitienė 2018). Hypothesis may firstly appear as a logical statement, that it is influenced by the researcher's expertise and perceptions, which are shaped through academic work. In a parallel manner, categorise research philosophy as a process that involves theories and ideas related to the development of expertise (Saunders et al. 2015). The authors argue that a high-quality research study entails a careful alignment between and the chosen research philosophy and the research design. Blumberg, Cooper, and Schindler (2014) state that consideration must be reviewed about the research design, as it must be full-bodied to effectively support the chosen research philosophy to guarantee a high level of quality in the research output. The authors strongly emphasise the significance of alignment between the research design and the research philosophy. Similarly, Kornberger and Mantere (2020) highlight the role of research philosophy in managing the selection of appropriate methods and approaches. The authors emphasise that research philosophy allows researchers to explore several viable and accessible methods, aiding in the alteration of appropriate approaches for the research study. The research philosophies include the following:

- Positivism
- Interpretivism
- Pragmatism
- Realism

These research philosophies offer researchers with different perspectives and frameworks to approach a research study, each with its individual methodologies, assumptions and implications. The research philosophies are discussed in detail below:

- I. **Positivism** is a philosophical perspective that emphasizes the use of scientific methods and observation to study and understand the social world. Positivists aim to achieve objectivity and value neutrality in their research, focusing on observable facts rather than subjective interpretations. In this research philosophy, quantitative data collection methods, such as surveys or experiments, and statistical analysis to test hypotheses and draw conclusions in the research study (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020).
- II. **Interpretivism**, on the other hand, is a philosophy of social science that emphasizes subjective understanding, meaning, and interpretation of human behavior. Interpretivists argue that social reality is shaped by individuals through their experiences, beliefs, and values. They believe that social phenomena cannot be fully understood or explained solely through quantitative methods but require qualitative approaches that take into account individuals' perspectives, culture, and context (Scauso, 2020).
- III. **Pragmatism** is a philosophical approach that focuses on practical consequences and aims to find solutions to real-world problems. Pragmatists value experience and experimentation, and they believe that truth is determined by the usefulness and effectiveness of ideas or actions. In the social sciences, pragmatists believe that knowledge should be practical, applicable, and able to inform action and decision-making (Ormerod, 2021).
- IV. **Realism** is a philosophical perspective that asserts the existence of an objective reality that exists independently of human perception. Realists believe that there are facts, laws, and structures in the social world that shape human behavior and social relations. They argue that social phenomena can be studied objectively and that the social world can be understood through empirical research and the identification of causal relationships (Lawani, 2021).

To summarize, positivism emphasizes scientific methods and observation, interpretivism focuses on subjective understanding and interpretation, pragmatism seeks practical solutions, and realism posits an objective reality. Each perspective offers different insights and approaches to studying and understanding the social world, and researchers may adopt one or more of these perspectives

depending on their research questions and objectives. Table 4.1 compares the methodologies in terms of the basic paradigms.

Table 4.1: Paradigms: terminology, methods, and methods of data collection

Paradigms	Terminology	Methods	Methods of data collection
Positivism	Objective, casual	Quantitative	Experiments, surveys, statistical analysis
Interpretivism	Subjective, context, meaning	Qualitative	Observations, Interviews, focus groups, textual analysis
Pragmatism	Practical	Mixed (involves both Quantitative and Qualitative)	Mixed methods (combination, of interviews, surveys, focus groups etc.)
Realism	Social justice, power structures	Qualitative	Participatory research, Critical discourse analysis, ethnography

Source: Creswell and Poth (2016) and Mertens (2019)

The principal orientation of this study is aligned with the Interpretivism paradigm, which emphasises subjective understanding, meaning, and interpretation of human behavior. The approach was in line with the study's objective. The approach allowed the researcher to be

flexible in the study design, choice of data collection instruments, and methodological decisions, thereby adapting the research strategies to the specific nodes of the research question. By accepting the flexibility, the interpretivism philosophy acknowledged that different problems may require different methods and that no individual approach fits all circumstances. In addition, the interpretivism research method placed a strong emphasis on practical solutions and tangible results. The approach is aligned with the pragmatic philosophy's commitment to addressing practical issues and finding appropriate solutions. Moreover, within the interpretivism paradigm, social reality is moulded by individuals through their experiences, beliefs, and values (Scauso, 2020).

4.4 Sampling

Headley and Plano Clark (2020: 146) agree that the sampling exemplifies the type of research study approach and the intended path the researcher chooses in the study. It provides insight into the quality of the inferences made by the researcher after analysing the findings. There are two main types of sampling methods: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling techniques involve random selection, where each member of the population has a known and equal chance of being included in the sample. On the other hand, Taherdoost (2021:15) explained that non-probability sampling relies on a researcher's judgement to select individuals or elements that are suitable (convenient) for the purpose of the study. Table 4.2 compares the two sampling methods:

Table 4.2: A comparison between non-probability sampling and probability sampling methods

Comparison	Non-probability sampling method	Probability sampling method
Also known as	Non-random selection	Random selection
Definition	A sampling technique whereby members of the population are selected purposely based on a criteria and not every member of the	A sampling technique that allows each member of the population has a chance to participate in the research study sample.

	population has a chance of being included in the sample.	
Research approach	Exploratory	Decisive
Research	Qualitative	Quantitative
Outcome	Biased	Neutral
Approach	Particular	Impartial
Conclusion	Systematic	Numerical
Theory	Created	Examined

Source: Pace (2021)

4.4.1 Sampling method

Purposive sampling was used to select the urban community NPO's for this study. According to Campbell et al (2020:654), purposive sampling method is a non-probability sampling technique wherein the researcher in which participants are selected because they have characteristics relevant to the study. Unlike probability study, where sampling methods focuses on every member of the population has an equal opportunity, purposive sampling is deliberate and focuses on selecting individuals who are most likely to provide valuable insights into the particular problem being explored (Rahman 2023:52). The decision to limit the research sample size is justified by Mthuli et al (2022:810), several key considerations as discussed by below:

- **Qualitative approach:** Since this study employed a qualitative methodology, the emphasis is on richness of data rather than breadth. Engaging actively with a smaller subset of NPOs, allows for the collection of detailed narratives and experiences that would be invaluable for drawing meaningful conclusions.
- **Depth of analysis:** By concentrating on a smaller number of NPOs, the researcher engaged more thoroughly with each organisation, allowing for comprehensive qualitative insights. This depth of analysis is crucial for understanding the complexities and nuances inherent in each organisation's operations, strategies and impact.
- **Resource constraints:** Practical limitations including time, budget and available resources, necessitate a more targeted approach. Engaging with a smaller sample enabled

the researcher to allocate sufficient resources to each case, ensuring high-quality data collection and analysis.

- **Focused objectives:** The research aimed to address specific questions that require detailed case studies rather than broad surveys. By selecting a limited number of NPOs that represent diverse sectors or demographic, the researcher derived tailored insights that contribute meaningfully to the existing body of knowledge.
- **Homogeneity and relevance:** the chosen NPOs was selected based on the relevance on the study's objectives, ensuring that they are representative of the specific themes being investigated. This strategic selection had facilitated the identification of common patterns and trends that are critical for understanding the broader landscape of the NPOs operations.

The selection criteria developed by the researcher, was used to select NPO's participating in the research study would be the following:

- **Relevance:** The NPO should be engaging or impact on the communities in the research area as the research study, which is eThekweni region in KwaZulu-Natal.
- **Experience:** The NPO must have considerable experience in the field, so they possess the knowledge and abilities to participate in the study
- **Credibility:** The NPO should have a good track record of implementing effective programs and using resources efficiently
- **Availability and willingness:** The NPO should be available throughout the study's duration and express willingness to cooperate in the research study.
- **Ethical regulations:** The NPO should follow professional and ethical conducts in its organisation practices or projects.
- **Independent status:** Preferably, an NPO not affiliated with any biasing or harming entity

Therefore, the goal of the researcher was to obtain participants from urban community NPO in eThekweni Municipality using the above criteria. Information gathered from participants had to be corroborated to enhance reliability and quality.

4.5 Target population

The ‘target population’ refers to the specific group of individuals or entities that the research aims to study (Mweshi and Sakyi 2020:182). This group is defined based on certain characteristics relevant to the research questions and objectives. Identifying a clear target population is crucial for ensuring that the research findings are valid, reliable and applicable to the desired context (Rahman 2023:50). In this study, the target population consisted of three distinct groups:

- NPO owners or founders
- NPO managers
- NPO administrative employees

Below in Table 4.3, Meyer and Barker (2020:60) highlight a detailed description of the three distinct groups:

Table 4.3: Detailed description of NPO Distinct Groups

Distinct group	Detailed description
NPO owners or founders	NPO owners or founders are individuals who establish the NPO. These individuals are often driven by a mission to address a particular social issue or community need. The characteristics of the NPO owner or founders are typically passionate, committed and knowledgeable about the organisation. These NPO owners or founders may bring specific expertise, personal experiences or professional backgrounds that shape the organisation’s mission and objectives. NPO owners or founders also include NPOs board members or trustees who are responsible for the governance and oversight of the NPOs.
NPO Managers	NPO Managers lead NPO’s employees for the day to day operations of the organisation. The leadership includes implementing policies set by the board and manage NPO staff and program. The characteristics involved as an NPO

	manager typically involve a strong leadership skill with excellent communication skills and a deep understanding of the organisation mission and field of the NPO.
NPO administrative employees	NPO administrative employees carry out the admin operational tasks of the NPO, including documenting operational tasks of the NPO, organising and documenting fundraising activities, developing marketing initiatives for the NPO and any administration task within NPO. The NPO administration employee's characteristics might have obtained a diverse educational backgrounds and consist of skills relevant to the organisation's mission. NPOs administration employees often dedicate to the social change and many have experience in advocacy, social work or community organising.

(Source: Meyer and Barker 2020:60)

Collectively, these three distinct group of stakeholders play a critical role in NPO governance, management and operations. These stakeholders contribute to the organisations mission and help ensure the NPO's sustainability and impact in the community. The commitment, passion and expertise of these stakeholders are essential for the success of an NPO. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the following target population was selected:

- A) Ten (10) NPO owners
- B) Six (06) NPO Managers
- C) Forty (40) NPO Administrative employees

The decision to include NPO administrative employees in this study is because of the participant's expertise and role in the study's subject matter. On the other hand, the selection of NPOs owners, managers were influenced by the literature reviewed which highlighted the participant's importance in administrative processes.

4.6 Qualitative approach

Qualitative research is a research approach that emphasizes on understanding and interpreting the experiences, meanings, and perceptions of individuals or groups (Creswell and Poth 2016). In

qualitative research, the researcher gathers data through methods such as observations, interviews, focus groups, or analysis of texts and documents. Natow (2020) explains that the qualitative research design is flexible, allowing for a developing and interactive process of data collection and analysis. Researchers actively engage with participants, seeking to understand the lived beliefs, experiences, values, and social contexts. Data analysis involves identifying themes, patterns, and connections within the collected data, often through techniques such as coding and thematic analysis (Kiger and Varpio 2020). The findings of qualitative research deliver a deep understanding of the research area and insights into the density and diversity of human experiences. Building on the qualitative research approach, it can also contribute to theory development, inform policy and practice, and provide a foundation for further research (Doyle et al 2020). However, it is significant to note that qualitative research does not intend for the generalise towards a larger population but focuses on the understanding of specific contexts and generating rich, contextualised knowledge (Hays and McKibben 2021).

Furthermore, qualitative research approach offers researchers more understanding into a research area, comprising of open-ended questions, expressing individual experiences on the subject matter than a quantitative approach (Silverman 2016: 39). Therefore, face-to-face interviews was conducted with the following participants,

- Ten (10) NPO's owners
- Six (06) NPOs manager

Moreover, approximately four (4) focus group discussions occurred with sixty (40) NPO administrative employees.

4.7 Measuring Instrument

A research measuring instrument is a systematic tool or device used to collect, quantify, or evaluate data in a study (Chen *et al.*2022:553). For the purpose of this study, qualitative research instruments were used, namely face-to-face interview and focus group discussion. Mio *et al.* (2022:368) highlighted that the design of the measuring instrument should align with the objectives of the research study, ensuring that the data collected is effective and captures the relevant information required for the study.

4.7.1 Face-to-Face Interview

Saarijärvi and Bratt (2021:393) clarify that during interviews, the researcher would obtain all the information required and gives respondents the freedom to respond in their own words to provide as much details as they offer. Ten (10) face-to-face interviews occurred with NPO owners and six (06) face-to-face interviews managers. A semi-structured interview tool was used to guide the interview (Annexure A). The main advantage of face-to-face interviews is that it allowed the researcher to ensure that participants understands the questions being questioned.

4.7.1.1 Recruitment process for interviews and focus group discussion

The researcher had initially obtained approval from Durban University of Technology, Accounting and Informatics Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) and Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC) for ethical clearance and approval (refer to Annexure E). This was to ensure that ethical guidelines were followed throughout the study. After receiving approval, the researcher had obtained Gatekeeper permission from Department of Social Development (DSD) in Kwa-Zulu Natal (refer to Annexure F and G). This was conducted to ensure that the researcher could gain access to NPOs in eThekweni Municipality.

Thereafter, once Gatekeeper permission was granted by DSD and an ethical clearance number was given by the university. Thereafter, the researcher had emailed NPOs based in eThekweni region to schedule an interview appointment with NPO owner and separately NPO managers. Additionally, the researcher requested a suitable time and date to conduct focus group discussions with NPO administrative employees. Thereafter, the researcher emailed the research study letter of information and consent form to each participant to review. Upon voluntary approval from each of the participant approves the interview and focus group discussion, the researcher had scheduled an appropriate date and time for the interview or focus group discussion at the NPO establishment.

4.7.1.2 Face-to-face interview schedule research instrument

The face-to-face interview with NPO owners and managers consisted of five (5) sections. Section A focused on collecting data related to the background information of the participants. This section aimed to provide contextual information about the participants which could be useful for understanding any potential relationships or patterns in the data. Section B focused on the exploration of the current administrative processes used by the NPOs in eThekweni Municipality. It consisted of open-ended questions, which required participants to respond about the experience

with the current administrative processes. These open ended questions aimed to gather in-depth qualitative data that could be analysed and compared between different participants.

Following the opened questions based of the current administrative process, Section C focused on the current digital technologies adopted by the NPOs in eThekweni Municipality. This section allowed for participants to express the level of agreement or disagreement with technology usage at the NPO. Section D fixated on assessing the factors that affect the administrative processes at the NPO in eThekweni Municipality. The participant response allowed for the measurement of attitudes, opinions, and perceptions on the challenges experienced by the NPO.

Lastly, Section E introduced the opened questions based on the development a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs. This section allowed participants to provide detailed and free responses, offering them an opportunity to express his/her thoughts, opinions, and experiences in own persona.

4.7.1.3 Face-to-face interviews with NPO owners and managers

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with NPO owners and managers who expressed availability and willingness to participate in the research study. The researcher recognised the importance of gathering insights from NPO owners in eThekweni Municipality to gain a comprehensive understanding of the administrative processes within the NPO.

Ideally, the researcher aimed to interview at least one NPO from each district from eThekweni Municipality. For this study, ten (10) NPO owners and six (06) NPO managers were available and agreed to participate in the study. While this number may be smaller than initially anticipated, it can still provide valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of the interviewed NPO owners.

Semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility in the questioning process, enabling the participants to share own thoughts and experiences in a more open-ended manner. The researcher prepared a list of twenty-four (24) questions to guide the discussion during these interviews. These questions revolved around topics such as exploring the current administrative processes used by NPOs, establish the digital technologies are adopted by NPOs, assess the factors that affect the administrative processes used by NPOs and what should be included in a digital system for efficient administrative processes in the NPO.

4.7.2 Schedule for face-to-face interview with NPO owners

Face-to-face interviews took place from 02nd February 2025 till 16th May 2025. The pseudonyms P01 – P10 were used to represent the participants interviewed. Below in Table 4.4 highlights the date and time interview schedule with NPO owners:

Table 4.4: Interview schedule details with NPO owners from eThekweni Municipality

Participant No.	Type of NPO	Date and day	Time	Location
P01	Community welfare NPO based in Phoenix.	25 th February 2025 (Tuesday)	10h00 till 11h00	NPO site
P02	NPO Shelter for abused women based in Chatsworth.	28 th February 2025 (Friday)	09h00 till 10h30	NPO site
P03	Community feeding NPO based in Durban.	13 th April 2025 (Tuesday)	11h00 till 12h30	NPO site
P04	Community feeding NPO based in KwaMashu.	29 th April 2025 (Wednesday)	10h00 till 11h30	NPO site
P05	Community NPO for children with disabilities based in Overport.	24 th April 2025 (Wednesday)	12h00 till 13h45	NPO site
P06	HIV/AIDS Community NPO based in Umlazi.	08 th May 2025 (Thursday)	10h00 till 12h00	NPO site

P07	Drug rehabilitation NPO based in Durban.	09 th May 2025 (Friday)	09h00 till 10h40	NPO site
P08	Soup Kitchen NPO based in Central Durban.	11 th May 2025 (Sunday)	13h30 till 14h20	NPO site
P09	Homeless Shelter for Women and children NPO based in North Durban.	14 th May 2025 (Wednesday)	10h30 till 12h20	NPO site
P10	Albinism community NPO based in Pinetown.	16 th May 2025 (Friday)	11h30 till 12h20	NPO site

4.7.3 Schedule for face-to-face interview with NPO managers

Face-to-face interviews took place from 25th February 2025 till 08th May 2025. Initially, 10 NPO managers had agreed to participate in the research study. However, 2 NPO managers had withdrawn from the study due to work commitments. The remaining 2 NPO supervisors had cancelled the interview sessions and withdrew from the study. This had resulted to only six (06) NPO managers participating in the research study.

The pseudonyms P11 – P16 were used to represent the participants interviewed. On the next page in Table 4.5, the date and time interview schedule with NPO managers are presented.

Table 4.5: Interview schedule details with NPO managers

Participant No.	Type of NPO	Date and day	Time	Location
P11	Community welfare NPO based in Phoenix.	25 th February 2025 (Tuesday)	10h00 till 11h00	NPO site
P12	NPO Shelter for abused women based in Chatsworth.	28 th February 2025 (Friday)	09h00 till 10h30	NPO site
P13	Community feeding NPO based in Durban.	13 th April 2025 (Tuesday)	11h00 till 12h30	NPO site
P14	Community feeding NPO based in KwaMashu.	29 th April 2025 (Wednesday)	10h00 till 11h30	NPO site
P15	Community NPO for children with disabilities based in Overport.	24 th April 2025 (Wednesday)	12h00 till 13h45	NPO site
P16	HIV/AIDS Community NPO based in Umlazi.	08 th May 2025 (Thursday)	10h00 till 12h00	NPO site

At the time of the face-to-face interview, each participant was requested to sign a consent form (refer to Annexure A). This form had outlined the study, the benefits and extent of confidentiality. Before the commencement of the interview, the participant was notified of his right to participate was voluntarily and that the participant had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The researcher also requested permission to audio tape the interview session only with the respective

participant's permission. If audio recording was denied, the participants did allow for the researcher to manually transcribe the interview.

4.8 Focus group discussion

It is another alternative of data collection method, where discussions led by a researcher and open discussions can be held in a groups of participants. However, may not be fruitful as one or two dominant people may monopolise the conversation, and the researcher could lose the attention of the quieter respondents, who would shy away from participating (Business Research Methodology 2021). The four (04) focus group discussion was held with administrative employees of NPOs.

4.8.1 Focus group discussion research instrument

The focus group discussion with NPO administrative employees consisted of five (5) sections. Section A focused on obtaining data related to the background information of the participants. This section aimed to provide contextual information about the participants which could be useful for understanding any potential relationships or patterns in the data. Section B focused on the exploration of the current administrative processes used by the NPOs in eThekweni Municipality. It consisted of open-ended questions, which required participants to respond about the experience with the current administrative processes. These open ended questions aimed to gather in-depth qualitative data that could be analysed and compared between different participants.

Succeeding the opened questions based of the current administrative process, Section C focused on the current digital technologies adopted by the NPOs in eThekweni Municipality. This section allowed for participants to express the level of agreement or disagreement with technology usage at the NPO. Section D focused on assessing the factors that affect the administrative processes at the NPO in eThekweni Municipality. Lastly, Section E introduced the opened questions based on the development a new digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs. This section allowed participants to provide detailed and free responses, offering the administrative employees the opportunity to express his/her thoughts, opinions, and experiences in own persona.

4.8.2 Schedule for focus group discussion with NPO administrative employees

The four (04) focus group discussion occurred from 27th February 2025 till 30th May 2025. Initially, 60 NPO administrative employees had agreed to participate in the research study. However, overall 15 NPO administrative employees had withdrawn from the study due to work commitments. The remaining 5 NPO administrative employee's voluntary did not want to

participate in the research study. This had resulted to only forty (40) NPO administrative employees participating in the research study. For each focus group discussion, NPO administrative employees were invited from different community NPO within eThekweni municipality to participant in the focus group discussion. Namely, Durban CBD, Chatsworth, Phoenix and Verulam districts. The pseudonyms P17 – P52 were used to represent the participants from the focus group discussion. Below in Table 4.6, the date and time for the focus group discussion schedule with NPO administrative employees are presented.

Table 4.6: Focus group discussion schedule details with NPO administrative employees

Focus group discussion no.	Participants (N)	Date and day	Time	Location
1	N10 P17 – P26	27 th February 2025 (Thursday)	09h00 – 10h00	Verulam NPO site
2	N06 P27 – P32	07 th April 2025 (Monday)	09h00 – 10h00	Durban CBD NPO site
3	N15 P33 – P47	10 th May 2025 (Saturday)	10h30 – 12h20	Phoenix NPO site
4	N09 P48 – P52	30 th May 2025 (Friday)	13h30 – 15h40	Pinetown NPO site

4.9 Data collection and analysis

Primary data is collected by the researcher directly from participants by interviews, focus groups, mail or computerized surveys to address a question of a study (Velentgas et al. 2013: 109). In this study, the qualitative data instruments included the face-to-face semi-structured interviews with NPOs owners, managers and focus group discussion with employees based in the NPOs based in eThekweni municipality in Kwa-Zulu Natal.

In South Africa, NPOs can voluntarily register the NPOs operations with the Department of Social Development (Department of Social Development 2023). Once registered, NPOs annual reports must be submitted within nine months after the end of their financial year. The registered NPO can voluntarily request for deregistration of their organisation. The Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Social Development database indicates that there is a total of 625 NPOs in the eThekweni Region (Department of Social Development 2023). For the purpose of this study, only Urban NPO's based in the eThekweni Region of Kwa-Zulu Natal were selected.

Urban NPOs have an exclusive development network position due to, midway between donor's beneficiaries and locational advantage. They operate in large metropolitan areas with infrastructure that is often significantly better than rural areas of the country, for example- a transportation centre and communication to remote regions, international airport, comfortable hotels in city centre, specifically to the governmental offices. Location as a reserve makes digital transformation and accountability possible.

4.10 Data collection

The researcher reassured that the participants' that their confidentiality would be maintained at all times and that all data collected would be secured in an anonymised formality.

4.10.1 Data collection for face-to-face semi-structured interviews

The face-to-face interviews consisted of a semi-structured interview schedules to establish a conversational discussion between the researcher and participant. It was also used to guide the topic discussion for the interview. The face-to-face interview duration would be approximately 60 minutes. In instance when participants did not give permission to be audio recorded the researcher requested for permission to transcript the discussion manually. The venue for the face-to-face interview was the NPO premises, in order to observe the participant and environment. Qualitative data analysis was carried out with the transcriptions of the data mentioned above, using thorough content and thematic analysis. The researcher would identify themes and sub-theme to interpreted the results of the qualitative data and compared the findings with literature in the discussion section of the study.

4.10.2 Data collection for focus group discussion

The focus group discussion consisted of a semi-structured discussion schedule to establish a conversational group discussion between the researcher and the participants. It was used to guide the topic discussion for the focus group discussion. The duration for the focus group discussion

was approximately 30 to 60 minutes. In instance when participants did not give permission to be audio recorded the researcher requested for permission to transcript the discussion manually. The venue for the focus group discussion was a centralised NPO site per region. Qualitative data analysis was transcribed of the data mentioned above, using thorough content and thematic analysis. The researcher identified themes and sub-themes and thereafter were discussed.

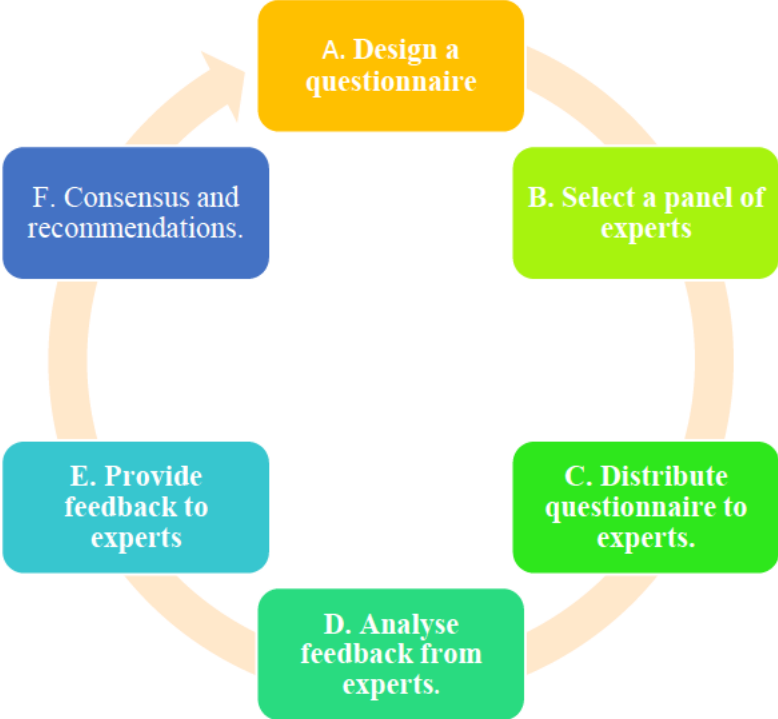
4.11 Data Management

For the purpose of this study, aliases were used, and the code linking data to individuals would be securely stored. The researcher and the supervisors would have access to the data, and the researcher would ensure that data are maintained in confidentiality. The researcher ensured that information arising from an individual interview or focus group discussion, would not be discussed to identify a participant. Audio information were reviewed at a private place, and data would be relocated to a personal computer protected by a unique PIN. Field notes were stored in locked cabinets where only the researcher and supervisor/s would have access. Electronic data will be deleted permanently from a personal computer, field notes will be shredded, and audiotape will be incinerated after five years. In the dissemination of the study, individuals were anonymized to protect his or her identity. Letters from participant observation would be written in detailed descriptions (as already been mentioned above) to provide a word picture of the work of the NPO owner, manager, or administrator in the urban NPO's and be able to understand the processes of accountability mechanisms in the project implementations. Nonverbal cues were added for context.

4.12 Delphi methods

The Delphi method is a structured communication technique often used in forecasting, decision-making, and policy analysis (Cuhls 2023:14). It involves gathering input from a panel of experts through a series of a brief questionnaires or interviews, with the goal of reaching a consensus on a specific topic (Naisola-Ruiter 2022:93). On the next page in Figure 4.1, is an explanation of how the Delphi method can be applied to develop a digital system for NPO administration processes in eThekweni Municipality.

Figure 4.1: Delphi method applied for the development of a digital system for NPO administration processes.



(Niederberger *et al.* 2021:694)

A) Define objectives and scope

The researcher created a structured questionnaire to gather insights about the digital system developed for NPO administration. Question included about user experience, security requirements, data management, compliance needs, and integration capabilities with existing administration systems.

B) Select a panel of experts

The researcher would assemble a diverse group of stakeholders, including NPO leaders, Information Communication Technological (ICT) and Information System experts. These individuals were selected based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement in NPO administration and digital technology.

C) Design the questionnaire

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to the expert panel for individual responses. Open-ended answers to gain comprehensive insights were encouraged.

D) Analyse feedback from experts

The researcher collected and summarised the responses. Common themes, major concerns, and suggestions for features or improvements were identified.

E) Provide feedback to experts

The researcher shared the summarised findings with the panel lists and provide a clear understanding emerges on the key features and requirements of the digital system.

F) Consensus and recommendations

The researcher compiled a report that outlines the consensus reached by the panel, along with prioritised recommendations for the digital system's functionalities and design.

This report should include actionable steps for the development phase, addressing technical specifications, user needs, training, and implementation strategies.

The Delphi method facilitates a systematic approach to developing a digital system for NPO administration in eThekweni Municipality by leveraging the expertise and insights of various stakeholders. This collaborative process ensures that the resulting system effectively addresses the actual needs and challenges faced by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality. By highlighting consensus and recommendation, the method fosters a robust foundation for successful implementation and long-term sustainability.

4.13 Scope and limitations of this study

When conducting a research study focused on the development of a digital system for the implementation of administrative processes in community urban NPOs in the eThekweni Municipality, it is essential to establish clear inclusion and exclusion criteria. Dekkers et al (2022:25) discussed that an criteria help to ensure that the study population is relevant to your research objectives and that the findings are meaningful. By using Dekkers et al (2022) themes, the following inclusion and exclusions for an NPO research study was developed by the researcher below:

4.13.1 Inclusion criteria for the study

These criteria define who is eligible to participate in the study:

- A) Type of Organisation

- Must be a registered urban NPOs operating within the eThekweni Municipality under the Department of Social Development in Kwa-Zulu Natal.
- Focused on community development or community social services.

B) Operational Duration

- The NPOs should be operational for at least two years to ensure it has established administrative processes and can provide relevant insights.

C) Staff Composition

- Participants must include individuals involved in decision-making or administrative roles, such as directors or managers and administrative employees.

D) Technology Use

- Organisations should currently use or be open to adopting digital tools in their administrative processes, whether they are basic (e.g., Microsoft Word) or advanced (e.g., specialized software).

E) Languages

- Participants should be proficient in the languages used for research (e.g., English, isiZulu) to facilitate effective communication during interviews.

4.13.2 Exclusion criteria for the study

These criteria define who is not eligible to participate in the study:

A) Type of Organisation

- Organisations that are not classified as non-profits (e.g., for-profit businesses, governmental entities).

B) Size of Organisation

- Very small organisations with minimal administrative processes (e.g., those with fewer than two staff members) may be excluded, as they may not have the complexity in their processes that the study aims to address.

C) Operational Duration

- Newly established NPOs (operating for less than two years) may not have sufficient experience with administrative processes or sufficient data to contribute meaningful insights.

D) Lack of Engagement

- NPOs that have previously expressed a lack of interest in digital transformation or those not actively involved in improving their administrative capabilities.

Establishing these inclusion and exclusion criteria assisted the researcher to focus the study on the most relevant participants, thereby enhancing findings. By targeting NPOs with appropriate characteristics and experiences, the research had generated actionable insights that inform the development of digital systems to be tailored to the specific needs of community NPOs in the eThekweni Municipality.

4.14 Delimitations

Delimitations allows the researcher to limit the scope and explain the boundaries within the research study (Kuada 2012: 123). The delimitations are in the researchers' control. Delimiting factors included the choice of objectives, the research questions, the variables, the theoretical framework adopted for the study and the population investigated. The research study was linked to NPOs owners, managers and employees based in the KwaZulu - Natal province.

4.15 Data quality control

To ensure data quality in this study, the research objectives and data requirements were clearly defined, enabling a focused approach to data collection and ensuring the collected data's relevance. Pilot testing was conducted to identify and address any issues or challenges prior to the actual data collection phase.

A pilot study is a preliminary exercise intended to test and refine research instruments such as interview guides or focus group discussion protocols, before embarking on a larger-scale study (Dźwigoł 2020:6). Pilot study assists with the process to identify potential issues, improve data collection strategies, and enhance the overall quality of the research (Pearson et al 2020:3). In this study, a pilot study of the face-to-face interview was conducted with a sample of two (02) NPO owners and one (01) NPO manager. Additionally, a pilot study of the focus group discussion interview scheduled was conducted with six (06) NPO administrative employees. The pilot study of the interview schedule and focus group discussion schedule was to ensure that the research study's objectives and research instruments were aligned.

After collecting responses from the pilot study participants, the data were analysed and examined. The researcher and the supervisors reviewed the responses and identified any questions that were unclear or required improvement. This process involved scrutinising the answers to ensure that the questions were understandable and stimulated the desired information. Based on the analysis and feedback received during the pilot study, there was no revisions and improvements required to the interview schedule and focus group discussion schedule. The aim was to enhance the clarity and effectiveness of the questions, ensuring that they accurately captured the information required for the main study.

The data collected from these participants during the pilot study were not included in the final analysis of the main study. Instead, their participation served to refine the instrument question and optimise its effectiveness for the subsequent data collection with the larger sample. Conducting a pilot study of research instruments like interviews and focus group discussions is a critical step in qualitative research. It ensures that the tools used for data collection are effective, clear, and appropriate for the target population, ultimately enhancing the credibility and reliability of the research findings.

4.15.1 Credibility

To ensure credibility in the study, the researcher engaged appropriate data collection techniques with quality control measures, addressed potential biases to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and representativeness of the collected data. Transparency and ethical considerations contributed significantly to credibility. The researcher openly disclosed any conflicts of interest, funding sources, and potential biases that could influence the study's outcomes. The study adhered to ethical guidelines and protocols, including obtaining informed consent from participants, safeguarding privacy, and confidentiality, and safeguarding the welfare of the participants.

4.15.2 Transferability

In this study, the researcher provided rich and detailed descriptions of the research methodology, data collection techniques, and context of the study. By providing this documentation, other researchers could evaluate the relevance and applicability of the findings to their respective study. Furthermore, the researcher engaged in reflexive and transparent practices. It involved critically reflecting on own biases, assumptions, and perspectives that may influence the research process and findings. By openly discussing these influences and limitations, readers can better evaluate the potential transferability of the results.

4.15.3 Dependability

Dependability in research refers to the reliability, consistency and trustworthiness of the research process and findings. Belotto (2018) pointed out that dependability involved establishing the stability and consistency of the study's methods, procedures, and outcomes, ensuring that they can be relied upon to produce consistent and dependable results. To ensure dependability, the researcher provided in-depth descriptions of participants' responses. This included capturing and documenting participants' perspectives, experiences, and insights with clarity and rich detail. By offering comprehensive descriptions of participants' responses, the researcher enhanced the dependability of the study as this allowed for a deeper understanding and interpretation of the data.

4.15.4 Conformability

Conformability in research discusses to the objective and unbiased approach taken by researchers in gathering and analysing the data collected (Mohajan, 2018). It implies that the findings and analysis are solely based on the data obtained from the participants during the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussion, without any undue influence from the researcher. To achieve conformability, the researcher ensured that the voices of the participants were accurately represented. This was done by using direct quotations whenever possible, allowing the participants' own words to be heard. In cases where translation was necessary, the researcher ensured that the translated text appropriately conveys the intended meaning and maintains the integrity of the participants' responses. Additionally, the researcher approached the study with an open mind and without preconceived notions about the expected findings. By setting aside any biases or preconceptions, the researcher was able maintain objectivity and allow the data to shape the analysis and interpretation.

4.15.5 Authenticity

Authenticity in research relates to being truthful, dependable and genuine encompassing endeavours to accurately represent the realities, experiences, and perspectives of both participants and the phenomenon under study (Hayashi, Abib and Hoppen, 2019). In this study, the pursuit of authenticity involved diverse voices and perspectives. It encompassed the selection of are presentative sample comprising participants relevant to the research objectives. Furthermore, the establishment of rapport and trust with participants was considered vital for fostering authenticity. By building respectful and collaborative relationships, a safe and supportive environment was created, enabling participants to share their experiences openly and

honestly. When reporting the research findings, transparency and honesty were paramount. This entailed faithfully representing the voices of the participants using direct quotations or excerpts from interviews or other sources. Additionally, contextual information was provided to assist readers in comprehending the authenticity of the findings.

4.16 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations in research encompass a set of principles and guidelines designed to protect the rights, well-being, and dignity of participants while ensuring the integrity of the research process (Pietilä et al 2020:50). Head (2020:73) highlights that central to the ethical considerations, it is the principle that researchers adequately inform participants about the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits, allowing them to make informed decisions regarding their involvement. Specifically, for research, there is three research ethical principles, namely, justice, beneficence, and regard for human dignity (Husband 2020:2). Naik et al (2022:2) reiterates that confidentiality and privacy must be safeguarded to protect sensitive participant information. Additionally, research should be conducted with integrity and honesty, avoiding any form of misconduct such as fabrication or plagiarism (Thunberg and Arnell 2022:758). In this study, ethical considerations were carefully addressed to protect the rights and well-being of the participants.

4.16.1 University ethical processes

This research study's ethical considerations would be consistent with those of the Durban University of Technology (DUT). The letter of information and research instruments that would be used to collect data would be submitted to the research supervisor/s and the Faculty Research Ethics Committee for ethical clearance. The researcher obtained ethical clearance first, before conducting the process for obtaining Gatekeepers permission to conduct the research study.

4.16.2 Gatekeeper compliance

For research study to be conducted at an organisation, such as the private or public sector, authorisation should be obtained from the Gatekeeper before any data is collected. In this study, the researcher received permission from the Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Social Development, Head of Department (Annexure F and G) then proceeded to communicate with NPO's Director or owner.

4.16.3 NPO's compliance

The researcher communicated with NPOs within eThekweni Municipality to schedule an appointment. Once a confirmed date, time and venue is confirmed, the researcher then conducted an information session / briefing about the research and written information (letter of information and consent form). NPO owners, managers and NPO administrative employees (participants) were given adequate information on the research study, aims of the research, the procedures that would be followed, the credibility of the researcher and how the results were used so that they make an informed decision on whether they want to participate in the research study or not. The researcher received approval from each NPO owner, NPO managers and NPO administrative employee to conduct the research study within the organisation before proceeding to the next step.

The researcher scheduled an appropriate date, time and venue to conduct face-to-face interview with each NPO's owner and manager in the privacy of the NPO's venue. Separately, the researcher scheduled an appropriate date, time and venue to conduct focus group discussion with NPOs administrative employees in the NPO venue that is conducive to participants to discuss responses freely. Significant attention was devoted to the following ethical considerations:

- **Ensuring respondents are giving informed consent**

The respondents were informed of the study's nature and objectives. A letter of information would be shared with all participants concerned and for the participants who are unable to read, the letter would be read to them by the researcher. Each participant signed an informed consent form. The participants were informed of the study and reasons why it was done and why they were selected. Participants who are unable to write, would be issued with a stamp pad and a right (R) thumb print were be taken. The study participants were given a choice to participate or not without any coercion and also to withdraw from the study at any point, if they wished to do so.

- **Ensuring that participants are not harmed**

All the participants were over the age of 18. Their contribution in the research was entirely voluntary, and they were informed that if they wished, they could stop taking part in the study at any moment. The DUT review process carefully considered the likelihood of the research injuring participants and concluded that the researcher was correctly handling this concern.

- **Ensuring that permission is obtained**

This study involved NPO owners, NPO managers and NPO administrative employees. Each participant consented to participate in the research relating to his or her work by participating in this study. Before conducting the interviews and focus group discussions, participants were explicitly informed about their privacy and confidentiality rights. Participants were assured that their identities would be protected, and they were given the freedom to choose not to answer any questions they were uncomfortable with, in order to uphold their constitutional right to human dignity.

- **Ensuring Confidentiality and anonymity**

Participants' anonymity and confidentiality were protected because no names were to be utilised or disclosed in the final write-up or at any other stage or after the thesis was completed. Participants were provided assurances that allowed them to interact freely and provide genuine information about their opinions and experiences with the NPO administration processes.

In this research study, participation was voluntary and participants were not coerced into participating which is why they would be signing the consent form before being interviewed or involved in the focus group discussion. The researcher obtained permission from the participant/s to record or transcribe the interview or the focus group discussion. Data collected by the researcher was treated with ethical consideration and at no point did the researcher compromise the integrity of the participants. The electronic data was stored in a computer and secured with a personal secret password only known to the researcher and data wiped off after 5 years. Access to voice recordings would not be shared with anyone without consent.

4.17 Summary

This chapter provided detailed information about the research strategy and methodology employed in the study. The researcher procured all necessary precautions to ensure the study was conducted ethically and effectively. The research methodology section included a complete description of the data gathering techniques, research design, data collection methods and Delphi methods employed. It also addressed the philosophical foundations and overall approaches guiding the research process, providing readers with a clear understanding of how the study was conducted and the rationale behind the chosen approach. The chapter further probed into the administration of data collection and data analysis procedures. The researcher explained how the face-to-face interviews and focus groups were managed, ensuring that participants understood

the instructions and were able to provide meaningful and accurate responses. This attention to detail enhances the validity and reliability of the data collected. The findings of the study are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS AND INTREPRETATION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, is the results from the thematic and content analysis of the semi-structured interview and focus group discussion through a process of coding, resulting in the emergence of themes.to provide a clear representation of the data. The data collected through the interviews was analysed thematically. Thematic analysis involves identifying recurring themes, patterns, and concepts within the interview data.

This section focuses on the findings, interpretation, and discussion of results derived from the research data collection. main aim of the research is to explore the administrative processes used by NPOs based in eThekwini Municipality in Kwa-Zulu Natal and to develop a digital system of the administrative process to improve efficiency. By using this approach, the researcher gained deeper insights into the perspectives and experiences of the participants. In addition to the data analysis, this chapter addresses specific research inquiries that were investigated in the study. The first part (Section 5.3) presents the findings obtained from the face-to-face interview sessions with NPO Owners. The second part (Section 5.4) introduces the findings retrieved from the face-to-face interview sessions with NPO managers. Lastly, the third part (Section 5.5) incorporates the findings of NPO administrative employees focus group discussions. All data that emerged from the face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions were deductively coded with the aid of thematic analysis.

The following specific research questions were addressed by this study:

- What is the current administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekwini Municipality?
- How are the current digital technologies are adopted by NPOs in eThekwini Municipality?
- What are the factors that affect the administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekwini Municipality?
- What digital system could be developed to address the administrative efficiency for NPOs?

5.2 Overview of participants

In-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with ten (10) NPO owners and six (06) Managers. Additionally, four (4) focus group discussion with NPO administrative employees which overall consisted of 40 participants in total.

5.2.1 Face-to-face interview schedule research instrument

The face to face interview with NPO owners and NPO managers consisted of five (5) sections. Section A focused on collecting data related to the background information of the participants. This section aimed to provide contextual information about the participants which could be useful for understanding any potential relationships or patterns in the data. Section B focused on the exploration of the current administrative processes used by the NPOs in eThekweni Municipality. It consisted of open-ended questions, which required participants to respond about the experience with the current administrative processes. These open ended questions aimed to gather in-depth qualitative data that could be analysed and compared between different participants.

Following the opened questions based of the current administrative process, Section C focused on the current digital technologies adopted by the NPOs in eThekweni Municipality. This section allowed for participants to express the level of agreement or disagreement with technology usage at the NPO. Section D fixated on assessing the factors that affect the administrative processes at the NPO in eThekweni Municipality. The participant response allowed for the measurement of attitudes, opinions, and perceptions on the challenges experienced by the NPO.

Lastly, Section E introduced the opened questions based on the development a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs. This section allowed participants to provide detailed and free responses, offering them an opportunity to express his/her thoughts, opinions, and experiences in own persona.

5.2.2 Face-to-face interviews with NPO owners and NPO managers

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with NPO owners and NPO managers who expressed availability and willingness to participate in the research study. The researcher recognised the importance of gathering insights from NPO owners in eThekweni Municipality to gain a comprehensive understanding of the administrative processes within the NPO.

For this study, ten (10) NPO owners and six (6) NPO managers were available and agreed to participate in the study. While this number may be smaller than initially anticipated, it can still provide valuable insights into the experiences and perspectives of the interviewed NPO owners. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility in the questioning process, enabling the participants to share own thoughts and experiences in a more open-ended manner. The researcher prepared a list of twenty-four (24) questions to guide the discussion during these interviews. These questions revolved around topics such as exploring the current administrative processes used by NPOs, establish the digital technologies are adopted by NPOs, assess the factors that affect the administrative processes used by NPOs and what should be included in a digital system for efficient administrative processes in the NPO.

The first section of findings introduces the background information of the NPO owners. Thereafter, the emerging themes from the semi-structured face to face interview sessions with NPO owners are presented. An analysis of the data obtained from the open-ended questions resulted in identification of the themes and sub-themes are highlighted.

5.2.3. Section A: Personal details

In this section, the findings relating to participant’s personal details and work experience are discussed.

5.2.3.1. NPOs feedback on the duration of being an NPO owner

Following the analysis of the data collected from NPO owners regarding the duration of being a centre manager, the data reveals below that there is a diverse tenure length among NPO centre managers. Below in Table 5.1, the following findings are presented then discussed.

Table 5.1 Participants duration of being an NPO owner

Duration of being an NPO Owner	Participants response rate	Participant
0-1 year	0%	-
2-3 year	40%	P05, P08, P09 and P10
4-5 year	40%	P03, P04, P06 and P07
5 or more year	20%	P01 and P02

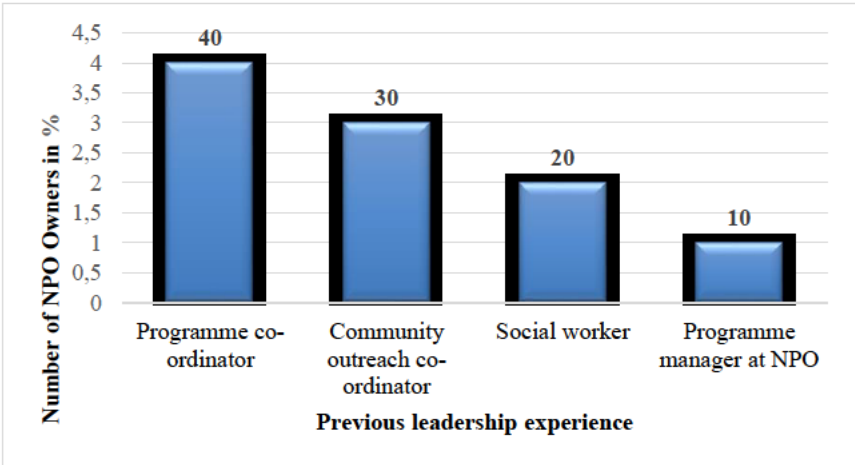
Table 5.1 shows that a response rate of 40% of NPO owners have 2-to-3-year duration of being an NPO owner. Similarly, 40% of NPO Owners have 4-to-5-year duration of being an NPO owner. These NPO owners have reported that they are still ‘new and fresh’ to the ‘NPO ecosystem’.

On the other hand, 20% of NPO owners have been an NPO owner for 5 or more years. This distribution of feedback from participants indicates that there is NPO owners who have been in the NPO owner position for many years and there is still an opening for new NPOs within the communities of eThekweni Municipality.

5.2.3.2 NPO owner’s previous leadership experience

The distribution of previous work experience in leadership provides valuable insights into the leadership dynamics, skill sets, and operational focus of these organisations. The subsequent findings noted in Figure 5.1 highlights the NPO’s leadership previous work experience in leadership.

Figure 5.1: NPO owner’s feedback on the previous leadership experience



A portion of 40% of NPO owners previous work experience comprised of roles as program coordinators. Below are responses from participants:

“Before taking this role, I worked as a program coordinator for a different nonprofit for three years, where I managed various community outreach programs and volunteering initiatives. The duties entailed detail-oriented planning, execution, and evaluation of programs within the NPO.” (P03).

” Prior to this role, I was a program coordinator at a community health initiative focused on substance abuse prevention for three years, where I managed outreach programs and trained volunteers. I had developed my communication and organisation skills.” (P07).

The experience equipped them to efficiently manage resources, timelines, and stakeholder expectations. Program coordinators typically possess strong skills in communication, organisation, and problem-solving. Their leadership may foster a culture of accountability and continuous improvement within the NPO.

On the other hand, 30% of NPO owners’ previous leadership experience include outreach coordination roles, which is an evident emphasis on community engagement and external relations. Some participants indicated the following statements:

“Before this role, I worked for two years as a community outreach coordinator for a local health NGO, where I led initiatives aimed at improving nutrition and health outcomes in underserved communities.” (P04).

“Preceding to this, I worked as a volunteer coordinator for a community outreach program that focused on food security for four years, where I managed a team of volunteers, communicating with the public and planned various food distribution initiatives.” (P08).

Outreach coordinators play a crucial role in building partnerships and increasing awareness of the organisation’s mission. Participants had indicated that the role focused on value community needs and stakeholder involvement. The participants experience focused on a robust of capabilities in networking, public speaking, and relationship management, which are essential for mobilizing resources and support.

The presence of 20% of NPO owners with experience as social workers highlights a commitment to understanding the needs of vulnerable populations directly.

Below is one participant response:

“Being a social worker had contributed to a more empathetic leadership role.” (P01).

These participants highlighted that they focused on a client-centered approach in decision-making processes, ensuring that the voices of beneficiaries are heard.

Whilst NPO owners’ previous leadership experience as a programme manager, making up the smallest percentage of 10%, it does indicate a level of strategic oversight, higher-level organisational skills within the NPO leadership.

“Previously, I served as a program manager at another non-profit focused on healthcare and community outreach for four years, where I worked closely with families of children with disabilities.” (P05).

These participant’s expertise can guide the NPO in navigating complex funding landscapes and scaling operations. In additionally, these participants suggested that a programme manager experience introduces the best practices and frameworks for measuring outcomes, impact, aiding in accountability to stakeholders and funders within an NPO.

The diversity in professional backgrounds of NPO owners suggests a multifaceted approach to leadership that balances operational experience with community engagement and social understanding. The predominance of program coordinators and outreach coordinators indicates that these organisations are likely focused on effective service delivery and active community participation. Meanwhile, the presence of social workers and program managers as previous leadership experience adds depth in understanding the pressing social issues and strategic planning necessary for sustainable growth. This blend of experiences fosters a holistic approach to leadership, likely enhancing the NPO’s ability to adapt to challenges, innovate, and effectively respond to the needs of the communities they serve. Such a leadership structure is well-positioned to create impactful, responsive, and socially relevant programs.

5.2.4. Themes emerging from face-to-face interview with NPO owners

This section presents the themes and sub-themes findings from the (10) ten face-to-face interviews conducted with NPO owners below in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Themes and sub-themes emerging from face-to-face interview sessions with NPO owners

Theme	Sub-theme
<p>1. Exploration of the NPO’s current administrative processes</p>	<p>1.1 Manual and digital administrative processes</p> <p>1.2 Transparency and accountability</p> <p>1.3 Operation efficiency</p> <p>1.4 Resource usage</p>

<p>2. Current digital technologies adopted by the NPOs</p>	<p>2.1 Microsoft Office and social apps</p> <p>2.2 Demographic factors</p> <p>2.3 Streamlined communication</p> <p>2.4 Safety and security of data</p> <p>2.5 Training and support for technology usage</p>
<p>3. Assessing the factors that affect the administrative processes at the NPO</p>	<p>3.1 Resource constraints</p> <p>3.2 Staff burnout</p> <p>3.3 Technological challenges</p> <p>3.4 Compliance pressures</p> <p>3.5 Data management issues</p> <p>3.6 Support for capacity building</p> <p>3.7 Accountability</p>
<p>4. Development a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs</p>	<p>4.1 Decrease of manual administration</p> <p>4.2 Enhanced data management</p> <p>4.3 Tracking of budget and resource allocation</p> <p>4.4 Audio to text solution</p> <p>4.5 Community benefit tracker system</p> <p>4.6 Fear of job insecurity and resistance to change</p> <p>4.7 Financial viability</p> <p>4.8 Ongoing maintenance and support cost</p> <p>4.9 Challenges</p>

	<p>4.10 Strategies for the implementation of a digital administrative system</p>
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5.2.4.1 Theme 1: Exploration of the NPO’s current administrative processes

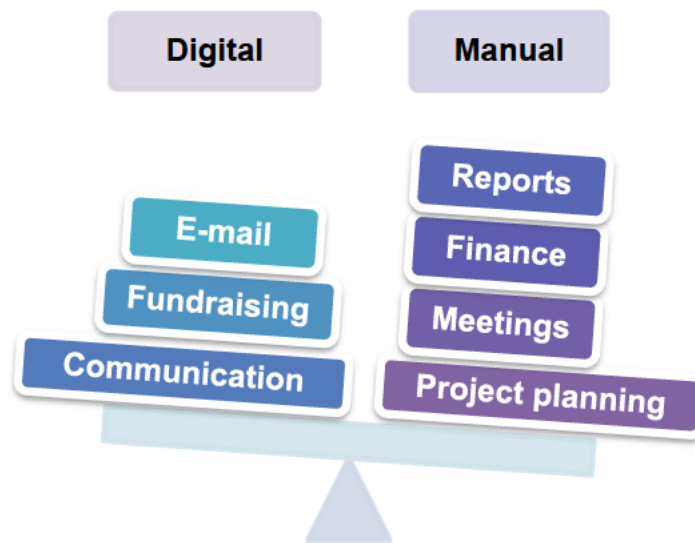
In the ever-evolving landscape of NPOs, effective administrative processes play a pivotal role in sustaining operations and advancing missions to affected communities (Gatsolati *et al.* 2021:2). This theme of exploration provides a comprehensive understanding of how NPOs navigate the complexities of administration, the obstacles and the innovative solutions implemented.

In the following sections, the researcher would delve into the key themes and insights derived from interviews with NPO owners, drawing upon the voices and experiences of NPO leaders. These findings will not only illuminate the current state of administrative practices in the NPO sector but also provide a foundation for recommendations aimed at enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of these vital organisations. Furthermore, the responses gathered during these interviews reveal a diverse landscape of administrative processes, highlighting both commonalities and unique approaches tailored to individual organisational needs. To gain insight into this critical aspect, the following factors were discussed during the interview session with NPO owners: Focusing on the current administrative processes, transparency and accountability surrounding the administration processes, current operation efficiency and resource usage.

5.2.4.1.2 Manual and digital administrative processes

NPO Owners were asked to describe the current administrative processes within their respective NPO. The following interpretation aspects reviewed at how NPO owners view the efficiency, effectiveness, challenges, and areas for improvement within their administrative practices. Majority of the NPO owners described the current administrative processes are conducted in a manual and digital aspect. Figure 5.2 on the next page, highlights the manual and digital processes within the NPO.

Figure 5.2: NPO Owners describe the current administrative processes within the NPO



NPO Owners expressed that they use both manual and digital tools in the current administration processes within the NPO. The participants had expressed different levels of satisfaction with the efficiency of the respective NPO's current administrative processes. Below some participants describe the NPO current administrative processes within the NPO:

"We have a manual and digital administrative process within our NPO. In terms of our operational tasks, we follow a structured manual budgeting process, allocating resources based on priority needs and projected revenue. We keep track of rates, utilities, and membership fees carefully to ensure financial health and compliance." (P05).

"With regards to meetings, it is held monthly face to face with all stakeholders to discuss the NPO progress. Reports are generated quarterly using the Department of Social Development digital template and typed for transparency and accountability. The findings are presented to the Department of Social Development Representative within our NPO." (P07).

In project planning, we use manual components. Separately, we have a dedicated team for fundraising initiatives using both manual and digital aspects...but more digital, which includes planning events, writing grant applications, and reaching out for donations. Our marketing efforts also play a key role in raising funds. The current administration process is somewhat satisfying in the NPO operations." (P03).

On the other hand, other NPO owners have confirmed that the current administrative process is still manual with the use of a digital app, WhatsApp for communication.

“Our current administration process is mainly a manual process. We do use ‘WhatsApp’ and social media for communication. We do use a PC to type out our reports. Our budgeting involves identifying food costs, supplies, and utility expenses, with careful resource allocation each month based on donations and community needs. We manage revenue manually, which includes donations, fundraising efforts and keep track of utilities like water and electricity to manage costs effectively. It is time consuming.” (P08).

Majority of the NPO owners mentioned that for accounting purposes, Microsoft Excel, spreadsheet to track and manually review the income and expenses meticulously. P06 stated that regular financial administrative reporting gives an overview of financial health and alerts the NPO team to any discrepancies. P07 highlighted that fundraising is a vital component of operations below:

“We actively seek out grant opportunities and tailor our applications to align with funders’ priorities. We do not digital finance apps within the NPO. Hence, we manually oversee each transaction that is completed within the NPO to ensure accountability. It is a long process, but it must be done.” (P07).

Overall, the administrative processes in place at P01-P10 NPOs reflect a manual administrative process with few digital apps into managing operations effectively. The insights gathered provide a valuable perspective on the importance of planning, compliance, and community engagement in the sustainability of NPOs operations in eThekweni Municipality, Durban. These reflections highlight both the strengths and areas for growth in the organisation’s operational administrative tasks.

5.2.4.1.3 Transparency and accountability

In the landscape of NPOs, understanding the alignment between administrative processes and organisational goals is critical for achieving mission driven objectives. As NPOs operate under unique constraints. The researcher observed and questioned the NPO owners’ perception if whether the current administrative processes are aligned to the NPOs goals and objectives. The following findings was described by participants:

“It does align but I find that the current administrative processes are quite burdensome. The excessive paperwork and administrative hurdles delay our projects. It often feels like the NPO

spend more time on compliance than helping the communities we serve. In addition, we are short staffed, so some staff have double or triple load of admin task towards the NPO." (P01).

On the other hand, P02 remarked the following:

"While I appreciate the regulations meant to ensure accountability, I believe that there should be a balance. The application processes for funding are lengthy and complicated, which discourages smaller NPOs from applying."

P03 commented on how the current NPO implementation of technology below:

"Technology has played a significant role in streamlining some of our NPO administrative tasks. However, many NPOs lack access to the necessary technology resources and training, which can create inefficiencies."

P04 highlighted that the current regulatory environment creates unnecessary barriers. Many potential donors are deterred by the lengthy compliance requirements. A simplified process would help us secure funding more effectively.

Moreover, P05 stated that *"There are very few workshops or training sessions available that focus on administrative skills for NPO leaders. We need more support in this area to enhance our efficiency."*

However, P06 emphasis that:

"I have mixed feelings. On one hand, the administration processes ensure transparency alignment within our NPO. On the other hand, I wish there was more streamlined communication from government bodies to clarify the processes."

This feedback encapsulates various perspectives on the perceived effectiveness and efficiency of administrative processes faced by NPO owners in Durban, highlighting both challenges and areas for improvement.

5.2.4.1.4 Operation efficiency

NPOs owners were asked about the effectiveness and efficiency of the current administrative processes. The responses below reveal a spectrum of experiences, challenges, and innovations that characterize the administrative landscape of NPOs in the region.

A significant number of NPO owners described improvements in the streamlining of their administrative processes. The below findings are participant's response:

“Overall, I believe our processes are quite effective, but there are areas for improvement, particularly in how we adopt technology for efficiency. Our manual processes can sometimes slow us down.” (P03).

P04 describes that whilst our administration processes are effective, they can sometimes be slow due to limited resources and manual tracking methods.

“While we have foundational processes that support our operations, there are areas for improvement, particularly in data management and communication. Transitioning to more digital solutions would enhance our effectiveness. We often find ourselves dragged down by manual record keeping, which affects our operational efficiency” (P10).

On the other hand, P05 expressed the following

“I would say our administration processes are efficient; however, there is room for improvement. Streamlining certain procedures and further integrating technology could enhance our effectiveness in managing operations, especially during peak fundraising periods.” (P05).

Majority of NPO owners had indicated that while they have made significant strides in enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the NPO administrative processes, challenges remain.

Key areas of success include the adoption of technology, improved communication, and robust impact measurement, while ongoing issues such as resource constraints, training needs, and regulatory compliance persist. The insights gathered from these interviews provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of administrative practices within NPOs in Durban.

Additionally, NPO owners were asked to identify how many of the NPO employees are involved in the administrative staffing as well as qualitative insights into the roles and responsibilities of their administrative personnel. This information is critical in evaluating how well these

organisations are equipped to fulfil their missions while managing the often-complex administrative tasks required to sustain their operations.

Findings indicate variations in administrative staffing levels across different NPOs, influenced by factors such as organisational size, funding availability, and specific mission focus. Below is participant's response:

"We have three dedicated employees focusing primarily on administrative tasks, along with support from other team members." (P03).

"We have two full-time staff and a few part-time employees focused on administrative duties. Our volunteer network also supports various tasks." (P04).

"We have two full-time administrative staff members, a project coordinator who help with various administrative tasks." (P05).

"We have three full-time employees who handle administrative tasks, alongside one part-time grant writer." (P06).

"Three full-time staff members and two part-time volunteers who assist with administrative tasks." (P07).

"Our NPO has two full-time staff members and several part-time volunteers who assist with administrative tasks on a rotational basis." (P08).

"There are four full-time staff members who handle the administrative processes, along with several part-time volunteers who assist as needed." (P09).

Interestingly, some NPOs owners have discussed that they have a mass number of administrative staff within their NPOs:

"Currently, five full-time employees are directly engaged in administrative processes, alongside several interns and volunteers who contribute as needed. Each staff member plays a crucial role, from resource management to beneficiary support." (P10).

“We have various administrative staff conducting different administrative roles within the NPO. From fundraising to project co-ordination to basic administrative duties. In total, we have seven staff involved in administrative duties with two interns at switchboard.” (P01).

“In our NPO, no staff can escape administrative duties. All NPO staff are involved in the administration duties.” (P02).

Additionally, NPO owners highlighted the importance of dedicated administrative roles versus those shared with programmatic responsibilities, revealing a diverse landscape of operational strategies. This introductory section sets the stage for a detailed examination of the number of employees engaged in administrative processes within NPOs, offering insights into operational dynamics, resource allocation, and areas for development within the sector

5.2.4.1.5 Resource usage

Effective administration is vital to the sustainability and impact of NPOs, as it encompasses a range of resources, including paper, equipment to conduct reporting, and communication. Understanding how much of the NPOs resources is key for evaluating the operational efficiency and strategic priorities.

Participants shared their experiences regarding both direct and indirect costs associated with administrative functions, such as salaries, office supplies, technology investments, and training. Participants responded the following:

“On average, we use about 200 reams of writing paper annually. In terms of time, our administrative staff spends approximately 60 hours a week on various tasks. We also have budget constraints that impact equipment quality.” (P03).

“We use approximately 30 reams of writing paper per month for reports and documentation. Staff dedicate about 30 hours weekly to administrative tasks, and we make use of basic office equipment like computers and our cell phones to manage operations.” (P04).

“We estimate that we use around 150 reams of writing paper annually for reports and documentation. The administrative staff dedicates certain amount of hours each week to these processes, supported by basic equipment including computers, printers, and phones.” (P05).

“We use 50 reams of writing paper monthly for reports and client records. The administrative staff typically spends at least 4 hours a day on administrative tasks, and we rely on standard office equipment like computers and printers.” (P06).

Alarming, some NPOs owner detail the number of manual resources are used to conduct administrative tasks within their NPO below:

“An estimate of 150 reams of writing paper by mid-year, primarily for reports and patient records. Our administrative staff dedicates approximately 30 hours weekly to administrative duties, relying on standard office equipment like computers and printers.” (P07).

“Our NPO has an administrative section and all reports are currently manual, thereafter is typed. We do use a lot of paper. In terms of digital resources, we use computers to manage email, our webpage and social media pages. We do have a switchboard.” (P01).

The findings above indicate that resource allocation for administrative processes varies significantly across NPOs depending on factors such as the size of the organisation and the complexity of the NPOs operational frameworks. Some NPO owners pointed out the challenges of securing adequate funding for administrative functions, which often leads to a reliance on volunteers or supplementary support while emphasizing that efficient administrative processes are crucial for achieving the NPO missions and maintaining donor trust. By estimating these resource levels, this research aims to highlight patterns in administrative spending and the implications for NPO effectiveness.

Moreover, NPOs owners were asked as to whether the administrative tasks were handled by an external company. All of the participants stated that their NPO’s administrative tasks are managed internally.

5.2.4.2 Theme 2: Current digital technologies adopted by the NPOs

NPOs are increasingly adopting these tools to enhance their operational capabilities, improve stakeholder engagement, and extend the NPO’s outreach efforts. This section presents an in-depth analysis of the current digital solutions employed by NPOs, including communication tools, fundraising platforms, volunteer management systems, and customer relationship.

NPO owners were asked to discuss the use of current digital technology services or digital platform used within the NPO. Participants expressed the following:

“We utilize Microsoft Office for documentation, Google Drive for file sharing, and WhatsApp to communicate.” (P03).

“We use WhatsApp for communication and Microsoft Excel for budgeting and tracking donations. These tools help streamline our operations but are basic. We still use old school methods such as using a writing material and pen” (P04).

“Yes. WhatsApp for real-time communication among staff and volunteers. Microsoft for typing. Accounts are done manual.” (P08).

“Yes. We use Google Drive for document storage and sharing, WhatsApp for communication among staff, and Excel for budgeting and tracking donations. However, all initial information, we still manually write down information” (P09).

Overall, the findings reveal that while many NPOs have successfully integrated digital software into their daily operations, significant challenges remain. Participants still refer to manual writing of information for administration purposes. Such as Participant P04 expressed that even though the positive effectiveness of digital software assists with communication and budgeting, it is basic. By synthesizing these insights, the researcher was able to identify and understanding the current digital software used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality.

5.2.4.2.1 Demographic factors

NPO owners were asked as to whether demographic or personal characteristics significantly influence the adoption and usage of digital technologies within NPOs for administrative processes. The summary of these findings is outlined below:

“Most of our team members are relatively tech-savvy, but we do have staff with varying degrees of computer literacy, which can affect how efficiently we use digital tools.” (P03).

“Many of my team members are familiar with smartphones and basic software, but some staff are not familiar with digital tools.” (P04).

“The varying levels of technology proficiency among staff have influenced our adoption rates. While younger team members adapt quickly, older staff are less confident in using digital tools.” (P05).

“The varying levels of digital literacy among staff have influenced our adoption rates. Some employees are very comfortable with technology, while others require more support and training, which affects our overall efficiency.” (P07).

“The digital literacy levels of our staff vary, which affects how smoothly we can integrate technology into our administrative tasks. Younger staff members are generally more comfortable with digital tools.” (P08).

“Yes, varying levels of digital literacy among staff influence our technology adoption. While some are very comfortable with digital tools, others require additional training, highlighting the need for comprehensive tech training.” (P10).

Majority of participants had agreed that the ‘younger’ staff members demonstrate a higher propensity for adopting digital technologies usage and, often exhibiting greater comfort familiarity with digital tools. In contrast, older generations may exhibit hesitancy, primarily due to limited exposure or training opportunities. This generational divide impacts the overall integration of technology into administrative processes, often necessitating tailored training programs to bridge the gap.

On the other hand, P06 expressed the following statement:

“No. We are not affected by any demographic or personal characteristics.” (P06).

The findings of this question exemplify that the adoption and usage of digital technologies for administrative processes within NPOs are influenced by a complex interplay of demographic and personal characteristics. Understanding these factors is crucial for NPOs seeking to foster effective digital transformation. By addressing the variations in comfort levels and educational backgrounds NPOs can develop targeted strategies to enhance the adoption of digital technologies across all levels of the organisation. Ultimately, a more inclusive and informed approach to digital technology implementation will lead to improved administrative efficiency and effectiveness in achieving the NPO missions.

5.2.4.2.2 Streamlined communication

Participants were questioned about the effectiveness and efficiency of the current digital technologies used within the NPO for administrative processes. The summary of findings is sub-themed into key areas, namely: streamlined workflow, data Management with a limit, enhanced communication and collaboration, cost-effectiveness of operations, improved stakeholder engagement, challenges and limitations.

a) Streamlined workflow

The adoption of digital solutions had led to the automation of routine administrative tasks, such as data entry, scheduling, and reporting. Participant 03 expressed the following:

“They significantly enhance our streamlined of communication. Such as Microsoft office for documentation, and collaboration, making it easier for teams to work together, especially during remote work periods.” (P03).

Tools like Microsoft office have allowed NPOs to streamline workflows, reducing the time spent on routine tasks and enabling staff to focus on strategic activities that drive the NPOs mission forward.

b) Data Management with a limit

Digital databases and cloud-based storage solutions such as Google Drive have enhanced data management practices. NPOs report greater efficiency in accessing and sharing information, facilitating better collaboration among team members. P06 endorses this statement below:

“They contribute positively by improving communication and allowing for easier data management, but many processes are not fully digitized, which can still lead to inefficiencies.” (P06).

Enhanced data accessibility also improves decision-making by providing real-time insights into operations and performance metrics. However, as the findings also reveals that there is a limit for the data management process as the NPO still reverts to manual processes to complete the administrative tasks.

c) Enhanced communication and collaboration

Digital communication platforms such as WhatsApp have transformed the NPOs internal and external stakeholder’s communication. P05 explains the current digital technology effectiveness below:

“WhatsApp does help to streamline communication and collaboration within the team, allowing us to share information quickly and keep everyone updated. However, we often rely on manual processes which can still be time-consuming.” (P05).

d) Cost-effectiveness of operations

By transitioning to digital solutions, NPOs have noticed a reduction in operational costs associated with paper printing, and manual processing. P07 has stated that digital technologies have improved the NPO communication and made document sharing easier. Furthermore, P07 elaborated that the current digital system is cost effective for the NPO and works within budget. The cost effectiveness allows NPOs to allocate more resources directly to their programs and services.

e) Improved stakeholder engagement

Digital technologies have significantly enhanced the way NPOs engage with donors, volunteers, and beneficiaries. Participants have expressed a positive feedback with digital technologies involvement within the NPO.

“Digital technology has significantly streamlined our processes, especially when it comes to social media engagement and communication.” (P10).

NPOs reported an increased engagement levels, leading to higher donor retention rates and volunteer participation.

f) Challenges and Limitations

Despite the positive impact of the current digital technologies adopt by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality, NPOs face challenges that hinder the overall effectiveness. P04 discusses below:

“For now, it does assist us. It helps with communication and allow us to share updates quickly and to work as a team. However, there is a limit due to funding and safety issues around the area, the NPO continues with manual processes.” (P04).

Issues such as insufficient support, funding and safety whilst using digital technology limited the potential benefits of technology. The findings reveal that the current digital technologies employed within NPOs considerably enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of their administrative processes. By streamlining workflows, improving data management, fostering

communication, and enabling data-driven decisions, NPOs can operate more efficiently and effectively fulfill their missions. However, participants also expressed a dissatisfaction with the limitations of usage when it comes to digital technologies. Issues such as funding leads NPOs to use manual admin processes for the NPO.

5.2.4.2.3 Safety and security of data

The security and privacy of data associated with the use of basic digital technologies in the administrative processes of NPOs is of critical nature, especially where resources may be limited. NPO owners were asked about the security and privacy of data of stakeholders when using the current digital technologies. Below are the NPO responses:

“Currently, for our physical data management, we do use the ‘old-school’ cupboard lock and key type of security measure. For digital, we utilize password-protected files and encrypted communications where possible. Training is also provided to educate staff on data protection practices. For privacy of our stakeholders, when uploading any images on social media platform, we either blur the community images or we do not upload any names of individuals.” (P03).

“We enforce the use of password protection for all sensitive files and have protocols for data handling and storage. When we upload any evidence of community project done by our NPO, we do not block out images but do insert the community area details. So, that other stakeholders can also understand that this is real people affected by issues and it is not fake outreach initiative” (P05).

“We ensure data security through password protections.” (P06).

“We utilise password protections on sensitive documents and limit access to only essential personnel. Staff are trained on data privacy best practices, especially given the sensitive nature of our clients’ information. We do not upload any images of communities where we conduct outreach efforts due to POPIA” (P07).

“We implement password protections on our smartphones and ensure that sensitive data access is limited to authorized personnel. We also have important documentation under lock & key.” (P08).

“Password protections for sensitive documents and limit access to confidential manual information. No images are uploaded due to POPIA act.” (P10).

Majority of NPOs are operating with basic digital technologies such as Microsoft office and WhatsApp, have not adopted comprehensive security protocols. Fundamental practices, such as regular software updates and secure backup procedures, are inconsistently implemented. These organisations often rely on basic password protection and do not employ more robust security measures, such as firewalls or multi-factor authentication (MFA).

The level of awareness regarding data protection regulations, such as the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) in South Africa, varies among NPOs. While some organisations have taken steps to understand and comply with the POPIA act, many reported limited knowledge of their obligations. This gap in understanding can lead to unintentional violations and increased vulnerability to data breaches within the NPO. The below finding does indicate that some NPOs are particularly vulnerable to data breaches and privacy violations:

“We do not have much security when using digital technology. The only technology we use mostly is our smartphones which have password.” (P04).

Overall findings demonstrate that while NPOs in Durban, South Africa, are increasingly utilizing basic digital technologies for administrative processes, they face significant challenges regarding data security and privacy. Vulnerabilities stemming from limited security protocols, insufficient training, and resource constraints highlight the urgent need for enhanced awareness and investment in data protection measures. By prioritizing security practices and fostering a culture of data privacy, NPOs can better protect sensitive information and maintain the trust of NPO stakeholders and beneficiaries. The insights gathered here call for a concerted effort among NPOs, local tech communities, and regulatory bodies to ensure safe and effective use of digital technologies.

5.2.4.2.4 Training or support programs available to NPOs in eThekweni Municipality

Participants were asked a question related to the training and support programs available to NPOs in eThekweni Municipality. Below are some of the participant’s responses:

“Yes, there are some local initiatives and workshops aimed at enhancing digital skills that we have participated in, funded through local government programs.” (P03).

“Yes. A few workshops offered by KZN Department of Social Development, I do attend. However, we our staff have participated in local workshops aimed at enhancing our digital skills, but regular attendance can be challenging due to our workload.” (P05).

“Yes, we access training workshops provided by local organisations aimed at improving digital literacy among NPO employees; however, participation often depends on budget and scheduling.” (P06).

“Yes. though our participation is sometimes limited by budget constraints.” (P09).

On the other hand, one of NPO owners have disagreed and stated that there is no training or support programs available to NPOs in eThekweni Municipality. Below is one participant’s response to the question.

“No. However, the Department of Social Development representative does attend the training programmes but it is of no beneficial use towards the employee’s in the NPO. Due to a lack of an info sharing session taking place after the training.” (P07).

The finding reveals a contrast as despite the availability of training and support programs, many NPOs in Durban face barriers to participation. These challenges include limited awareness of available programs, financial constraints that preclude attendance, and staffing shortages that prevent staff from pursuing time from their duties to participate in training.

5.2.4.3 Theme 3: Assessing the factors that affect the administrative processes at the NPO

This section explores the various administrative processes challenges faced by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality. As NPOs play a crucial role in addressing social issues and providing essential services, the efficiency and effectiveness of NPO administrative operations are paramount for the NPO overall success. However, this research finding reveals that NPOs encounter a myriad of obstacles that hinder the ability to operate smoothly and achieve the NPOs mission. NPO owners were asked about the major challenges the NPO experienced within the administrative processes. The key sub-themes are presented and discussed on the next page.

5.2.4.3.1 Resource constraints

NPO owners highlighted that there is an overwhelmingly financial limitation as a significant barrier to effective administrative operations. Many participants reported that insufficient funding restricts the NPOs ability to invest in necessary technology, hire qualified staff, and provide adequate training. This perception underlines a common belief that financial stability is critical to overcoming administrative hurdles.

“Limited resources often mean that we struggle with time management. Staff sometimes encounter workload pressures, which can lead to lapses in administrative diligence. Also, funding is an issue. Employees are encouraged to communicate challenges and work collaboratively to prioritize and delegate tasks.” (P03).

“Limited funding and high demand for services can stretch our resources thin. Staff burnout is also a concern; as administrative tasks can sometimes become overwhelming alongside community service.” (P07).

5.2.4.3.2 Staff burnout

Many NPOs owners expressed a concern over high workloads placed on the limited NPO staff members. The perception of chronic understaffing leads to feelings of burnout and stress among employees, affecting the NPO productivity and motivation. This recognition of the human factor emphasizes the need for adequate staffing and support to maintain a healthy work environment.

“The main challenge is the limited staff and funding. Employees often have burnouts and a feeling of overwhelming of work stress. Everyone at the NPO has to complete administration task, there is no escape. Staff rely on teamwork and communicate openly about their workloads to ensure that critical tasks are prioritized.” (P04).

5.2.4.3.3 Technological challenges

NPOs exhibit a mixed perception toward technology. While many recognise the importance of adopting digital solutions for efficiency, a significant portion of organisations report feeling overwhelmed by the rapid pace of technological change. The lack of digital skills among staff and insufficient training further exacerbate these challenges, leading to a reluctance to fully embrace technology.

“A significant challenge is the limited financial resources which make it hard to invest in better technology and additional administrative support. Staff often collaborate closely to share workloads and best practices, and we encourage open discussions about the hurdles they face.” (P05).

“The constrained budget that limits our ability to finance in technology and administrative support. High turnover in volunteers also makes consistent administrative practice difficult. We just work as a team and share knowledge, working together to support one another in managing workloads and overcoming administrative challenges.” (P08).

5.2.4.3.4 Compliance pressures

The perception of compliance with regulatory requirements is a source of stress for many NPOs. NPO owners have expressed concerns about the complexities of navigating legal obligations and maintaining transparency and accountability, often leading to anxiety about potential penalties or scrutiny from stakeholders surrounding the NPO.

“The dedication of compliance with regulatory requirements is a source of stress. Our staff prioritizing more work hours to completing manual administration tasks than assisting communities. Funding is also another challenge we experience.” (P09).

5.2.4.3.5 Data management issues

NPOs owners perceive inadequate data management practices as a significant challenge affecting the NPO operations. NPO owners cite difficulties in storing and analysing data. This perception underlines the need for improved data processes and infrastructure.

“That storing and maintain of data management processes hampers the NPO’s ability to make informed decisions and quick impact effectively. It does take time to find and identify data on time when working within communities. Our financial limitations broadly restrict our ability to invest in more sophisticated technology that would assist in data retrieval instantly. Additionally, high demands for our services can outpace our administrative capacity, creating operational bottlenecks.” (P10).

5.2.4.3.6 Support for capacity building

The perception of a gap in support for capacity-building initiatives is evident, with NPO owners expressing a need for targeted training programs that address the NPO specific administrative challenges. Organisations recognise that external support and tailored training could significantly enhance their operational capabilities.

“There is no support given to NPO, in terms of assisting with training for maintaining administrative task with a smaller admin task team. There are always budget cuts, then a cut down of amount of admin staff within the NPO. If there was free external support for administration, we would use it. With our current budget, we cannot enhance our administrative process or improve our NPO’s capabilities.” (P01).

The findings reveal that NPOs have a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced in the NPO administrative processes. Additionally, the findings reflect a combination of internal and external factors that influence the NPOs operational effectiveness.

5.2.4.3.7 Accountability and transparency

This question delves into the NPO revelation regarding how does the NPO show accountability in the administrative processes. Accountability is a fundamental principal for NPOs, influencing the NPOs reputation, donor trust and overall effectiveness in fulfilling the NPOs mission.

The findings reveal that all NPO owners (*P01-P10*) understand that accountability goes beyond government compliance, it embodies an ethical responsibility and commitment to the NPO mission. Below are few sub-themes identified relating to accountability of administration process:

- ***Importance of transparency***

Most NPOs owners express a strong belief that transparency is integral to accountability. P03 explained the following statement:

“We conduct regular audits and publicize our reports to stakeholders. Transparency in financial reporting is key to maintaining trust and accountability.” (P02).

- ***Reporting practices***

In the findings, NPOs have mixed perceptions regarding the complexity and effectiveness of reporting requirements within the NPO. Many NPO owners acknowledge that formal reporting

processes, including financial statements and reports for Department of Social Development (DSD) via the representative which are crucial for accountability of the NPO.

“We publish annual reports with the DSD Rep that detail our successes and areas for improvement, maintaining open lines of communication with our community to foster trust.” (P04).

However, some NPO owners perceive these requirements as burdensome and are advocating for streamlined reporting frameworks that reduce administrative burdens whilst still ensuring transparency. P06 explains further below:

“Our NPO ensures accountability through our transparent reporting practices with DSD, regular audits, and openly sharing outcomes with our stakeholders and community. All the paperwork does become burdensome as it is time-consuming and there needs to be an easier system where we type out reports on a system and it is instantly sent to DSD for reviewing.”

- ***Stakeholder engagement***

NPO owners have highlighted that active stakeholder engagement is vital for accountability. Engaging donors, beneficiaries and community members involved in discussion about the NPOs performance and impact, helps build trust and fosters a sense of shared responsibility. The findings illustrate that NPOs hold an understanding of accountability as a critical component for the NPOs administrative processes. P09 responded below:

“We maintain transparency by providing regular updates to our board, DSD, stakeholders, and community partners. We offer detailed reports on our programs and their impact, demonstrating our accountability to those who support us. Overall, it boosts our NPO performance and impact to be accountable within the NPO’s actions” (P09).

Additionally, participants were questioned as to the strategies and measures that NPOs employ to continuously monitor and enhance accountability in the NPOs administrative processes. P03 discusses the statement below:

“We have set up a DSD system of quarterly reviews to assess our administrative efficiency and impact, allowing us to address any issues proactively.” (P03).

NPOs that commit to providing stakeholders with frequent updates on financial performance, program outcomes, and organisational developments help build trust and improve accountability. Reports should be accessible and presented in clear, understandable formats.

- ***Regular performance monitoring and evaluation***

NPO owners highlight the need for continuous monitoring of organisational performance through regular evaluations and assessments supports accountability. Evaluations should focus on both programmatic outcomes and administrative efficiency. P05 expressed the below statement:

“We utilize feedback loops through regular surveys from beneficiaries and conduct internal reviews of our program effectiveness and administrative processes.” (P05).

Conducting periodic external audits and evaluations can provide an objective assessment of an NPO’s operations and financial practices. Engaging independent auditors helps identify potential weaknesses in accountability measures and offers recommendations for improvement, reinforcing confidence among stakeholders.

- **NPO stakeholder feedback mechanisms**

The findings from NPO owners indicated that gathering feedback from stakeholders is a critical strategy for monitoring accountability. NPOs that actively solicit input from donors, beneficiaries, and community members through surveys, focus groups, and regular communication can assess their performance and identify areas for improvement. Incorporating stakeholder perspectives fosters a culture of accountability and responsiveness. P04 highlights below:

“Regular feedback sessions from Department of Social Development and volunteers help us assess the impact and efficiency of our programs, allowing for adjustments where necessary.” (P04).

NPOs that adopt a mind-set of continuous improvement are more likely to enhance accountability. Establishing regular review processes and using evaluation results to inform strategic planning encourage organisations to adapt and refine their practices over time, ensuring ongoing accountability.

Overall the findings accentuate that clear strategies and continuous monitoring of accountability in administrative processes is vital for ensuring operational integrity. By implementing DSD

Administrative structures, engaging stakeholders and regular reviews contribute to a culture of accountability within an NPO. As accountability supports a sustainable growth and effectiveness of an NPO.

5.2.4.4 Theme 4: Development a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs

This section explores the perceptions of NPO owners regarding the development and implementation of a digital administrative processes within NPO. As digital transformation increasingly becomes a defining factor for operational efficiency, NPO owners are recognizing the potential benefits and challenges associated with integrating technology into the NPO administrative functions. This research aims to understand what digital system could be developed to address the administrative efficiency for NPOs.

NPO owners were asked about what is necessary for to be included in a digital system for efficient administrative processes. The key sub-themes are discussed on the next page.

5.2.4.4.1 Decrease of manual administration process

NPO owners commonly acknowledge the potential benefits of digital administrative processes, particularly in terms of efficiency gains. As P08 elaborates the finding below:

“A digital system that would streamline administration workflows, cut out manual paperwork, and decrease the time spent on administrative tasks. This would allow us to focus on what is important, serving the community.” (P08).

Participants have revealed that digitalisation can significantly streamline administration workflows, reduce paperwork, and decrease the time spent on administrative tasks. This efficiency is seen as essential for allowing staff to focus more on the NPOs community mission-driven activities rather than routine administrative work.

5.2.4.4.2 Enhanced data management

Many NPO owners believe that a digital system would assist in improving the data accuracy, streamlining the NPO record-keeping, and enhance the ability to track, analyse and report on key metrics. As P03 explains below:

“A comprehensive dashboard for tracking key metrics for data management, project management capabilities, and a streamlined communication system are essential features we would want. But most importantly, it must integrate into the existing NPO administration system.” (P03).

Additionally, P03 highlighted that the new digital system should integrate into the existing NPO administration system. NPO owners stressed that the new digital system should only enhance the data management within the NPO, no change the entire administration system. An improved data management is associated with better decision-making and accountability to stakeholders

5.2.4.4.3 Tracking of budget and resource allocation

Despite recognizing the benefits of the current digital software used within NPOs, NPO owners expressed concerns that there might be irregularities of budget tracking and resource allocation within the NPO. P04 emphasised below:

“We are currently using Microsoft office to conduct budget and resource allocation then still revert back to manual. However, we are not sure if the figures are always accurate. A user-friendly system for tracking donor contributions and volunteer engagement, as well as a communication platform integrated with our record-keeping system would be essential.” (P04).

5.2.4.4.4 Audio-to-text

NPO owners expressed the importance of implementing quality control processes to ensure the accuracy of transcriptions. Many organisations report that converting audio recordings of meetings, interviews, and discussions into text format saves time and reduces the burden of manual note-taking. P01 describes the need for a system where audio to text for typing out community consults or reports below:

“When we have community member consulting with us regarding the issue such as abuse, it would be nice to have a system that would instantly type out the audio instead of us manually writing down the report, then typing it out then only taking action. It is a lengthy process. Hence, an audio to text to be implemented in the digital system would be beneficial to us.” (P01).

This adds an extra layer of work that must be accounted for in administrative processes. The findings demonstrate that audio-to-text solutions would offer a considerable advantage for NPO administration, particularly in enhancing efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility of information.

5.2.4.4.5 Community benefit tracking system

NPO owners expressed the need for ‘keeping track’ of the NPO beneficiaries. This would assist the NPO in a long term for assisting each community equally. Below are the findings reveal the following:

“A digital case management system that tracks client progress, medication tracking, therapy tracking, appointment scheduling, and integrated communication tools would significantly improve our efficiency.” (P07).

Furthermore, P07 highlighted that the new digital system should have a digital case management system that tracks a community beneficiary profile that would have a feature such as health tracking, so that they could assist the community beneficiary accordingly. On the other hand, P09 revealed that there needs to an employee access profile to each feature on the digital system.

“An all-inclusive management system for tracking client data, resource management capabilities, tax services, employee access profiles and integrated communication tools would significantly enhance our efficiency.” (P09).

Additionally, P09 elaborated that employee access information is important due to NPO owners could then track who is viewing or accessing features on the new digital system. NPO owners perceive that digital administrative processes can enhance the donor management system, allowing for more effective communication, outreach, and transparency. P06 highlighted the following for the new digital system:

“An all in one type of management system that integrates community data, a donor management system, and communication tools to facilitate collaboration would be essential.” (P06).

Moreover, P06 indicated that the digital system could facilitate collaboration and connect with donors, volunteers, and beneficiaries in more meaningful ways, thereby strengthening relationships and trust of the NPO.

The overall findings reveal that NPO owners hold a complex and multifaceted perception of the development of a new digital administrative processes. While participants recognize the significant benefits of efficiency and improved data management, concerns about security and staff adaptability remain prevalent. The emphasis on staff training, fostering a culture of innovation for data management, resource allocation, beneficiary management, donor management and viewing digital access as transformation for the all-inclusive digital system. These insights can guide the researcher in developing and creating a targeted digital system for the NPO benefit. The new digital system should ultimately enhance NPOs capacity to fulfill their missions effectively.

5.2.4.4.6 Fear of job insecurity and resistance to change

NPO owners recognize that security and privacy as significant challenges associated with digital administrative processes. P05 highlights the need for robust security measures when adopting digital solutions below:

“As we currently do mostly manual administration processes due to not only unable to purchase technology but also concerned about the safety and security issue of data. We have concerns about using new technology without harming our community and investors. We also need a system that complies with SARS for tax. The new digital system should be designed to instil all these into a ‘all-in-one type of system.’” (P05).

The potential for data breaches and unauthorized access to sensitive information raises concerns about compliance with regulations and the protection of stakeholder information. Owners frequently note that employees may fear that changes, particularly those involving technology, could lead to redundancies or job losses.

“There may be resistance from staff who are uncomfortable with technology. Additionally, there could be concerns about technology taking over their jobs.” (P08).

Such fears can create significant anxiety among staff, leading to resistance to new initiatives. NPO owners perceive the need to address these concerns proactively to ensure buy-in from employees. NPO owners widely acknowledge that NPO employees may resist change to the digital system due to a fear of the unknown and discomfort with altering established routines. P03 revealed the following:

“Yes, some employees may resist change due to comfort with existing processes. Training and clear communication about the benefits will be crucial.” (P03).

P03 further explained that the long-standing staff, accustomed to specific workflows, may be apprehensive about adopting new technologies or processes that disrupt their familiar patterns. Moreover, P06 highlight the concern of the cost of technology and crime in South Africa:

“Yes, there may be hesitance from employees uncomfortable with technology or concerned about the learning curve and associated costs of implementation. Also, the crime level surrounding the area, where technology equipment is at high risk.” (P06).

P06 pointed out that some NPO employees might feel ‘uncomfortable’ with technology and costing of technology. Moreover, as NPOs might require new equipment to use the new digital system, NPO owners are concerned that the NPO might be a target for criminals in the area.

5.2.4.4.7 Funding and resource

Despite recognizing the benefits, NPO owners expressed concerns regarding the financial investment required for implementing digital processes. P07 highlighted the below statement:

“Yes. The main issue is funding for the new digital system. Also, the lack of resources such as a laptop or smartphone for all staff and stakeholders.” (P07).

Concerns about upfront costs, ongoing maintenance expenses, and the allocation of limited resources to technology as opposed to programmatic needs contribute to reluctance in adopting digital solutions. As NPOs are increasingly sought to enhance the NPOs operational efficiency and effectiveness through digital transformation, understanding how owners perceive the costs, benefits, and potential financial impacts of such initiatives becomes critical. NPO owners were questioned as to whether the NPO has conducted an assessment to identify the financial viability of implementing a digital system for administration. Below are the key findings identified:

- **Preliminary considerations**

NPO owners acknowledge the preliminary costs associated with implementing digital systems, including software acquisition, hardware purchases, and potential IT consultation fees. P03 stated the below:

“We’ve conducted preliminary assessments such as the hardware involved, but a full feasibility study has not yet been completed.” (P03).

On the other hand, P01 pointed out an alarming finding:

“We have conducted a feasibility study, and we have no funding available for a digital system. At the moment, with our record keeping system, if you come to us 10 years later requesting for a case record...we do not have it. We do not have laptops nor any digital storage or device storage.”

NPO owners have also expressed concern about how these initial investments can strain already limited budgets, highlighting the challenge of balancing immediate financial constraints with long-term goals for the digital system. Hence, the NPO has not conducted a formal feasibility study. P05 explains below:

“We have identified potential costs and benefits during discussions, but a formal feasibility study has yet to be conducted due to resource constraints.” (P05).

- **Budget constraints**

NPO owners expressed concerns about the continuous costs associated with maintaining digital systems, including software subscriptions, updates, and technical support. The findings have identified that NPOs have discussed informally about the financial viability of a digital system. Below P07 and P08 expressed that the NPO cannot conduct a full feasibility study due to budget and resource constraints.

“We have discussed the associated costs informally, but a detailed feasibility study has not yet been conducted due to budget constraints.” (P07).

“Our NPO have informally discussed potential costs and benefits, but a formal feasibility study has yet to be conducted among the NPO due to the limited time, funding and resources.” (P08).

Lastly, P10 has stated that the NPO has recognised the importance of implementing a digital system but have not conducted a financial viability, informally nor formally yet.

“We have not conducted a formal feasibility study yet, but we recognize the importance of evaluating both set-up and ongoing costs before implementation.” (P10).

The findings indicate that NPO owners have a common perception of the financial viability of implementing digital administrative systems within the NPO. While they acknowledge the preliminary costs and ongoing financial commitments, many also recognize the budget constraints. By understanding these perceptions, the researcher can provide support to NPOs by developing a digital administrative system that is budget friendly.

5.2.4.4.8 Ongoing maintenance and support cost

Several owners express concern about the continuous expenses costs required for the maintenance and support of digital systems.

“The ongoing costs of a digital system could burden our limited budget, especially if we cannot secure additional funding.” (P03).

“Risks include ongoing costs related to purchasing of equipment, software maintenance and potential underfunding of such initiatives.” (P06).

“Operational costs concerning software subscriptions and maintenance.” (P08).

“Ongoing costs related to software subscriptions and maintenance might strain our budget, particularly if funding fluctuates.” (P09).

This finding includes software subscription fees, updates, and technical support, which can accumulate over time and impact the organisation’s financial health if not properly budgeted.

- **Training and Staff Adaptation**

The perceived need for extensive training and capacity building poses a challenge for NPO owners, who identify the costs and time associated with training staff on new systems as a risk to implementation success. P05 highlighted the below response:

“Yes, there may be hesitation from staff who are not as tech-savvy, as well as concerns about the costs and time commitment involved in training.” (P05).

The finding highlights that insufficient training can lead to underutilization of the technology, resulting in wasted resources and suboptimal outcomes. Thereby, leading to the potential for resistance from employees to adopt new digital systems is another challenge highlighted by NPO

owners. Reluctance or apprehension towards technology can hinder the effective implementation of digital solutions, resulting in inefficiencies and wasted financial investments.

- **Limited Resources for Digital Transition**

NPO owners recognize that the NPO may lack the necessary resources financial, human, or technical to support a successful transition to digital systems. Limited capacity can hinder the implementation process and pose risks to the NPO's overall financial sustainability.

"The risks can include ongoing maintenance costs and potential underfunding of technology initiatives if donor priorities shift." (P07).

"The primary risk lies in the ongoing costs associated with software licensing and system maintenance. If funding fluctuates or decreases, sustaining these costs could become challenging." (P10).

5.2.4.4.9 Challenges

A significant concern about the challenges when implementing a new digital system for administrative processes. NPO owners reflected that there is the potential lack of training and resources available to employees during the transition to new processes. P10 discussed below:

"Resistance may come from staff who are less comfortable with technology or fear the learning process involved. Ensuring adequate training and emphasizing the benefits of the new system will be crucial in mitigating this resistance." (P10).

NPO owners perceive that inadequate training can lead to frustration among staff, fostering resistance to change. Therefore, recognize that investing in comprehensive training and support is critical to facilitating smoother transitions for digital transformation. Furthermore, NPO owners frequently identify the high upfront costs associated with implementing digital systems as a significant risk to financial sustainability.

"Currently, we do not have any other source of funding to even invest with a digital administrative system, which has a high initial cost. We have applied to Lotto's NPO funding in 2023 and this year, we received notification that our application was declined. This year, we have applied again but there is so many issues with the application system. We cannot even upload our application, yet our application is complete." (P01).

This finding leads to concerns about the NPO's ability to maintain essential services if resources are diverted to technology investments. NPO owners were also questioned as to whether the NPO would be able to secure additional funding or grants for the implementation of a digital administrative system. The findings below reflect several key challenges emerge that reflect their views on financial support for technology adoption:

- ***Awareness of funding sources and restriction***

Many NPO owner's express the lack of awareness for potential funding sources and grants specifically aimed at supporting technology initiatives within the NPO sector.

"No, we do not receive any funding calls or opportunities, but we are constantly seeking grants and support from local businesses and foundations." (P06).

"We explore various funding opportunities, but securing specific grants for technology adoption can be challenging. We do not receive much information about any organisations or funding that assist with technology for the NPO." (P03).

"We are actively pursuing grants and funding opportunities. However, competition for tech-specific funding is fierce, and we often need to modify proposals to align with donor interests." (P10).

NPO owners further expressed concerns regarding the restrictions that may accompany grant funding. There might be limitations on how funds can be utilized, which can hinder flexibility in addressing organisational needs and effectively implementing digital systems tailored to the funding specific contexts.

- ***Challenges in securing funding***

Despite the awareness of current available funding options, several NPO owners frequently report challenges in securing grants for digital administrative systems. The findings indicate that majority of NPOs in Durban are competing for securing funding's for each respective NPO, which turns out into a competition as participants reported below:

“We face competition from other NPOs for these funds. All NPOs compete for the same fund, which is challenging to secure funding.” (P04).

“We continually apply for grants and reach out to local businesses for sponsorship, though competition for tech-focused funding can be high.” (P05).

“We actively seek grants and partnerships with local business to support technology initiatives, but funding for digital projects is often competitive and limited amongst the NPO sector.” (P07).

“At the moment, it is challenging, especially in South Africa. Not only us but many NPO’s struggle for funds. Currently, we received a budget cut and it has affected our workload.” (P09).

These challenges include a competitive grant landscape, complex application processes, and a lack of clarity on grant eligibility and requirements. As a result, some owners feel discouraged from pursuing funding opportunities.

Overall, the findings illustrate that NPO owners generally perceive additional funding and grants as vital for the successful implementation of digital administrative systems. While they are aware of available certain opportunities and recognize the importance of funding for overcoming financial barriers, challenges related to competition for the funding, restrictions, and the need for long-term support persist. By understanding these perceptions and addressing obstacles in securing grants, NPOs can better position themselves to access the necessary resources for effective digital transformation. Enhanced collaboration, demonstrated impact, and a focus on sustainability in funding models will be key to fostering successful technology adoption in the NPO sector.

The findings indicate that NPO owners possess an understanding of the potential barriers and resistance that can arise from employees and stakeholders during the digital transformation. NPO owner’s perceptions highlight the importance of effective communication, NPO staff adaptability, and stakeholder engagement in mitigating resistance. Additionally, addressing fears related to job security, demonstrating the benefits of changes, and providing adequate training and support are crucial strategies identified by owners to facilitate successful transitions. By proactively managing these challenges, NPO leaders can foster an organisational environment

conducive to growth and innovation, ultimately enhancing the digital transformation effectiveness within the NPO.

5.2.4.4.10 Strategies for the implementation of a digital administrative system

This question presents the findings related to NPO owners' s insight on what strategies should be implemented for ensuring the smooth adoption of digital administrative systems. Several common themes have emerged regarding the approaches that can facilitate successful implementation. The findings are summarized below:

- ***Comprehensive training***

NPO owners consistently emphasis on the importance of providing thorough training and ongoing support for NPO staff during the adoption of digital systems.

“Comprehensive training programs, phased implementation, and creating feedback loops for employees will facilitate smoother adoption.” (P03).

Additionally, NPO owners believe that investing in capacity-building measures helps ensure that employees feel confident and competent in using new technologies, which is crucial for minimizing resistance and maximizing utilization.

On the other hand, P04 expressed below:

“Providing the necessary equipment and training to NPOs.” (P04).

Owners acknowledge the importance of training and resources for the successful implementation of the digital administrative system. Recognizing these recommendations as part of the implementation strategies, ensures that organisations can sustain the NPO digital initiatives.

- ***Clear Communication of Benefits***

A recurring theme among NPO owners is the necessity of clearly communicating the benefits for adopting digital administrative systems to all involved stakeholders.

“Providing thorough training and establishing a support system for employees, as well as communicating the benefits of the system, would be essential for successful adoption.” (P05).

On the other hand, P09 pointed out that the benefits of the digital administrative system should benefit all staff and not only selected members from the NPO below.

“Open communication about the benefits of the system, and gradual implementation are crucial for success. Ongoing training and support of the new system to all staff and not selected members only.” (P09).

Owners perceive that articulating how technology can enhance efficiency, transparency, and overall mission effectiveness can mitigate apprehension and resistance to change.

- ***Phased implementation approach***

NPO owners often recommend a phased approach to implementation. By rolling out new systems in stages, organisations can manage the transition more effectively, allowing for adjustments based on feedback and reducing the potential for overwhelming staff with too much change at once.

“A user-friendly implementation of each stage with strategies that reflect a strong representation of the technology’s benefits, can foster a smoother transition. Ongoing support after rollout will also be critical.” (P10).

- ***Ongoing technical support***

Owners stress on the necessity of having strong technical support available during and after implementation of the digital administrative system.

“Ongoing technical support are crucial to ensure a successful transition from a manual system to a digital system.” (P08).

The findings indicate that NPO owners possess a clear understanding of the required strategies needed for the smooth adoption of digital administrative systems. Access to reliable technical assistance helps resolve issues quickly, alleviating frustrations and ensuring that staff can effectively use the digital systems without prolonged disruptions. By prioritizing comprehensive training, clear communication of benefits for all staff and a phased implementation process, NPOs can effectively address potential challenges and facilitate a successful transition. These strategic insights can guide NPOs in implementing effective digital solutions that align with the NPO missions and enhance the operational capacity in a sustainable manner.

The last question offered an opportunity for NPO owners to reflect the individual view of any additional information that would assist NPOs for the adoption of a digital administrative system.

Below is some participant’s response:

“We believe that enhancing our administrative capabilities through digital tools will not only improve efficiency but also amplify our organisational impact in the community.” (P03).

“Investing in technology is vital for enhancing our administrative efficiency. By digitizing processes, we can better serve our organisation’s mission and the children we support, making data-driven decisions that lead to improved outcomes.” (P05).

“I think it is important to address the technological gaps, which is essential for us to meet the increasing demand for our rehabilitation services effectively. Collaboration with tech partners and investing in capacity building for our staff will be vital for our long-term sustainability.” (P07).

“Technology will be transformative for our organisation in improving administrative efficiency and enhancing our outreach capabilities. Collaborating with tech companies or obtaining pro-bono support could significantly reduce implementation hurdles, allowing us to better serve individuals with albinism.” (P10).

The findings indicate that NPO owners have a positive and are eager for additional information across the adoption of a digital administrative system. By addressing these informational needs, the NPO can enhance the readiness and confidence in embracing digital solutions that align with the NPO mission and improve the NPO operational activities.

The overall findings from this section illuminate the perceptions of NPO owners, regarding the NPO current administrative challenges and the potential for developing a new digital administrative system. Through qualitative face to face interviews with NPO owners, several key themes emerged that highlight both the obstacles faced and the opportunities for improvement in administrative processes.

Firstly, NPO owners collectively identified a range of administrative challenges, including resource constraints, the complexity of regulatory compliance, inadequate technology infrastructure, and the need for streamlined processes. Many participants had reported that the burden of administrative tasks often detracts from the NPO core missions, leading to frustration and inefficiencies. These challenges are exacerbated by a reliance on volunteers and limited funding, which can hinder the effectiveness of the NPO operations.

In addressing these challenges, the research found a strong interest among NPO owners in the development of a new digital administrative system. Participants expressed optimism about the potential benefits of a tailored digital system designed to meet the specific needs of the non-profit sector, such as automated reporting, donor management, and data management. However, the shift to a digital framework also raises concerns regarding implementation costs, the need for staff training, and the importance of ensuring user-friendly interfaces that accommodate varying levels of technological proficiency among all stakeholders within the NPO.

5.3 Summary

In summary, the findings highlight a clear recognition among NPO owners in eThekweni Municipality of the current limitations in the NPO administrative processes and a proactive desire to seek digital transformation solutions. The path forward involves not only addressing the challenges identified but also implementing strategic partnerships to develop a comprehensive digital administrative system that enhances the NPO's overall efficiency and effectiveness.

5.4 Face-to-face interview sessions with NPO managers

The first section of findings introduces the background information of the NPO managers. Thereafter, the emerging themes from the semi-structured face-to-face interview sessions with NPO managers are presented. An analysis of the data obtained from the open-ended questions resulted in identification of the themes and sub-themes are highlighted.

5.4.1. Section A: Personal details

In this section, the findings relating to participant's personal details and work experience are discussed.

5.4.1.1 Duration of being an NPO managers

The analysis of the data collected from NPO manager regarding the duration of being a manager, the data reveals below that there is a diverse tenure length among NPO centre managers. On the next page in Table 5.3, the following findings are presented then discussed.

Table 5.3 Participants duration of being an NPO managers

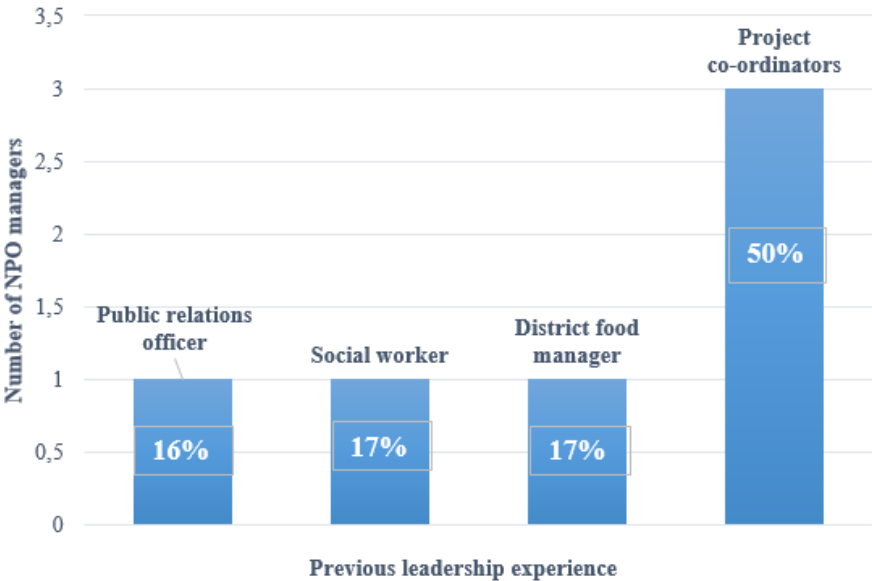
Duration of being an NPO Manager	Participants response rate	Participant
0-1 year	17%	P12
2-3 year	33%	P14, P15
4-5 year	17%	P16
5 or more year	33%	P11, P13

The findings in Table 5.3 indicate that 17% participant represents those who have been NPO manager’s role for a short duration and that this participant are relatively new to the role. On the other hand, 33% represent individuals who have served as NPO managers for a slightly longer period, between two to three years. This group of NPO managers may bring some experience but still may be in the early stages of their management careers. Similar to the first percentage of 17% of NPO managers indicates a small proportion of participants who are at the very early stages of their managerial journey, which might emphasise the turnover or entry point into NPO management level. Lastly, 33% NPO managers reflected a larger group who have been in their roles for a few years, suggesting level of stability and possibly more experienced in their managerial responsibilities. Overall, the distribution suggests that the majority of participants have relatively short tenures as NPO managers, which might point to trends in turnover or entry into the field.

5.4.1.2 NPO manager’s previous leadership experience

Previous work experience in leadership provide acumens into the leadership dynamics, skill sets, and operational focus of these organisations. The subsequent findings noted in Figure 5.3 highlights the NPO’s leadership previous work experience in leadership on the next page.

Figure 5.3 NPO manager’s previous leadership experience



NPO Managers were questioned about their previous leadership experience to provide insights into the backgrounds of the participants before assuming their current roles. In Figure 5.3, 16% indicates that a small segment of the NPO managers previously worked in public relations. This experience may have equipped them with skills in communication, community engagement, and stakeholder management, which are valuable in promoting the NPO's mission and activities. Similarly, a slightly larger group of 17% had experience as social workers. This background likely provides them with a strong understanding of community needs and the ability to interact empathetically with various populations, which is crucial in the non-profit sector. Another 17% of participants previously held roles as district food managers. Experience in this area may indicate competencies in resource management, logistics, and program implementation, particularly relevant to NPOs focused on food security and related initiatives. The largest group at 50% indicates that half of the NPO managers have prior experience as project coordinators. This suggests that these individuals are well-versed in managing teams, overseeing projects, and achieving specific objectives, which are essential skills for effective NPO management.

Overall, these findings suggest that NPO managers come from diverse professional backgrounds, with a significant emphasis on roles that require strong organisational, communication, and community-focused skills. The predominant experience as project coordinators highlights the importance of project management expertise in the non-profit sector.

5.4.2 Themes and sub-themes emerging from semi-structured face to face interview sessions with NPO managers

This section details emerging themes from the semi-structured face to face interview sessions with NPO managers. An analysis of the data obtained from the open-ended questions resulted in identification of the themes and sub-themes highlighted in Table 5.4 below.

Table 5.4: Themes and sub-themes emerging from semi-structured face to face interview sessions with NPO managers

Theme	Sub-theme
1. Exploration of the NPO’s current administrative processes.	1.1 Governance and compliance 1.2 Resource allocation and management 1.3 Communication flow 1.4 Documentation and record-keeping
2. Current digital technologies adopted by the NPOs.	2.1 Communication and marketing tools
3. Assessing the factors that affect the administrative processes at the NPO.	3.1 Organisational culture and leadership 3.2 Economic and social context 3.3 Technology readiness and accessibility
4. Development of a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs.	4.1 User-centric design 4.2 Integration with existing systems 4.3 Data security and privacy

5.4.2.1 Theme 1: Exploration of the NPO’s current administrative processes

Exploring these administrative processes allows for a critical assessment of existing practices, identifies areas for improvement, and highlights opportunities for streamlining operations. As the NPO sector in South Africa evolves, understanding and addressing the intricacies of current administrative processes is crucial for enhancing the overall effectiveness of NPOs. This exploration ultimately aims to support NPOs in optimising the administrative functions, empowering them to focus on impactful programming and services that benefit the communities they serve.

5.4.2.1.1 Governance and compliance

Effective board engagement is considered vital. Managers noted that regular board meetings and active participation in governance activities promote accountability and strategic alignment. Below participants express the following:

“We have a strong leadership in our NPO, who constantly reminds us that work has to be done, deadline to meet, DSD reports are due. That is how we show accountability.” (P12)

“We follow instructions from the top and it is filtered back to us. We then would have to implement it into our department and lastly, have to report back to the main leader of the NPO. It is a streamlined process with strong leadership.” (P14)

Discussions with NPO managers revealed a strong commitment to ethical leadership, with many emphases on the importance of leading by example in terms of compliance and ethical behaviour. P13 and P15 highlighted below:

“Whatever we do within the NPO, it is aligned with DSD requirements because we get our certification from them. 11 of our residence are funded by DSD as well. We use to use the healthcare app for our NPO...but it became too expensive and we had to drop it. For accurate payroll system, we use pastel. All our DSD reports are conducted on the spreadsheet and the only thing manual is our signatures.” (P13).

“We follow rules, regulations and protocols under the NPO and DSD. Everything.” (P15).

“We develop and prioritises resource allocation for our programs, staffing, and utilities. We also engage in revenue management through various fundraising efforts and consider membership in relevant organizations for networking and support. Regular staff meetings are held bi-weekly to discuss progress and challenges. We prepare reports each quarter for DSD, stakeholders and funders that cover activities and financial statuses. Our fundraising initiatives include community events, partnerships with local businesses, and online campaigns. We also solicit donations and grants, focusing on specific needs such as equipment and training for the children and their families. We maintain a database for tracking client information and improvements, facilitate training sessions, and manage volunteer coordination.” (P16).

While managers understand the reporting to demonstrate accountability, many have expressed managers also recognised the importance of transparency and ethical leadership in building trust with stakeholders. Continuing to address these areas can foster improved operational effectiveness and impact in the communities these organisations serve.

5.4.2.1.2 Resource allocation and management

Effective resource allocation typically begins with a thorough needs assessment. Managers reported that understanding community needs is essential for justifying the allocation of resources. As P14 explained below:

“The resource usage depends on tasks but in an NPO there is a lot of admin that takes place.”

NPO managers highlighted the importance of practices, including regular monitoring and reporting of financial performance. Most NPOs maintain strict protocols for expenditure tracking and financial approvals.

Due to budget constraints, many NPOs rely heavily on volunteers. Effective recruitment, training, and management of volunteers are essential for maximizing their contributions.

Many managers cited funding instability as a significant challenge affecting resource allocation. Fluctuations in donor priorities and economic conditions can lead to uncertainty in budget planning. P11 explained the following sentiments:

“Given the resources we have, the current resources is efficient...but I do know that the world is evolving into the digital phase, and we can be far more efficient and effective if we go digital.”

The bureaucratic requirements associated with funding compliance often divert resources from programmatic activities. Managers expressed a desire for streamlined administrative processes to improve operational efficiency.

5.4.2.1.3 Communication flow

Managers emphasise the importance of regular meetings (e.g., staff meetings, board meetings, and project team meetings) to facilitate open communication. However, some participants indicated that with communication flow, all NPO staff members need to work together for the sustainability of the NPO. P13 emphasised below:

“We all have work to do and deadlines to meet...however we must have our meetings and when it comes to fundraising, everyone has to get involved. All tools down and everyone must get involved with the event. No one gets left behind, no one folding their hands and sitting. We do team effort, and it is all transparent.”

Managers highlighted the importance of building relationships and maintaining regular updates with stakeholders to foster trust and support. Managers reported that high workloads can lead to communication breakdowns, as staff may prioritize immediate tasks over communication efforts. This can result in a lack of clarity regarding responsibilities and organisational objectives. P11 expressed the following:

“We use emails, Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp...but it is not so effective. With the amount of workload, we do not have the capacity to run it”

While many organisations strive to foster an open and transparent communication environment, barriers such workload constraints pose ongoing challenges.

5.4.2.1.4 Documentation and record-keeping

NPOs in South Africa are required to comply with various legal frameworks, including the Non-profit Organisations Act of 1997 and the Companies Act. This compliance mandates that organisations maintain specific records, including registration documents, financial records, meeting minutes, and annual reports. Proper financial documentation is critical. This includes accounts payable and receivable, bank statements, invoices, receipts, and payroll records. Most NPOs maintain computerized accounting systems to manage their financial documentation as below participants describe the NPO administration:

“We have a admin manager who co-ordinates the admin process for the entire NPO. She has an assistant who compiles documentation for the NPO as well. Compulsory documentation includes minutes for meetings, beneficiary records, payroll records, invoices, accounts, tax and receipts for record-keeping.” (P11).

Documentation of board meetings, including agendas, minutes, and resolutions, is also essential for governance. Managers often emphasize the importance of documenting discussions and decisions to create accountability. NPOs must adhere to requirements set by the South African

Revenue Service (SARS) regarding financial documentation, especially if they seek tax-exempt status. This includes keeping detailed financial records and submitting annual tax returns. These records help track important NPO program effectiveness and assess outcomes. P13 explains below

“It is important for an NPO to keep track and control of all documentations and records within an NPO. The control is important because there are too many loop holes in the system and one error or loss, you lose track of any documentation process. For instance, in our NPO, some families of those enrolled in our NPO donate items for them. We do keep track of it on the PC. We make sure that the resident it was intended for, receives it. Nothing goes at a loss or goes missing. Because then we end up with a bad reputation.” (P13).

NPOs are often required to produce regular financial and programmatic reports for stakeholders, including funders and regulatory bodies. The accuracy and comprehensiveness of documentation directly impact the quality of these reports. However, it was found that some NPO managers are operating under demanding work environments. P12 expresses below:

“Everything must be recorded manually. All interactions, visits must be recorded. Monthly stats for DSD reports must be recorded. All these processes are not efficient even though it is necessary. We spend more time doing admin work than community work. Daily, we do 8 hours of work, even when we receive calls, we have to record it manually.” (P12)

While many organisations are making strides in adopting digital systems and establishing robust practices, challenges such as resource constraints, capacity building needs, and high staff turnover persist. By focusing on best practices, such as developing clear protocols, providing training, and utilizing appropriate software solutions, NPOs can enhance their documentation and record-keeping processes, ultimately strengthening their ability to serve their communities effectively.

5.4.3.2 Theme 2: Current digital technologies adopted by the NPOs

NPO managers identified that digital technologies are instrumental in enhancing monitoring and evaluation processes, allowing NPOs to collect and analyse data more effectively. This capability is particularly important in a sector where demonstrating measurable impact is crucial for securing funding and maintaining donor trust. However, it is important to note that digital tools

need to support the current business models, enabling NPOs to afford the digital technology and conduct the NPO operations effortlessly.

5.4.3.2.1 Communication and marketing tools

Email remains one of the most commonly used communication tools among majority of NPOs for formal correspondence, newsletters, and updates. Platforms like Gmail and Microsoft 365 are widely used for their user-friendly interfaces and integration capabilities with other applications. It was also noted that messaging applications like WhatsApp, Telegram, and Facebook messenger have gained popularity among NPOs for the ability to facilitate instant communication among staff and volunteers. These tools offer group chat functionalities, making it easier to share updates and coordinate efforts in real-time. P16 explained the following:

“Yes, we use Microsoft Word, Excel for the basic spreadsheet software for budgeting and tracking our finances. We also utilise social media platforms for outreach and a WhatsApp for internal communication among staff.”

The affordability and accessibility of mobile messaging applications make them particularly appealing for NPOs, even in areas with limited internet connectivity. Many organisations use these apps to communicate with beneficiaries who may not have access to more formal communication channels.

The exploration of communication tools adopted by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality underscores their importance in enhancing collaboration, engagement, and outreach efforts. NPOs can improve internal processes, connect with stakeholders, and build strong relationships with the communities they serve.

5.4.3.3 Theme 3: Assessing the factors that affect the administrative processes at the NPO

Assessing the factors that affect the administrative processes of NPOs is critical for understanding how these organisations operate and achieve their missions. NPOs play a vital role in addressing social challenges, providing essential services, and fostering community development. However, they often face a unique set of challenges that can impact their administrative efficiency and organisational effectiveness.

5.4.3.3.1 Organisational culture and leadership

Organisational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, and practices that shape the behaviour of individuals within an organisation. In NPOs, a strong and positive culture can enhance collaboration, motivation, and employee engagement, which are crucial for achieving organisational goals. Participants were questioned about the type of support or training the NPO receives from the municipality and DSD KZN. Below is the key mixed responses:

“No support or training at all.” (P11)

“No” (P12)

“Yes. They have workshops but it feels more like a tick-box activity. Like how to fill out the new documents for DSD forms. At the end of the day, we do everything correctly but we do not receive funding on time. So, nothing new comes out of these workshops.” (P13).

“Not that I am aware of.” (P14)

“Yes, there are some workshops and training sessions offered by local tech organisations aimed at helping NPOs improve their technology usage, but we just do not have the time to attend.” (P16).

Organisations lacking a culture of adaptability may struggle to implement necessary changes in the administrative processes, affecting overall performance. Participants were asked about any challenges or barriers that are affecting the administrative work flow. Below is the response:

“Previous years, we did receive a lot of support from DSD. However, recently our budget was cut off twice. We had two options to conduct in our NPO, which was either restructuring or letting people go. We chose restructuring. We didn’t cut down on staff, staff were given more roles to take on and no one was let go. All due to the budget cut. The system is failing us and DSD is failing NPOs.” (P11).

On the other hand, P16 explained issues surrounding the demographics factor with administration within the NPO:

“The tech-savviness of our staff varies, with some being very comfortable with technology and others less so. This disparity influences our adoption rate as we must ensure that all employees can effectively use any new tools or software introduced.”

Transformational leaders, for example, inspire and motivate employees by fostering a shared vision and encouraging collaborative efforts. This can lead to higher levels of commitment and productivity. On the other hand, authoritarian leadership may stifle creativity, discourage input from staff, resulting in bureaucratic ‘tick-box’ processes that hinder effective operational efficiency. Addressing these elements is essential for NPOs to optimize their operations, achieve their missions, and effectively respond to the needs of the communities they serve.

5.4.3.3.2 Economic and social context

NPOs heavily rely on various funding sources, including government grants, private donations, corporate sponsorships, and international aid. Economic fluctuations can significantly affect the availability and stability of these funding sources. Some participants expressed their understanding with this statement:

“Globally, not only South Africa but worldwide, we know and understand the economic situation that is taking place. It is difficult to find funders. Our NPO, instead of receiving funders, funders are dropping because they cannot afford.” (P11).

In times of economic downturns, such as during recessions or financial crises, NPOs may experience reduced funding, leading to budget cuts, staff layoffs, and limitations in program implementation. This can hinder the NPO ability to maintain efficient administrative processes. Economic factors often translate to resource limitations for NPOs, making it challenging to allocate adequate funds for administrative operations. Smaller organisations may struggle with insufficient infrastructure, leading to ineffective systems and processes.

5.4.3.3.3 Technology readiness and accessibility

Technology readiness and accessibility are fundamental factors influencing the administrative processes of NPOs in South Africa. As NPOs navigate an increasingly digital landscape, understanding the implications of these factors is critical for enhancing efficiency, communication, and service delivery. Below are key insights into how NPO technology readiness and accessibility impact administrative processes within NPOs in eThekweni Municipality: NPO

managers were questioned about the current digital technologies being used with their NPOs. Below are the responses:

“Yes, we have the normal social apps but we wanted to be the leaders in the market. Hence, we implemented a app called the ‘Healthcare app’ within our organisation. It worked well for our organisation...however it became too costly to maintain. It costed up to R2000 and we could no longer afford it and ended our subscription in February 2025.” (P13).

Technology readiness and accessibility are critical to the administrative effectiveness of Non-Profit Organisations in South Africa.

5.4.3.4 Theme 4: Development of a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs

Many NPOs face significant operational hurdles, including limited resources, fragmented administrative processes, and compliance with regulatory requirements. To navigate these challenges and enhance their effectiveness, there is a growing need for the development of digital systems that streamline administrative processes.

A well-designed digital system can transform how NPOs manage their operations by automating routine tasks, centralizing data, and facilitating communication among staff, volunteers, and stakeholders. By improving operational efficiency, these systems can free up valuable time and resources, allowing organisations to focus on the NPOs core mission of serving communities.

5.4.3.4.1 User-centric design

The goal of user-centric design is to create interfaces and features that meet the needs and preferences of the actual users of the system such as staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, and stakeholders. By focusing on the users, the digital system can enhance usability, increase engagement, and facilitate the administrative processes of NPOs. P14 indicated below:

“If they make an app that is user-friendly and affordable, then you will get a lot of other NPOs joining the platform. All types of NPOs. I mean, everyone wants to go digital and want to be part of the digital movement. (P14).

It is evident that NPOs are in favour of going the digital transformation route if the system is user-friendly to all in society. The user centric design would have to have a clear navigation and

allowing for usage to complete tasks without frustration. It is also important to note that participants expressed that the digital system must comply with accessibility standards, allowing users with disabilities to interact with the system effectively. This may include features like screen reader compatibility, adjustable font sizes, and easy colour differentiation for visually impaired users.

On the other hand, P16 pointed out that there is a need for the new digital system to function with offline capabilities below:

“A digital system should include a user-friendly database for client information, fundraising tracking capabilities, performance management features, and communication tools for collaboration among staff and volunteers. It should be a system that is able to function offline as well. So, that NPOs can function with the app in areas where network is limited.”

Given that many users in South Africa may access the digital system via mobile devices, design with a mobile-first approach, ensuring that the system is fully responsive and functions seamlessly across different screen sizes and devices. It is noted that the app should incorporate offline capabilities, enabling users to access critical features and data even in areas with limited internet connectivity. This is particularly important for NPOs serving rural communities.

Some NPO managers highlighted that the digital system should be user friendly to the community as well. P14 explains further below:

“It would be nice to see if we could have an option on resident or community feedback and a live feature. The use of emoji’s is perfect to evaluate the feedback on the NPOs work or projects. The end result can be a bar graph chart which we could use in our meetings and reports.”

It is evident that by reviewing community feedback on the NPOs projects, it would provide support increases from the community towards the NPO and it return, it would improve the NPOs staff morale. Additionally, the emoji evaluation system would allow users to report any issues and provide insights into the community’s experiences.

Implementing user-centric design principles in the development of a digital system for NPOs in eThekweni Municipality is essential for creating an efficient and effective administrative

solution. By understanding user needs, involving users throughout the design process, ensuring usability and accessibility, and providing ongoing support and feedback mechanisms, NPOs can develop a digital system that significantly enhances their administrative processes.

5.4.2.4.2 Integration with existing systems

In the development of a digital system for NPOs in eThekweni Municipality, NPO managers were asked about what should be in the development of the new digital system. Below are some of the responses:

“We definitely would need training for the new system. Also, the thing about devices. We have devices but what about the other organisations who do not have devices. Remember, everyone wants to move forward but it must be affordable to the NPO business model. It should integrate with the existing system.” (P13).

NPO managers identified that the development of the new digital system should be built on compatible current technologies and standards that allow for interoperability with existing systems. The implementation of training programs for NPO staff should include aspects on how to use both the new system and any integrated existing systems. Familiarising users with the digital system would promote adoption among the NPO.

On the other hand, some managers highlighted the costing factor for the new digital system. P14 expressed below:

“It’s definitely the pricing factor involved. NPOs do not have a lot of funds and we rely on funds to upkeep the NPO itself. We look at the pricing itself and also the maintenance time. Maintenance of the system should be overnight not days or weeks.” (P14).

Furthermore, P15 explained the following:

“I think with the digital system, it would be expensive but on the other hand, other costs would be cut down.”

By conducting thorough assessments, ensuring compatibility, safeguarding data integrity, and providing effective training and support, NPOs can successfully adopt new technologies while maintaining the functionality and reliability of their existing operations. By reviewing the cost

factor, the strategic integration would strengthen the capacity of NPOs to implement the digital system within the NPO.

5.4.3.4.3 Data security and privacy

NPOs that work with vulnerable populations must ensure that sensitive information, such as beneficiary details, affidavits and health records, is kept confidential. Managers often implement policies that dictate how sensitive information is handled. Participants were asked about the security and privacy of the NPO sensitive data. Below are the responses:

“With our NPO, we have an external security company that is safe-guarding our data and sensitive data. We do hope they are...They also keep a backup of our files.” (P11)

“We have passwords protecting all of our NPO data. The only thing that is manual is our signature” (P13).

“Everyone has their own password.” (P14).

“We implement password protection on sensitive information and use secure methods for storing data. Regular training on data privacy and compliance is conducted for all staff to minimize risks.” (P16)

NPOs handle sensitive information about beneficiaries, donors, and operational activities. As such, implementing robust security and privacy measures protects institutional integrity and builds trust with stakeholders. Ensure compliance with relevant data protection regulations, such as the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) in South Africa.

A digital system tailored to the unique needs of South African NPOs can enhance transparency and accountability, foster better stakeholder engagement, and support data-driven decision-making. By embracing technology, NPOs can not only improve the internal processes but also increase their impact on the communities they serve, ultimately contributing to a more effective and sustainable non-profit sector in South Africa.

5.6 Focus group discussion with NPO administrative employees

The first section of findings introduces the background information of the NPO administration employees. Thereafter, the emerging themes from the four (04) focus group discussion with NPO administrative employees are presented. An analysis of the data obtained from the open-ended questions resulted in identification of the themes and sub-themes are highlighted.

5.6.1. Section A: Personal details

In this section, the findings relating to participant's personal details and work experience are discussed.

5.6.1.1 Duration of being an NPO administrative employees

The analysis of the data collected from NPO administrative employees regarding the duration of being administrative employee. The data reveals below that there is a varied tenure length among the employees. Below in Table 5.5, the following findings are presented then discussed.

Table 5.5 Participants duration of being an NPO administrative employee

Duration of being an NPO administrative employee	Participants response rate	Participant
0-1 year	20%	P23, P28, P32, P33, P36, P40, P40, P41 and P43.
2-3 year	27%	P02, P09, P12, P13, P14, P16, P22, P26, P30, P35 and P39.
4-5 year	25%	P01, P03, P07, P10, P15, P24, P27, P31, P37 and P38.
5 or more year	28%	P04, P05, P06, P08, P11, P25, P29, P34, P42, P44 and P45.

The analysis of the four (4) focus group discussions with administrative employees in NPO reveals a diverse range of tenure among staff, indicating varying levels of experience and

exposure to the organization's administrative processes. The distribution of employee tenure is as follows:

0 to 1 Year

A significant portion 20% of employees are relatively new to their roles, suggesting that there is a substantial influx of fresh talent. These individuals may bring new perspectives and modern approaches but likely require ongoing training and support to navigate the NPO's established administrative practices effectively.

2 to 3 Years

This group, comprising 27% of the employees, represents those who have gained a moderate level of experience. They are likely familiar with daily operations and may serve as intermediaries between new hires and more experienced staff, facilitating knowledge transfer and mentoring.

4 to 5 Years

Employees in this category of 25% have a solid understanding of the organisation's processes. Their tenure suggests they have developed a deeper institutional knowledge and may be positioned to advocate for process improvements and share best practices within their teams, as they are familiar with both the organisation's history and operational context.

5 or More Years

The longest-serving group with an amount of 28% of employees brings invaluable experience and continuity to the organisation. Their extensive time in role typically contributes to a strong understanding of the NPO's mission, culture, and administrative challenges. These employees may play a crucial role in strategic decision-making and mentoring newer staff, leveraging their insights to influence administrative processes positively.

Overall, the distribution of administrative employees based on their duration in role shows a balanced mixture of experience levels within the organisation. This diversity can be beneficial, as it enables the blending of fresh ideas from newer employees with the institutional knowledge of long-serving staff. This dynamic can foster a culture of learning, knowledge sharing, and continuous improvement within the NPO's administrative functions, positioning the organisation to adapt effectively to both internal and external challenges

5.6.1.2 NPO administrative employees’ previous administrative experience

The distribution of previous work experience in administrative role provides valuable insights into the skill sets and operational focus of these organisations. The subsequent findings noted below in Table 5.6, highlights the NPO’s administrative employees’ previous administrative experience.

Table 5.6: NPO administrative employees’ previous administrative experience

Previous administrative experience	Percentage of employees
Customer service	13%
Administration	62%
Call centre agent	5%
Event planner	2%
School secretary	5%
Project administrator	2%
Data entry clerk	2%
Bank teller clerk	2%
Receptionist	5%
Executive secretary	2%

The analysis of the previous work experience of administrative employees within the NPO reveals an assorted background that significantly contributes to their current roles. The distribution of employee prior work experience is highlighted below:

- ***Administrative Experience***

A substantial majority of 62% of employees have previous experience in administrative roles. This strong foundation in administration equips them with essential skills in office management, document handling, scheduling, and organisational procedures. Their proficiency likely enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of various administrative tasks within the NPO.

- ***Customer Service***

Findings show 13% of employees come from customer service backgrounds. This experience contributes to their ability to engage and communicate effectively with various stakeholders, including donors, volunteers, and beneficiaries. These employees often excel in interpersonal skills, empathy, and problem-solving, which are critical in the non-profit sector.

- ***Receptionist***

A smaller segment of 5% has worked as receptionists. This experience typically involves managing front-office operations, handling inquiries, and providing a welcoming environment for visitors. Such competencies are valuable for creating positive first impressions and managing office communications effectively.

- ***Call center agent***

Also comprising 5% of employees, those with prior experience as call center agents bring skills in customer interaction, data recording, and handling high volumes of inquiries. Their ability to navigate customer concerns and provide solutions quickly can enhance the NPO's responsiveness.

- ***Event planner***

Findings indicate 2% percent of employees have experience in event planning, providing them with skills in organizing, coordinating logistics, and managing stakeholder expectations for events. This experience can be beneficial for NPOs that frequently engage in community outreach or fundraising events.

- ***School secretary***

The 5% of employees have previously worked as school secretaries, which involves administrative support in an educational setting. This experience may enhance their ability to work in structured environments, manage schedules, and handle sensitive information.

- ***Project Admin***

The results revealed the 2% of employees have held positions as project administrators. This experience contributes to skills in project coordination, monitoring progress, and ensuring project deadlines are met, which can be instrumental in managing NPO initiatives effectively.

- ***Data Entry***

A small segment of 2% has experience in data entry, highlighting their attention to detail and accuracy in managing and inputting information. These skills are important for maintaining data integrity within the organization.

- **Bank Clerk**

It was interesting to identify that 2% of employees have worked as bank clerks, which provides them with knowledge of financial processes and customer transactions. This background facilitates better financial management and accounting practices within the NPO.

- **Executive Assistant**

Finally, 2% of employees have served as executive assistants, which emphasis their skills in supporting senior management through efficient scheduling, correspondence, and operational support.

The various previous work experience of NPO administrative employees enhances their capabilities and contributes to the overall efficiency of the organisation. With a predominant background in administration of 62% complemented by experiences in customer service and other roles, employees can leverage their skills to address the unique challenges faced in the non-profit sector. This diverse expertise can foster a collaborative environment and help the NPO achieve its objectives more effectively.

5.6.2 Themes and sub-themes emerging from focus group discussion with NPO administrative employees

This section details emerging themes from the four (4) focus group discussion with NPO administrative employees. An analysis of the data obtained from the open-ended questions resulted in identification of the themes and sub-themes highlighted in Table 5.7 below.

Table 5.7: Themes and sub-themes emerging from focus group discussion with NPO administrative employees

Theme	Sub-theme
1. Exploration of the NPO’s current administrative processes.	1.1 Manual vs Automated 1.2 Resource usage 1.3 Tools and equipment 1.4 Challenges
2. Current digital technologies adopted by the NPOs.	2.1 Communication and marketing tools 2.2 Security and privacy of data
3. Assessing the factors that affect the administrative processes at the NPO.	3.1 Administration process successful cases 3.2 Accountability

4. Development of a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs.	4.1 Envision of a digital system 4.3 Barriers or resistance

5.6.2.1 Theme 1: Exploration of the NPO’s current administrative processes

Insights gathered from administrative employees reveal a mixture of traditional manual practices and the emerging use of automated systems. The findings indicate that while many NPOs continue to rely on manual administrative processes—such as paper-based record keeping and manual financial tracking.

Administrative staff have expressed both the challenges and advantages associated with their current practices. The manual processes are often time-consuming and prone to errors, leading to frustration and reduced job satisfaction among employees. In contrast, those NPOs that have adopted automated systems report improved accuracy, efficiency, and enhanced capacity to focus on mission-driven work. This introduction sets the stage for a deeper examination of how current administrative processes impact staff productivity, organisational effectiveness, and the overall ability of NPOs to serve their communities in the dynamic context of eThekweni Municipality.

5.6.2.1.1 Manual vs Automated

The examination of administrative processes in Non-Profit Organizations (NPOs) within eThekweni Municipality has shed light on the contrasting impacts of manual and automated systems. This comparative analysis reveals critical insights into efficiency, effectiveness, and challenges faced by NPOs in managing their operations. Manual processes, such as paper-based record-keeping and manual data entry, were found to be significantly time-consuming, often leading to delays in task completion and decision-making. Participants were questioned about the current administration processes for the NPOs. Below are key findings from the four focus groups:

"Very manual; it can be time-consuming." (P29).

"Manual systems predominate; we certainly lack integration." (P34).

"I would say quite manual; digital tools are limited." (P35).

"Our current system is predominantly manual. We rely a lot on paper documents. Sometimes, typing errors do occur." (P37).

Findings indicated that manual processes were prone to human errors, such as data entry mistakes, misfiling, or oversights in record-keeping, which could compromise the integrity of information. Manual administration often involved higher operational costs in terms of labour, printing, and storage of physical documents. Organisations incurred ongoing expenses related to paper supplies and storage facilities.

"For now, we are still using manual filing system, but we are looking into a digital system." (P15).

"We rely heavily on physical manual records at the moment. We use the basic spreadsheet on the PC to manage information." (P16).

While there are initial costs associated with implementing automated systems is challenging. Many NPOs expressed concerns that upfront costs of automation could be a barrier to adoption, particularly for smaller organizations with limited budgets. However, the potential for cost savings over time was recognized as an important consideration.

"We also use abit of both. However, we still store all data manually because of financial issues. We cannot afford to purchase items to store data."(P02).

"Adding on to the previous statement. We use mostly manual process in our NPO. This is due to the lack of training we have to use technology to complete admin tasks. We do need advanced technology to help us out."(P03).

Staff engaged in manual processes reported feelings of frustration and decreased job satisfaction due to repetitive tasks and the burden of administrative work. High workloads often detracted from their ability to contribute meaningfully to program delivery.

"I'd agree, manual processes dominate our administrative tasks. It is burdensome and overload of work." (P43).

The manual versus automated administrative processes in NPOs within eThekweni Municipality highlights that majority of NPOs in eThekweni Municipality still conduct administration processes manually with few automated processes. Organisations must weigh the initial investment against the potential for long-term savings and improved service delivery when considering a shift towards automation. These findings underscore the need for tailored support and training programs to facilitate successful transitions and maximise the benefits of automated administration.

5.6.2.1.2 Resource usage

The examination of resource usage in the administrative processes of NPOs in eThekweni Municipality has yielded several important insights regarding the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of their operations. Below are the key findings related to how these organisations utilise their resources—both human and material—in their administrative functions. Many NPOs operate with limited staffing, which often results in employees juggling multiple responsibilities, including fundraising, program development, and administrative tasks. This multitasking can lead to burnout and decreased job satisfaction. P38 explains below:

"We go through approximately 100 reams of paper a year; processing takes about 30 hours weekly. There is not enough staff to assistance with admin due to budget cuts. It has made our job challenging." (P38)

There is a notable lack of specialised administrative personnel, which hinders the efficiency of administrative processes. Organisations often rely on individuals without formal training in administration, leading to inconsistencies in practices and output quality. Additionally, it was found that many NPOs continue to rely heavily on paper for record-keeping and documentation, leading to significant material resource usage. This reliance not only increases costs (printing, storage) but also contributes to inefficiencies in information retrieval and management.

"I'd estimate 100 reams annually; it's quite paper-heavy here." (P02).

"We use a lot of paper and ask for donations like paper to conduct paperwork." (P11).

"We spend up to 2 to 3 hours." (P12).

"1 or 2 days to conduct manual admin tasks." (P13).

"It would normally deal with the cases we are dealing with, administrative tasks take up to 8 to 10 hours." (P15).

"I believe we're using about 40 reams and spending about 30 hours weekly." (P33).

The findings related to resource usage for administrative processes in NPOs in eThekweni Municipality highlight critical areas of concern and opportunity. Human resource limitations, financial constraints, material inefficiencies, and poor time management collectively hinder the potential effectiveness of these organisations. There is a clear need for targeted initiatives that address these challenges through enhanced training, investment in technology, and the adoption of more efficient processes. By optimising resource usage, NPOs can strengthen their administrative operations, ultimately leading to greater organisational impact and improved service delivery.

5.6.2.1.3 Tools and equipment

The analysis of tools and equipment utilised by administrative employees within NPOs in eThekweni Municipality reveals several critical subthemes that highlight the current landscape, usage patterns, and areas for improvement. Some NPO administrative employee's still conduct a manual system for storing files. P12 explains below:

"Manually we use shelving units, storage boxes, lock cabinets to store files."

On the other hand, the majority of employees rely on word processing software such as Microsoft Word for crafting documents, reports, and correspondence. This software is essential for creating professional materials that communicate organisational goals and activities. Below are the responses:

"My tasks rely heavily on Microsoft Office tools." (P23).

"My go-to tools are email, spreadsheets, and presentation software." (P26)

"The photocopier and office suite tools are core to my role." (P29).

"I rely on databases for tracking program participants." (P33).

"My laptop, printer, and Microsoft platform are essential for my daily tasks." (P37).

"I rely heavily on Microsoft Office, especially Word and Excel." (P38).

"E-mail and document management systems are vital for communication." (P39).

Additionally, it was found that the NPO administrative employees commonly use spreadsheet programs for DSD data entry, financial tracking, and reporting. These tools are integral for managing budgets, tracking donations, and analysing administrative data. The findings also highlight that participants use email services, NPO personalized email account or Gmail for the primary mode of communication among staff and with external partners.

However, one NPO administrative employee had indicated that the NPO administrative processes is purely manual and only the senior staff have access to technological tools and equipment. Below is P02 response:

“We do not have much technology or equipment as yet for all staff in our NPO. We store Documents are stored manually.”

The findings regarding tools and equipment used by NPO administrative employees in eThekweni Municipality reveal that while many organisations employ essential office software, communication tools, NPOs are lagging behind with technology. Bridging gaps in technology access and training can significantly empower administrative staff to perform their roles more effectively, ultimately contributing to the success of their organisations.

5.6.2.1.4 Challenges

The findings revealed several critical factors highlighting the challenges faced by the NPOs. These challenges significantly impact the efficiency and effectiveness of administrative operations. Many manual tasks, such as data entry and record-keeping, consume considerable time, leading to delays in processing information and completing administrative tasks. Employees reported feeling overwhelmed by the sheer volume of paperwork that needs to be managed manually. P05 expressed the following:

"We struggle with limited staff due to finance for such a broad workload." (P05)

The lack of digital integration often results in duplicated efforts, where employees must re-enter data across different formats or systems, further wasting time and resources. This redundancy can lead to frustration and decreased productivity. P01 exclaims below:

"The administration process is not very efficient; we lose a lot of time on redundant tasks." (P01).

"One issue is that we waste time on repetitive tasks that could be automated." (P39)

Furthermore, it was found that manual data entry heightens the risk of human error, such as inaccuracies in financial records or miscommunication in reports. These errors can have significant implications for decision-making and organisational credibility. P39 reiterates the sentiments below:

"The current administration process meets the basic needs but are prone to human error." (P39)

Employees noted that locating and retrieving necessary information from paper files or non-digitised records is frustrating and time-consuming. The inability to quickly access and analyse data limits responsiveness to stakeholder needs and reporting requirements. Below are the findings:

"The lack of a centralized system definitely hampers us." (P25).

"Yes, the biggest challenge is finance. There is not enough finance or budget for NPOs." (P13).

As participants previously indicated that due to budget cuts, many NPOs struggle with inadequate staff to handle the manual administrative workload. Employees reported feeling overburdened, particularly in small organisations where multitasking is common, leading to staff burnout and inefficiency.

The challenges associated with manual administration processes faced by NPO administrative employees in eThekweni Municipality are multifaceted and systemic. These challenges hinder operational efficiency and may adversely affect service delivery and stakeholder engagement. Recognising these challenges is the first step towards developing strategic solutions that can empower organisations to operate more efficiently in an evolving landscape.

5.6.2.2 Theme 2: Current digital technologies adopted by the NPOs.

The exploration of digital technologies adopted by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality reveals a significant shift towards the integration of digital solutions aimed at enhancing operational efficiency and effectiveness. As NPOs face increasing demands for transparency, accountability, and stakeholder engagement, the adoption of various digital tools has become essential for addressing these

Through the analysis of current practices, it is evident that while many corporate organisations have made strides in incorporating technology into their administrative processes, there remain gaps in integration and utilisation across the NPO sector. The insights gained from this assessment provide a foundation for identifying areas of improvement and opportunities for further technological advancement tailored to the unique needs of the non-profit sector.

5.6.2.2.1 Communication and marketing tools

The exploration of communication and marketing tools utilised by NPO administrative employees in eThekweni Municipality reveals various strategies and platforms that enhance organisational outreach, stakeholder engagement, and operational efficiency.

It was revealed that email remains the primary form of communication within and outside NPOs. Platforms such as Microsoft Outlook and Google mail (Gmail) are widely used for correspondence, sharing information, and updates with stakeholders, including donors, beneficiaries, and volunteers. Employees cite the importance of effective email management with the use of their own devices to maintain organised communication. The findings are presented below:

"We use our personal phones to conduct work." (P11)

"I rely on email and social media management tools."(P26)

Instant messaging tools such as WhatsApp and the South African Revenue Service (SARS) app are frequently employed for real-time communication among team members. These applications facilitate quick discussions and collaboration, particularly useful for on-the-go updates and informal exchanges. Below are the findings:

"I use WhatsApp for team communication regularly." (P07).

"I use SARS tools for managing tax information." (P09)

Furthermore, it was found that participants use various social media platforms, such as Facebook, Tik Tok and Instagram, are adopted for marketing and outreach efforts. NPOs use these platforms to promote events, share success stories, and engage with their communities. Employees

emphasis on social media's role in building awareness and connecting with younger demographics. P44 highlights below:

"Our team uses social media management applications such as Facebook or Instagram to coordinate our outreach." (P44).

Some NPOs maintain websites that serve as central hubs for information dissemination. Participant 40 explained that the NPO designs their own signage tools and advertises using design applications on their mobile devices. Employees highlighted that the importance of user-friendly design and regular content updates to attract visitors, hence they authentically design their own material.

"I frequently use signage tools like design apps for outreach materials." (P40).

The findings regarding the communication and marketing tools employed by NPO administrative employees in eThekweni Municipality illustrate a strategic approach to engaging stakeholders and promoting organisational initiatives.

5.6.2.2.2 Security and privacy of data

The analysis of security and privacy practices employed by administrative employees within NPOs in eThekweni Municipality reveals essential challenges and considerations in the management of sensitive data and communications. This theme highlights the significance of implementing effective security measures to protect organisational and stakeholder information. Participants indicated that the NPO conducts regular data backup practices are in place to prevent data loss resulting from system failures and accidental deletions. Employees noted that having backup systems, whether through USB or external drives, is vital for ensuring data availability and continuity of operations. P02 indicated below:

"Regular backups are done to prevent data loss."(P02)

It was identified that NPOs often employ role-based access control (RBAC) to restrict data access based on employee roles and responsibilities. This approach helped to minimize the risk of unauthorized access to sensitive information and ensures that individuals can only access data pertinent to their roles. Below are the findings:

"Access to databases is limited to authorized personnel only." (P01)

"We have strict password policies enforced across all platforms." (P06)

Additionally, it was found that many organisations had enforced strong password policies to secure access to digital platforms and documents. Employees emphasise the importance of regularly updating passwords and utilising multi-factor authentication to further enhance security.

"Access to databases is limited to authorized personnel only. For WhatsApp, we do not share sensitive information." (P11).

"Very few people access the database and case files. We have strict password policies enforced across all platforms." (P16).

"Limited access to files." (P13).

"We have strict password policies enforced across all platforms." (P22).

"We use strong passwords and change them regularly to protect our accounts." (P37)

NPOs are increasingly aware of the need to comply with data protection laws and regulations, such as the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) in South Africa. Employees highlighted the importance of training the integrating compliance into their administration processes to ensure the responsible handling of personal data.

"Training sessions are held to educate staff about handling confidential data." (P42)

Many organisations have established documentation related to their data protection policies, outlining procedures for managing confidential information. Employees emphasis that having clear policies enhances accountability and provides guidelines for best practices in data management. However, a startling finding was identified with P12 below:

"We are at risk as we do not have any security measures." (P12)

While many organisations have implemented various security measures, there remains a need for ongoing training, policy enhancement, and robust incident response strategies to effectively mitigate risks. By prioritising security and privacy, NPOs can better protect their operations, maintain stakeholder trust, and ensure compliance with legal obligations, ultimately supporting their mission and operational integrity.

5.6.2.3 Theme 3: Assessing the factors that affect the administrative processes at the NPO.

The focus group comprised diverse administrative staff members, each bringing unique perspectives based on their roles, experiences, and interactions within the organisation. Through structured discussions, several key themes emerged, highlighting both internal and external factors impacting administrative efficiency. The findings accentuate the need for tailored strategies that address these challenges, ultimately fostering an environment that supports the NPO's objectives while promoting streamlined administrative practices. By understanding these factors, NPOs can better position themselves to navigate the complexities of their operational landscape, enhance their administrative capabilities, and improve overall organisational performance.

5.6.2.3.1 Administration process successful cases

The exploration of manual administration processes within NPOs in eThekweni Municipality has identified several success cases that highlight effective practices despite challenges associated with manual operations. These cases demonstrate how certain strategies and approaches can lead to improved outcomes and efficiency. Several NPOs have developed standardised operating procedures for administrative tasks, which have significantly improved efficiency. By clearly defining workflows for processes such as record-keeping and reporting, organisations have minimized confusion and enhanced productivity among administrative staff. Below are the findings:

"We implemented a new filing system that has reduced retrieval times." (P04)

"We created a colour coded filing system for different operations within the NPO." (P13)

On the other hand, with South Africa's 'unique electricity situation', all business has to adapt to the electricity challenges of the country, including NPOs. P02 explains their NPO administration process during load shedding below:

"We try to complete administrative tasks and assist the community before load shedding begins. Due to our NPO not being able to afford either a generator or solar panel. It is a disadvantage." (P02).

It was also found that the implementation of checklists and templates for common administrative tasks, such as grant applications and meeting agendas, has led to more organised and thorough submissions. Employees reported that these tools help ensure that important steps are not overlooked, enhancing reliability in administrative functions. P35 explains below:

"Creating standardized templates reduced errors in documentation." (P35)

Many NPOs schedule regular meetings to discuss administrative updates and share progress on projects. These meetings foster open communication and teamwork, allowing staff to address challenges collaboratively and share best practices. As P38 echoes the finding below:

"Implementing weekly team meetings increased transparency and accountability." (P38)

It was also found that some NPOs have encouraged knowledge sharing among staff through informal gatherings and collaborative projects. Employees noted that sharing experiences and strategies for successful manual administration enhances collective expertise and improves task execution.

"The introduction of a feedback system helped guide our project adjustments effectively." (P45).

The findings surrounding manual administration success cases among NPO administrative employees in eThekweni Municipality illustrate that, despite the challenges inherent in manual processes, there are some effective practices and strategies that significantly enhance outcomes. By focusing on process management, community engagement, employee development, and adaptability, these organisations have demonstrated that success is achievable through thoughtful and strategic manual administration. These examples can serve as models for other NPOs aiming to improve their administrative efficiency and effectiveness in fulfilling their mission-driven goals.

5.6.2.3.2 Accountability

These findings reveal critical aspects related to transparency, responsibility, and integrity within their administration processes. These findings highlight how accountability is fostered, monitored, and embraced within the organisational culture of NPOs.

NPOs administrative employees tend to emphasise the importance of regular reporting on administrative activities, such as financial management, project updates, and overall progress. The involvement of governance bodies, such as DSD, boards of directors, in oversight activities reinforces accountability within NPOs. Employees noted that regular board meetings and oversight ensure that administrative actions align with the organisation's mission and ethical standards. Below are the findings:

"All project progress is documented and reviewed regularly along with our DSD Report." (P07)

"We keep handwritten notes or registers, receipts of purchases. All project progress is documented and reviewed regularly along with our DSD Report." (14).

"All project progress is documented and reviewed regularly along with our DSD Report." (P23).

"We publish DSD annual reports detailing our financial standing and project outcomes." (43).

The findings indicated that ethical leadership practices among management contribute to a culture of accountability. Employees reported that leaders who model responsible behaviour and transparency inspire similar values among staff, fostering an environment where accountability is a shared priority. Furthermore, below findings explain how some NPOs conduct accountability in their administration processes:

"We conduct audits to ensure funds are used properly."(P12)

"Documentation of all communications creates a record for accountability." (P41)

The findings on accountability among NPO administrative employees in eThekweni Municipality demonstrate the crucial role it plays in enhancing organisational effectiveness and fostering trust within the community. By establishing clear roles, implementing transparent reporting

mechanisms, and providing avenues for feedback, these organisations create a framework where accountability thrives. These practices provide valuable insights for other NPOs seeking to enhance accountability within their administrative processes.

5.6.2.4 Theme 4: Development of a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs.

In an era of rapid technological advancement, non-profit organisations (NPOs) face increasing pressure to optimise their administrative processes to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness. Participants highlighted a significant inefficiencies stemming from manual administrative processes, fragmented systems, and the time-consuming nature of administrative tasks. In response, NPO administrative employees expressed a collective desire for a cohesive digital solution that integrates key functions such as data management, communication, reporting, and compliance tracking. The key themes emerged from the discussions are presented below.

5.6.2.4.1 Envision of a digital system

The findings reveal how these employees perceive the role of digital systems in enhancing efficiency, data management, and overall organisational effectiveness. NPO administrative employees envision digital systems that could streamline workflows by automating repetitive tasks such as data entry and document management. The potential to reduce manual processes is seen as a significant opportunity to enhance overall operational efficiency and free up time for more strategic activities. Below are the findings:

"Audio to text, SARs with excel link to budget. Integration with accounting software for finances." (P10).

"Collaboration tools for project management." (P12).

"A user-friendly interface that's easy for all staff." (P03).

"Online fundraising initiatives. Automation of paperwork. I see it reducing paperwork significantly." (P11).

"A user-friendly interface that's easy for all staff." (P24).

"Real-time data entry and tracking features." (P25).

"Support for multi-language options for diverse staff." (P35).

"The ability to create and share visuals easily." (P36)

NPO administrative employees envision a centralised digital system for storing organisational data, including donor information, project documentation, and financial records. This consolidation would enhance data accessibility, reduce redundancy, and improve data integrity across the organisation. There is a strong emphasis on the need for digital systems that offer robust data analysis tools. Employees believe that improved analytical capabilities would allow for better decision-making, enabling organisations to identify trends, measure impact, and report on outcomes effectively.

NPO employees envision digital systems that prioritise user experience through intuitive interfaces and easy navigation. Ensuring that staff can quickly learn and adapt to new systems is essential for successful implementation and widespread adoption. Administrative employees highlighted the importance of customising digital systems to meet the unique needs of non-profit organisations. They believe that tailored solutions will enhance usability and effectiveness, addressing specific challenges faced in the sector.

The findings regarding the envision of a digital system by NPO administrative employees in eThekweni Municipality underscore a collective aspiration for enhanced efficiency, centralised data management, and improved collaborative capabilities. By focusing on user-friendly designs, robust security features, and adequate training support, these organisations strive to leverage technology effectively to overcome existing administrative challenges. Embracing digital systems is viewed as a transformative opportunity that can empower NPOs to achieve their missions more effectively and drive impactful change within their communities. These insights can guide future digitalisation efforts aimed at improving administrative processes in the non-profit sector.

5.6.2.4.2 Barriers and resistance

The investigation into barriers and resistance experienced by NPO administrative employees in eThekweni Municipality reveals various challenges that hinder effective administration

processes. These findings highlight internal and external factors contributing to resistance to change, inefficiencies, and obstacles in implementing best practices.

It was found that many administrative employees expressed concerns that adopting new technologies or processes could lead to job displacement. This fear often results in resistance to changes, as employees may feel threatened by automation and digitalisation initiatives. Below are the findings:

"Workload stress. Elders in the organization might feel overwhelmed by digital tools."(P02).

"Team members may prefer traditional methods." (P32).

Furthermore, employees reported that inadequate training programs often leave staff feeling unprepared to adopt new systems or processes. Without comprehensive training, employees may struggle to understand the benefits of new initiatives, leading to resistance due to uncertainty about their roles.

"Training and support." (P15).

"Training schedules must accommodate everyone's availability." (P27).

On the other perspective, P40 indicated that training could affect the NPOs business operations temporality which could be a potential barrier for the implementation of the new digital system.

"Training requirements could lead to temporary productivity drops." (P40).

The findings regarding barriers and resistance among NPO administrative employees in eThekweni Municipality are critical challenges to effective administration processes. Resistance to change, lack of training, resource constraints all contribute to an environment where employees may hesitate to embrace new practices or technologies.

5.7 Summary

In summary, understanding these challenges can inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at supporting NPOs in overcoming resistance and driving positive change within their operations. The focus group discussions with administrative employees of the NPOs revealed several key findings regarding the challenges, needs, and opportunities for enhancing administrative processes within the organisation. The insights gained from these discussions provide a comprehensive understanding of the current administrative landscape and highlight specific areas for improvement. The findings provided a clear need for a digital transformation of administrative processes within the NPO. By addressing the identified challenges and leveraging the insights shared by administrative employees, the researcher can develop a digital system that enhances efficiency, fosters collaboration, and ultimately supports its mission of serving the community more effectively. The proposed digital system not only has the potential to streamline operations but also to empower staff, improve job satisfaction, and enable the NPO to adapt to an evolving operational landscape.

CHAPTER SIX: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This discussion reflects on the findings from the development of a digital system aimed at enhancing the administrative processes of NPOs within the eThekweni municipality. It deliberates on the relationships between the literature, theoretical frameworks, results from the face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. The analysis evaluates the current administration effectiveness, identifies key administrative challenges faced by NPOs and highlights the impact of the current technological integration on organisational efficiency and service delivery. Additionally, the discussion would detail deeper into the specific findings related to the development of a digital system for administration of a NPO.

6.2 Objective 1: To explore the current administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality.

This section presents a discussion of the findings related to the current administrative processes of NPOs in the eThekweni Municipality. The objective is to explore how these organisations operate, the challenges and the strategies employed to navigate the current administrative landscapes.

6.2.1 Manual administration processes

NPO leaders frequently emphasised the potential of a digital system to streamline administrative tasks, reduce time spent on paperwork, and enable staff to focus more on core mission-driven activities (Holman 2022:4). NPO Managers noted specific examples where digital tools could minimize redundant processes. Similarly, NPO administrative employees echoed these sentiments, discussing current time-consuming manual processes. These participants expressed eagerness for a system that automates reporting, audio to text system, tracking donations and managing volunteers, which would, in turn, enhance the NPO productivity and morale. Mziray and Mshana (2023:1149) highlighted that by addressing these challenges requires advocacy at the municipal and national levels with the improvement of procedures that where the NPO is compliant whilst still focusing on the NPO core mission.

6.2.2 Human resource issues due to funding

It was noted that many NPOs in eThekweni municipality struggle with human resource issues due to limited funding and resources for hiring more staff. NPO owners, managers and

administrative employees expressed staff burn out and overloaded with administrative duties for compliance. In recent years, NPOs employment sector is viewed as a challenging environment and retaining staff is impossible with current conditions (Oliveira *et al.*2021:76). NPO employees have also expressed that the DSD KZN training and workshops are inefficient due to the workshop focus is on ‘*how to do reports or filling out forms*’. NPO staff resonated that the workshops fill the gap for current administration process but does not assist with the NPO admin workload improvement. To strengthen administrative processes, NPOs need to digitalise the administration practices and create a clear pathway for service delivery, avoid overworked employees and commitment to improving the affected communities (Baluch and Ridder 2021:77).

6.2.3 Finance tracking and resource usage

Funding for NPOs mainly comes from local government grants, international donations, and fundraising efforts (Cvetkovic *et al.*2024:92). However, many NPOs reported challenges in securing sustainable funding. Financial management practices vary significantly, with some NPOs in eThekweni Municipality by employing basic manual accounting methods while others utilise software solutions such as pastel for tracking finances and reporting. Purvis (2024:82) pointed out that the lack of tracking sustainable funding sources alongside inadequate financial management can severely impact the program delivery and organisational viability.

Furthermore, NPO staff have reported the mass consumption of paper consumption for administration. Majority of NPOs in eThekweni Municipality use manual note taking for admin activities within the NPO. The absence of trailing resources could affect the NPOs daily operations and service delivery (Natarajan 2025:11). Therefore, there is a need for NPOs to adopt standardised digital financial tracking management and resources practices.

6.2.4 Community project developments

Project development processes often involve community needs assessments, though this step can be inconsistent, leading to programs that may not fully address local issues (Nwauche and Flanigan 2022:125). Implementation tends to rely heavily on volunteer staff, who visit affected communities or notify NPOs on assistance is needed in certain communities. As NPO staff highlighted that they are burden with administration task, they explained that they do have limited time to actually do community planning or projects properly. Irregular project planning or programme delivery can result in a negative reputation towards the NPO (Abiddin *et al.*

2020:4386). Therefore, it is an essential need for NPOs to move to a digital route that involve an online platform which details the structured community project development processes. Alam (2022:9828) pointed out that a regular community needs assessments should be prioritised to ensure that NPOs remain relevant.

This study finding indicate that while NPOs in eThekweni Municipality are crucial to addressing social needs, they face significant administrative challenges. By addressing extensive administrative processes, human resource issues, enhancing tracking for financial management and resource processes and focus on community projects, these organisations can improve their administrative processes and effectiveness in serving the community.

6.3 Objective 2: To establish what digital technologies are adopted by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality.

In exploring the digital technologies adopted by NPOs in the eThekweni Municipality, several key findings emerged in this section. These findings highlight the extent of digital integration in their operations, the types of technologies utilised, and the impact these technologies have on organisational effectiveness.

6.3.1 Communication tools

Most NPOs utilise email for communication among staff, stakeholders, and funders. It was found that social platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook are popular for outreach, community engagement, and marketing communication efforts. These platforms help increase visibility and connect with potential donors and volunteers (Thomas and Duffett 2025:93). Majority of NPOs stated that there is not enough funding for applications like Zoom, Skype, and Microsoft Teams to conduct virtual meetings, especially during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

6.3.2 Extent of current digital adoption

While many larger NPOs have embraced a range of digital technologies, smaller or community-based organisations often lag in adopting more advanced tools (Malope *et al.* 2021:5). This discrepancy may be related to resource limitations, including funding and technical expertise. Most NPOs reported using basic technologies (e.g., email, social media), but no NPOs in eThekweni Municipality have implemented advanced technologies like Customer Relationship Management (CRM) systems or data analytics tools for impact measurement.

6.3.3 Impact of current digital technologies on NPOs

In the findings, NPO employees have significantly suggested that the current digital technologies have improved internal and external communication. Organisations complete communication task or collaboration among staff and stakeholders easier, which enhances project efficiency and response times. The use of social media has helped NPOs engage with the community and attract support from potential funders (Baffoe and Luo 2021:2). Many NPOs noted an increase in engagement through social media campaigns. Boakye (2024:276) highlighted that digital platforms have enabled NPOs to reach a wider audience and diversify their funding sources.

6.3.4 Challenges in digital adoption

Many NPOs reported that they face challenges such as limited financial resources, lack of equipment or resources, inadequate training and job insecurity that hinder the effective adoption and use of digital technologies. Godefroid *et al.* (2024:238) explained that staff are hesitant to adopt new technologies due to the learning curve or a preference for traditional methods, leading to inconsistencies in digital engagement. NPO employees are also concerned regarding data privacy and cybersecurity issues which are prevalent in the findings (Alghamdi *et al.*2022:334). From this study finding, it was found that some NPOs lack adequate measures to protect online sensitive information, which can deter adoption of certain technologies, particularly in donor management.

Overall, the findings indicate a growing adoption of digital technologies among NPOs in eThekwini Municipality, which enhances their operations and outreach but also highlights challenges related to capacity and resources.

6.4 Objective 3: To assess the factors that affect the administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekwini Municipality

The assessment of the administrative processes utilised by NPOs in eThekwini Municipality reveals a complex interplay of various factors that influence their effectiveness and efficiency. The following findings provide a critical overview of these factors, categorised into internal and external influences.

6.4.1 Internal factors

Many NPOs in eThekwini Municipality operate with limited human resources, including a heavy reliance on volunteers, restricted administrative capabilities of many NPOs. Most organisations

face difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified staff for administrative roles (Nwauche and Flanigan 2022:120). Additionally, inadequate funding hinders many NPOs from investing in necessary administrative infrastructure and technology. Sibisi and Makka (2022:1090) pointed out that financial instability often leads to staff turnover and affects overall organisational effectiveness.

6.4.2 External factors

NPOs often face complex regulatory requirements that vary by jurisdiction. Tshiyoyo (2022:30) indicated that many organisations struggle to comply with local, provincial, and national regulations, leading to administrative burdens and potential legal issues. In addition, NPOs follow stringent reporting obligations create additional workload, especially for smaller NPOs that may lack dedicated administrative staff.

Moreover, it was found that the expectations and conditions set by donors can shape administrative processes, often pushing organisations to prioritise certain activities over others. Morkel (2022:60) proposes that this may limit the NPO ability to respond to community needs effectively. Furthermore, NPO employees have stated that the competitive nature of funding in the NPO sector may lead organisations to invest more time in fundraising activities rather than focusing on core administrative and service delivery duties.

This study finding identified that while some NPOs are adopting digital tools, many NPOs continue to rely on outdated manual processes due to limited resources and capacity to implement new technologies. Ayinkamiye and Spencer (2021:65) further explain that without updated digital technology, NPOs struggle with data collection, analysis, reporting due to insufficient technological infrastructure and lack of training, which hinders informed decision-making.

The outdated administrative procedure lacks engagement with local communities' critical feedback process which might leading to misalignment with community needs. It would result in a negative public perception of the NPOs. Makofane and Selepe (2022:268) emphasized that NPOs with strong reputations may find it easier to attract funding and support, while those with negative perceptions face additional challenges in operation.

The findings indicate that the administrative processes of NPOs in eThekweni Municipality are significantly influenced by a blend of internal and external factors. Understanding these factors

is critical for identifying areas of improvement and developing strategies that enhance administrative effectiveness. This critical assessment underscores the necessity for NPOs to invest in capacity building, stakeholder engagement, and streamlined compliance to mitigate challenges and optimise their administrative operations.

6.5 Objective 4: To develop a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs

In the context of eThekweni Municipality, where a diverse array of community NPOs operate, there is an urgent need for a streamlined digital solution that enhances administrative efficiency, promotes better communication, and simplifies compliance management. This research study aims to develop a digital system tailored specifically for NPOs operating within the municipality, leveraging technology to automate administrative processes, reduce manual workload, and facilitate real-time data sharing among stakeholders.

Through insights from NPO leaders, administrative staff, and technological experts, this study will utilise qualitative methodologies such as the Delphi technique to gather comprehensive requirements. This is to ensure that the resulting system meets the unique needs of its users.

Ultimately, the project aspires to create a user-friendly, purposeful and secure digital platform that not only improves operational efficiency for NPOs but also enhances service delivery to the communities they serve. By addressing the administrative challenges faced by these organisations, this research seeks to empower NPOs in eThekweni Municipality to fulfil their missions more effectively and sustainably.

6.5.1 Need for a centralised administrative system

Many NPOs express a need for integrated digital management tools that combine financial management, project tracking, and human resources in one platform. Currently, many organisations use disparate systems or manual processes that lead to inefficiencies and increased chances of error.

NPOs highlighted challenges in internal communication and collaboration among teams and stakeholders. A centralised digital system can facilitate better communication, information sharing, and collaborative project management.

6.5.2 Key features sought in a digital system

The findings of this study identified that majority of NPO staff expressed the following features that should be included in the NPO digital system:

- User-Friendly Interface
- Financial tracking and reporting
- Donor and stakeholder management
- Document management
- Audio-to-text
- SARS link
- Resource planning
- Security features

The findings underscore the pressing need for a comprehensive digital system to enhance administrative processes for NPOs in eThekweni Municipality. By addressing specific organisational needs, incorporating essential features, and navigating challenges related to resistance and resource constraints, a well-designed digital solution can significantly improve operational efficiency and effectiveness. Implementing these recommendations will help ensure that the digital system not only meets the immediate administrative needs of NPOs but also supports the long-term sustainability and growth.

6.6 Comparison of findings

In this research study the NPO employees (NPO owners, managers and administrative employees) identified similar benefits of a digital system, their perspectives varied in terminology and emphasis:

6.6.1 NPO leadership vs. NPO staff perspectives

In this study, it was found that some NPO leaders focused more on strategic benefits like organisational growth, while staff members emphasised on daily operational improvements and user-friendliness. Leaders approached the conversation with a broader, more economic lens, whereas staff discussions were grounded in immediate, practical contexts.

6.6.2 Concerns about digital literacy

All NPO employees acknowledged the potential hurdle of digital adoption, but NPO leaders were more concerned with how this would impact productivity, while staff expressed a desire for training and hands-on support to bridge their skills gap.

6.6.3 Data security concerns

Although all NPO staff groups undertook the data security seriously, the NPO leaders framed it within compliance and risk management, while NPO administrative employees focused on the emotional aspect of job security and trust in handling sensitive information.

In developing a digital system for the administrative processes of NPOs in the eThekweni municipality, it is crucial to integrate insights from various stakeholders. A successful system requires a careful balance between efficiency, user experience, comprehensive training, data security, and budget considerations. The creation of such a system should be an inclusive process that both NPO leaders and NPO administrative employees participate in. This is to ensure that the final product not only supports organisational goals but also empowers staff in their daily work. By fostering a collaborative environment, NPOs can successfully navigate the challenges of digitisation and enhance their operational capacities effectively.

6.7 Recommendations

Based on the insights gathered from face-to-face interview with NPO owners, NPO managers and focus group discussions with NPO administrative employees of NPOs in eThekweni Municipality, several key findings emerged that highlight the potential benefits and necessary features of a digital system designed to enhance administrative efficiency.

The following recommendations based on the study findings was developed to guide the development and implementation of a digital system for NPO administrative processes:

- Create a user-friendly digital platform that integrates various administrative functions, including client data management, financial tracking, project reporting, audio-to-text function, SARS link and compliance documentation. This unified system should streamline workflows and reduce redundancy.
- Involve administrative staff in the design and development process to ensure the digital system meets their needs and expectations. Conduct user testing sessions with a diverse group of employees to gather feedback on usability and functionality.

- Develop and deliver tailored training programs to equip staff with the necessary skills to effectively utilise the digital system. Ensure that training covers all functional areas of the system and offers ongoing support for users.
- Prioritise the development of robust data security measures to protect sensitive organisational and client information. Implement clear guidelines for data access and sharing to minimize the risk of breaches.
- Integrate reporting features into the digital system to allow for real-time analytics and insights into administrative operations. This functionality will enable NPOs to quickly assess performance, track compliance, and make informed decisions.
- Establish a continuous feedback loop to collect insights from user's post-implementation. Regularly assess the effectiveness of the system and make data-driven adjustments based on user experiences and evolving administrative needs.
- Seek partnerships with technology providers, sectoral associations, and local government bodies to access technical expertise, funding opportunities, and best practices for implementing digital systems in NPOs.
- Implement change management strategies to ease the transition to a digital system. Communicate the benefits of the new system clearly to all staff members and involve them in the implementation process to foster buy-in and minimize resistance.

6.7.1 Development of a proto type system based on the recommendations

The development of the 'UbuntuSmart SA' prototype, aimed at enhancing administrative processes for NPOs in the eThekweni Municipality, yielded significant findings that inform both the design and functionality of the system. These findings are based on the study findings, 'UbuntuSmart SA' highlights essential features, user needs, and potential challenges associated with the prototype. On the next page in Figure 6.1, highlights UbuntuSmart SA key features and functions for administration and thereafter discussed below.

Figure 6.1: UbuntuSmart SA key features and functions for administration



A) User-centered design features

The UbuntuSmart SA digital system includes intuitive navigation, clear prompts, and visual aids, ensuring ease of use. Incorporating customisable dashboards could further enhance user experience by allowing individuals to tailor their workspace based on personal preferences and tasks.

B) Integration of data management functions

The UbuntuSmart SA digital system was designed to facilitate seamless integration of these functions into a single dashboard, streamlining workflows and reducing the need for switching between different systems. This cohesive approach is expected to improve efficiency and data accuracy. Participants highlighted the need for a centralised platform that integrates multiple administrative functions such as data management, financial tracking, audio-to-text, SARS link, reporting, and compliance management

C) Real-time data access and reporting

The digital system incorporates real-time data entry and reporting features that allow administrators to generate reports on demand. Dashboards providing key performance indicators (KPIs) and visual analytics can support timely insights into organisational performance.

D) Collaboration and communication tools

The UbuntuSmart SA prototype includes built-in messaging and document-sharing functionalities to enable better coordination among team members. Collaborative project management tools are also integrated to track progress on various initiatives and facilitate teamwork. Employees indicated a need for enhanced collaboration and communication capabilities within the administrative framework.

E) Training and support resources

The prototype features a dedicated training module that offers tutorials, FAQs, and resources to assist users in navigating the system. Additionally, a feedback mechanism allows users to report issues and request assistance, fostering a supportive learning environment. There is a recognition of the importance of training and ongoing support in ensuring successful adoption and utilisation of the new system.

F) Data security and compliance

The UbuntuSmart SA prototype is equipped with robust security measures, including user authentication, access controls, and data encryption to protect sensitive information. Compliance checklists and documentation storage function within the system address regulatory requirements, ensuring accountability. Concerns regarding data security, privacy, and compliance with regulations were paramount among participants.

G) Feedback loop for continuous improvement

The prototype includes a built-in feedback feature that allows users to submit suggestions, report challenges, and highlight areas for improvement. This mechanism will facilitate iterative development and refinement of the system over time. Participants expressed the desire for a system that evolves based on user feedback and changing needs within the organisation.

The findings gathered during the development of the UbuntuSmart SA prototype underscore the importance of a user-centered, integrated, and secure digital system for enhancing administrative processes within NPOs in eThekweni Municipality. By addressing the identified needs and preferences of administrative employees, the NPO Connect prototype has the potential to significantly improve operational efficiencies, facilitate better collaboration, and support the overall mission of non-profit organizations. Continued user engagement and feedback will be essential for further refining the prototype and ensuring its long-term success in the NPO sector.

The researcher decided to use the Delphi method to engage experts from the NPOs, ICT and IS field on digital pedagogies. Figure 4.1 under the research methodology chapter illustrates and explains the Delphi method for this study. The link for the digital system UbuntuSmart SA is the following link: <https://v0-npoc-onnect-dashboard-design-alpha.vercel.app/auth/login>. The expert panel was request to enter their email address and any password key to access the digital administrative system for the Delphi method.

The researcher was positioned as a facilitator during the Delphi process for this study. Participants that were seasoned experts were selected on anonymity from the NPOs, ICT and IS field. This ensured that at each round in the Delphi process, opinions remained independent or unbiased from other participants.

The questionnaire was based on five (5) main questions was aligned to the research study objectives, that was developed by the researcher. Specifically:

- To explore the current administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekwini Municipality.
- To establish what digital technologies are adopted by NPOs in eThekwini Municipality.
- To critically assess the factors that affect the administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekwini Municipality.
- To develop a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs.

Once participants completed and returned the responses, the facilitator prepared a summary report. The summary report was distributed to experts who participated in the Delphi process from the NPO, ICT and IS field. The facilitator ensured that the summary report did not disclose the identities of participants.

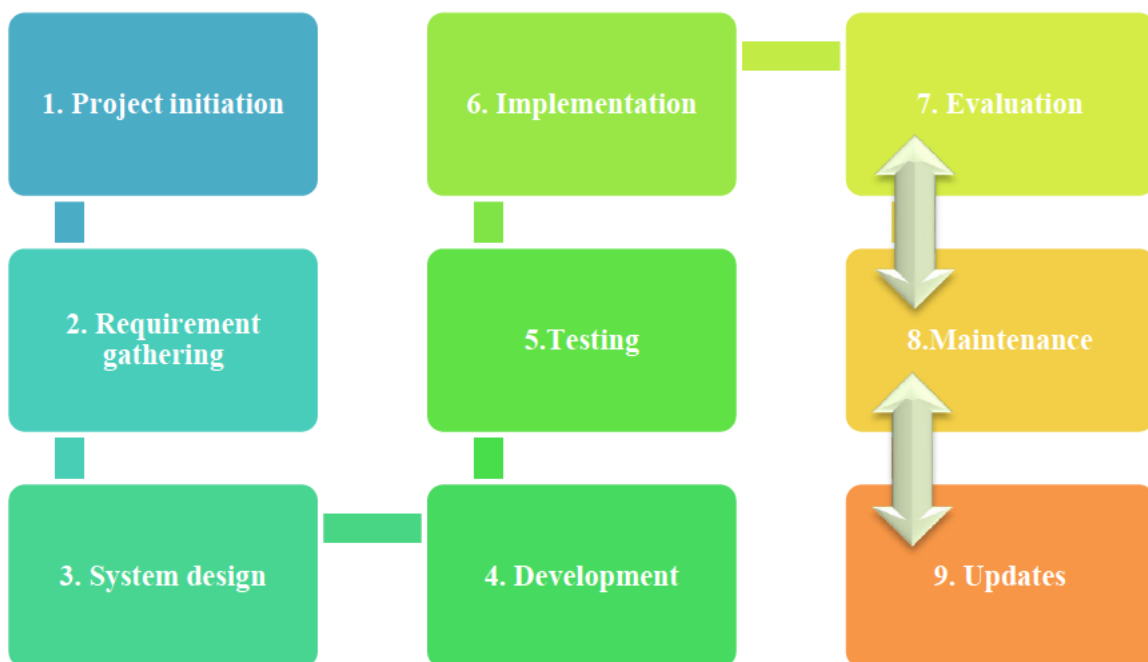
Thereafter, experts in the NPOs, ICT and IS field reached consensus related to the effective design of a digital system for NPOs administration processes in eThekwini Municipality. The forecast clearly depicted experts broadly agreeing with each other on the design of the training model. The Delphi method, combined with data analysed from this qualitative study, contributed to the design of the digital system for NPOs administration processes.

In exploring the potential for developing a digital system aimed at enhancing administrative processes for NPOs in eThekwini Municipality, several key findings have emerged. These

findings highlight the specific needs of NPOs, the types of digital solutions that can address admin processes and the challenges that must be navigated for successful implementation.

Creating a flow diagram for the development of a digital system for NPO administration processes in eThekweni Municipality involves outlining the key stages in the development process. Below in figure 6.2 represents a is a textual representation of what this flow diagram would encompass, thereafter discussed.

Figure 6.2: Flow diagram for the development of digital NPO administration system



1. Project Initiation

- Define project goals and objectives
- Identify key stakeholders
- Conduct preliminary research and needs assessment

2. Requirement Gathering

- Qualitative research approach (The use of interviews and focus discussion groups)
- Delphi Method
- Assemble expert panel
- Conduct rounds of questionnaires

- Analyse responses and identify key features
- Document functional and non-functional requirements

3. System Design

- Create system architecture
- Develop user interface (UI) wireframes and user experience (UX) designs
- Define data structure and database design
- Establish security and compliance protocols

4. Development

- Front-End Development: Create the user interface and user experience elements
- Back-End Development: Build server-side logic, APIs, and database connections
- Integration: Ensure compatibility with existing systems

5. Testing

- Conduct various testing phases
- Unit Testing: Test individual components for functionality
- Integration Testing: Test interactions between components
- User Acceptance Testing (UAT): Gather feedback from actual users
- Document and resolve bugs/issues

6. Implementation

- Deploy the system in a controlled environment
- Train users on the new system
- Monitor system performance and gather user feedback

7. Evaluation

- Assess system effectiveness based on predefined metrics
- Collect feedback and suggestions for improvement
- Conduct a post-implementation review with stakeholders

8. Maintenance and Updates

- Provide ongoing support and troubleshoot issues

- Regularly update the system based on user feedback and evolving needs
- Implement new features as necessary

6.8 Implications of the study

The design proposed in figure 6.1 and figure 6.2 is a work-in-progress, although the researcher conducted a Delphi study. The intention of the researcher is to brainstorm this design with experts in NPO sector, ICT and IS field. The main aim of the research was to explore the administrative processes used by NPOs based in eThekweni Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal and to develop a digital system for the NPOs administrative processes to improve efficiency. The researcher envisions that the digital system will provide resources to understand pedagogy, learning theories and emerging digital tools aligned to the relevant elements within the NPO system. The research findings in this study have the potential to influence policies and strategies related to NPOs administration processes in eThekweni Municipality. If the recommendations of the current study are taken into consideration, this could enable NPO leaders and local government to develop a grounded understanding of a digital system for administration processes in the digital environment.

6.9 Future research

This study included only NPOs based in eThekweni Municipality in Durban. Future research studies could include NPOs at different regions and provinces, as well as examining other NPO studies conducted in the South African context. Future research studies could also be to conduct in-depth studies to explore the relationship between user experience design and effective system adoption.

Additionally, to investigate best practices for data management and protection tailored to the NPO sector. Moreover, the implications of data breaches and compliance requirements to ascertain the effectiveness of various security measures in safeguarding sensitive information could be explored.

In terms of NPO leadership, future studies could focus on the role of leadership and change management strategies in the adoption of digital systems within NPOs. Investigate how leadership styles and organisational cultures impact the success of technology implementation. On the other hand, with NPO employees, the focus for future research could explore the impact of different training methodologies (e.g., in-person vs. online training, one-on-one coaching, peer

learning) on staff adaptation to digital systems. Research could determine which approaches yield the best results in terms of system use and user satisfaction.

The findings presented here feature the critical areas for future research related to the development and implementation of digital systems for administrative processes in NPOs. By addressing these areas through empirical studies and applied research, scholars and practitioners can contribute to creating effective, user-centered digital solutions that enhance the operational capacities of NPOs in eThekweni Municipality and beyond. This research will not only contribute to the body of knowledge but will also provide practical insights for improving the efficacy of NPOs in fulfilling their missions.

6.10 Conclusion

The development of a digital system for administrative processes tailored to NPOs in eThekweni Municipality represents a significant step forward in enhancing operational efficiency, transparency, and service delivery within the sector. The main aim of the research was to explore the administrative processes used by NPOs based in eThekweni Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal and to develop a digital system for the NPOs administrative process to improve efficiency. This study has critically examined the current administrative challenges faced by NPOs, gathered insights from face-to-face interviews with NPO owners, NPO managers and NPO administrative employees through focus group discussions, and developed the UbuntuSmart SA prototype to address identified needs.

The findings of the study highlight several key aspects. Firstly, the necessity for a user-friendly, integrated platform was evident, as many NPOs struggled with manual processes and fragmented systems. The introduction of a centralised digital solution promises to streamline operations by consolidating various administrative functions, thus reducing redundancy and allowing staff to focus on their core missions.

Moreover, the study features the importance of real-time data access and reporting capabilities, which are essential for informed decision-making and enhanced accountability. The prototype's functionalities, which include collaboration tools and built-in training resources, align with the expressed needs of users and aim to foster a supportive environment for staff at all levels of technological proficiency.

The emphasis on data security and compliance ensures that the new system adheres to regulatory standards, addressing critical concerns regarding the protection of sensitive information. Furthermore, the feedback mechanisms embedded within the prototype facilitate a culture of continuous improvement, allowing the system to evolve in response to the changing needs of NPOs.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the body of knowledge surrounding the digital transformation of administrative processes within the NPO sector. It presents actionable insights and recommendations that can guide future implementations of digital systems not only in eThekweni Municipality but also in similar contexts. As non-profit organisations increasingly seek to maximize their impact with limited resources, the development of systems like UbuntuSmart SA emerges as an essential strategy for enhancing operational capacities and achieving organisational goals.

In conclusion, the successful implementation of the UbuntuSmart SA prototype holds the potential to revolutionise administrative practices within NPOs, leading to improved efficiency, collaboration, and overall impact in the community. Continued research and engagement with stakeholders will be critical in refining and expanding this digital solution to meet the evolving challenges of the non-profit sector.

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ANNEXURE A:

Semi-structured interview schedule for NPOs owners, managers and supervisors.



Interview Guide for NGOs Owner, Manager or Supervisor

Semi-structured interview schedule

Date of data collection: _____

Time: _____

Title of research project:

Development of a digital system for the implementation of administration processes in non-profit organisations (NPOs) in eThekweni Municipality

Introduction

Hello. My name is Egashnee Moodley-Bhulaye. I would like to start off by thanking you for taking the time to participate in this interview.

Section A: Personal details

1. How long have you been a Centre Manager for this organisation?
2. Previous experience in another organisation in a leadership position?

Section B: To explore the current administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality

3. Can you describe the current administrative process that takes place within the NPO, when it comes to the following:

- operational tasks such as the budgeting, resource allocation, performance and revenue management, rates, utilities and any organisational membership
- Meetings, reports and presentations
- Projects (Fundraising initiatives, calls for donations or funds etc)
- Any other administrative processes not listed above

4. How do the current administrative processes of the NPO align with the goals and objectives of the organisation?

5. In your opinion, how effective and efficient are these administrative processes, you had mentioned in question number 4?

6. How many NPO employees are involved with administrative processes in your NPO?

7. Can you provide an estimate of how much resources such as paper, equipment and hours would it take to conduct administrative processes in your NPO?

8. Is there any external administrative company that handles your administrative tasks?

If yes, can you explain what does the external company conduct with your NPO's administrative tasks.

Section C: To establish the digital technologies are adopted by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality

9. Do you use any digital technology services or digital platform/app within the NPO?

- If yes, can you state them and their function or role with administration process.
- If no, can you explain why and what challenges have influenced you to not adopt a digital technology into the NPO's administrative tasks.

10. Are there any demographic or personal characteristics that have influenced the adoption and usage of digital technologies for administrative processes?

11. How do these digital technologies contribute to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the administrative processes in the NPO?

12. What measures are in place to ensure the security and privacy of data when using these digital technologies for administrative processes within the NPO?

13. Are there any digital technology training or support programs available to the NPOs in eThekweni Municipality to enhance the adoption and usage of technology for administrative processes within the NPO?

14. How do the digital technologies used for administrative processes align with the goals and objectives of the NPOs?

Section D: To critically assess the factors that affect the administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality

15. What are some of the major challenges you face pertaining to administrative processes structure in the NPO?

- If any challenges, how do the employees of NPOs perceive and navigate around these factors in their day to day administrative tasks for the NPO?

16. How does the NPO show accountability through your NPO administrative process and NPO Projects, in the midst of challenges faced?

17. What strategies or measures are in place to continuously monitor and evaluate these factors and their impact on the administrative processes?

Section E: To develop a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs

18. What, in your opinion, is necessary to be included in a digital system for efficient administrative processes in the NPO? Any specific features or functionalities?

19. Are there any potential barriers or resistance from NPO employees or other stakeholders that need to be considered when integrating a digital system?

20. Has there been any assessment or feasibility study conducted to determine the financial viability of implementing a digital system in the NPO's administrative processes?

21. What are the potential risks and challenges associated with the financial sustainability of the digital system?

22. Can the NPO secure additional funding or grant to support the implementation and maintenance of a digital system?

23. What strategies or initiatives should be implemented to ensure a smooth and efficient adoption and usage of the digital system by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality?

24. Please provide any additional information, which might be useful for this research study in voicing your opinion

End

ANNEXURE B:



LETTER OF INFORMATION

For NPO owners, managers and supervisors

Dear Participant

Welcome to my research project. Thank you for participating in my study.

Title of the Research Study: Development of a digital system for the implementation of administration processes in non-profit organisations (NPOs) in eThekweni Municipality

Principal Investigator: Mrs E. Moodley-Bhulaye
(Masters in Management Science in Administration and Information Management)

Supervisor: Professor M. Rajkoomar, PhD: Library & Information (Supervisor) and Dr. M. Ngibe, PhD: Business Administration (Co-supervisor)

Brief introduction and purpose of the study: The main aim of the research is to explore the administration processes used by Non-profit organisations in eThekweni Region in KwaZulu - Natal and to develop a digital system of the administrative process. In this study, a qualitative approach would be used. Qualitative approach will include semi-structured interviews with urban NPOs owners and managers or supervisors. The second part of the approach would include focus group discussions with urban NPOs administrative employees based in eThekweni region in KwaZulu – Natal. This research study would contribute to the development of an system for the improvement of NPO performance.

Greetings: Hello, I am a postgraduate student at Durban University of Technology and I would like to invite you and your employees to participate in the research study about the development of a digital system for the implementation of administration processes in non-profit organisations (NPOs) in eThekweni Municipality.

Even though there is an administrative process for NPOs, the challenges in accountability have resulted in low levels of public trust and confidence in the work of NPOs in the country and negatively impacted the NPOs ability to mobilize resources and effect change in the communities they serve. There is a lack of research on the specific challenges and opportunities the NPOs face in the digital transformation journey. Therefore, the main aim of the research is to explore the administration processes used by

Non-profit organisations in eThekweni Region in KwaZulu - Natal and to develop a digital system of the administrative process.

The following objectives that will be addressed through this project will include:

- To explore the current administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality
- To establish what digital technologies are adopted by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality
- To critically assess the factors that affect the administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality
- To develop a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs

Outline of the procedures: During the study, your responsibility is to answer twenty seven questions in the semi-structured interview. The face to face interview will be approximately 60 minutes.

Risks or discomforts to the participant: You will not be exposed to any risk or harm by participating in this research study.

Benefits: The findings for the study would give you an insight into the administration processes used by Non-profit organisations in eThekweni Municipality in KwaZulu Natal. This research study would also contribute to the development of an application for the improvement of NPO administrative performance.

Reason/s why the participant may be withdrawn from the study: Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw at any stage of the study and will not be penalized should you choose to withdraw.

Remuneration: You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Costs of the study: There will be no cost to the participants for participating in this study.

Confidentiality: All data collected will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of the study only. All data collection tools will be identified will be kept under lock and key and electronic data secured with private pass word for a maximum period of 15 years. All paper based records will thereafter be destroyed with shredding and electronic data wiped off.

Research-related injury: No risk or harm to participants is expected. You may report harm if it occurs due to the study to the research council and to the researcher.

Persons to contact in the event of any problems or queries

Researcher: Mrs E. Moodley-Bhulaye **contact number:** 078 270 2688

Supervisor: Professor M. Rajkoomar **contact number:** (031) 3736776

Co-supervisor: Dr. M. Ngibe **contact number:** (031) 3735858 -

Complaints can be reported to the Acting Director: Research and Postgraduate Support on
researchdirector@dut.ac.za



CONSENT

Statement of agreement to participate in the research study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Egashnee Moodley-Bhulaye (Name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: **241/24**
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerized system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant	Date	Time	Signature	Right Thumbprint

I, **Egashnee Moodley-Bhulaye** (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risk of the above study.

Full name of researcher	Date	Signature

Full name of witness (If applicable)	Date	Signature

Full name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)	Date	Signature

ANNEXURE C:



Development of a digital system for the implementation of administration processes in community non-profit organisations (NPOs) in eThekweni Municipality

Focus group discussion schedule for NPO Administrative employees

Introduction

Hello. My name is Egashnee Moodley-Bhulaye. I would like to start off by thanking each of you for taking the time to participate in this focus group discussion. We will be here for about an half an hour.

The reason we are here today is to obtain your opinions and attitudes about the development of a digital system for the implementation of administration processes in community non-profit organisations (NPOs) in eThekweni Municipality.

I would be leading the discussion today. I am not here to convince you of anything or try and sway your opinion. My intention is to pose questions to the group and then encourage and facilitate the discussion.

Opinions expressed would be treated in confidence. All responses would remain anonymous. Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your participation at any stage. Your valuable responses would assist in the development of a digital system for the implementation of administration processes in community non-profit organisations (NPOs) in eThekweni Municipality

*[Ascertain that there are no objections to the use of an audio recorder;
then switch it on.]*

Ground rules

To allow our conversation to flow more freely, I'd like to go over some ground rules.

- Only one person speaks at a time.
- Please avoid side conversations.
- Everyone does not have to answer every single question, but I'd like to hear from each of you today as the discussion progresses.

- This is a confidential discussion in that I would not report your names or who said what to the university. As indicated earlier, names of participants would not be included in the reporting of this discussion. It also means that, except for the report of the findings that would be written, what is said in this room stays in this room.
- I stress confidentiality because I would like an open discussion. I would like all of you to feel free to comment on each other's remarks without fear that your comments would be repeated later or possibly taken out of context.
- Remember there are no 'wrong answers', just different opinions. Say what is true for you, even if you are the only one who feels that way. Do not let the group sway you. But if you do change your mind, just let me know.
- Let me know if you need to take a bathroom break.

Ice breaker

Each participant has to make 3 statements about themselves, one of which is not true (For example, I was born in Japan; I am a part time disco dancer etc.). The group must vote on which statement is not true.

General questions

Section A: Personal details

1. How long have you been employed in the NPO as an administrative employee?
2. What previous experience as an 'administrative' employee do you have?
3. Describe the type of administrative tasks you conduct for the NPO?

Specific questions

Section B: To explore the current administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality

4. Would you describe the current administrative processes as a manual or automated system being utilized in your NPO?
5. Can you provide an estimate of how much resources such as paper, equipment and hours would it take to conduct administrative processes in your NPO?
6. What are the most frequently used tools or equipment you use in your daily administrative tasks?
7. In your opinion, how effective and efficient are these administrative processes in supporting your day to day administration operations at the NPO?
8. Is there any external administrative company that handles your administrative processes?
9. Are there any challenges relating to the current administrative processes?

If yes, can you describe some of your biggest challenges when conducting administrative processes within the NPO.

Section C: To establish what digital technologies are adopted by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality

10. What do you understand by the term 'digital'?

[Here I will firstly get their responses and then elaborate/clarify the terms if there is some confusion on the definitions.]

11. Are there any digital applications or systems you use to complete the administrative processes for the NPO?

If yes, can you list and discuss the digital applications or systems

12. How do these digital technologies contribute to the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the administrative processes in the NPO?

13. What measures are in place to ensure the security and privacy of data when using these digital technologies for administrative processes within the NPO?

14. Are there any digital technology training or support programs available to the NPOs in eThekweni Municipality to enhance the adoption and usage of technology for administrative processes within the NPO?

15. What, in your own opinion, is necessary functions is needed in a NPO digital administration system was developed?

Section D: To critically assess the factors that affect the administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality

16. What are some of the major challenges you face pertaining to administrative processes structure in the NPO? *(The researcher would provide an example of administrative processes explanation)*

17. Can you provide examples of successful cases where these factors have been effectively managed or overcome, resulting in improved administrative processes?

18. How does the NPO show accountability through your NPO administrative process and NPO Projects?

19. What strategies or measures are in place to continuously monitor and evaluate these factors and their impact on the administrative processes?

Section E: To develop a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs

20. How do you envision a digital system improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the administrative processes for the NPO?

21. Are there any specific features or functionalities that you believe a digital system should have to address the needs of NPOs in eThekweni Municipality?

22. Are there any potential barriers or resistance from NPO employees or other stakeholders that need to be considered when developing and implementing a digital system?
23. What strategies or initiatives should be implemented to ensure a smooth and efficient adoption and usage of the digital system by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality?
24. What, in your opinion, is necessary to be included in a digital system for efficient administrative processes in the NPO?
25. Please provide any additional information, which might be useful for this research study in voicing your opinion

Closing

Thank you for participating in this discussion on the development of a digital system for the implementation of administration processes in community non-profit organisations (NPOs) in eThekweni Municipality. Your comments have given me valuable insights that would assist in identifying the challenges, impacts and best practices of the administrative processes within an NPO.

ANNEXURE D:



LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR NPO ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEE

Dear Participant

Welcome to my research project. Thank you for participating in my study.

Title of the Research Study: Development of a digital system for the implementation of administration processes in non-profit organisations (NPOs) in eThekweni Municipality

Principal Investigator: Mrs E. Moodley-Bhulaye

(Masters in Management Science in Administration and Information Management)

Supervisor: Professor M. Rajkoomar, PhD: Library & Information (Supervisor) and Dr. M. Ngibe, PhD: Business Administration (Co-supervisor)

Brief introduction and purpose of the study: The main aim of the research is to explore the administration processes used by Non-profit organisations in eThekweni Region in KwaZulu - Natal and to develop a digital system of the administrative process. In this study, a qualitative approach would be used. Qualitative approach will include semi-structured interviews with urban NPOs owners and managers or supervisors. The second part of the approach would include focus group discussions with urban NPOs administrative employees based in eThekweni region in KwaZulu – Natal. This research study would contribute to the development of an system for the improvement of NPO performance.

Greetings: Hello, I am a postgraduate student at Durban University of Technology and I would like to invite you and your employees to participate in the research study about the development of a digital system for the implementation of administration processes in non-profit organisations (NPOs) in eThekweni Municipality.

Even though there is an administrative process for NPOs, the challenges in accountability have resulted in low levels of public trust and confidence in the work of NPOs in the country and negatively impacted the NPOs ability to mobilize resources and effect change in the communities they serve. There is a lack of research on the specific challenges and opportunities the NPOs face in the digital transformation journey. Therefore, the main aim of the research is to explore the administration

processes used by Non-profit organisations in eThekweni Region in KwaZulu - Natal and to develop a digital system of the administrative process.

The following objectives that will be addressed through this project will include:

- To explore the current administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality
- To establish what digital technologies are adopted by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality
- To critically assess the factors that affect the administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality
- To develop a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs

Outline of the procedures: During the study, your responsibility is to answer eleven questions in the focus group discussion. The focus group discussion will be approximately 20-25 minutes.

Risks or discomforts to the participant: You will not be exposed to any risk or harm by participating in this research study.

Benefits: The findings for the study would give you an insight into the administration processes used by Non-profit organisations in eThekweni Municipality in KwaZulu Natal. This research study would also contribute to the development of an application for the improvement of NPO administrative performance.

Reason/s why the participant may be withdrawn from the study: Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may withdraw at any stage of the study and will not be penalized should you choose to withdraw.

Remuneration: You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

Costs of the study: There will be no cost to the participants

Confidentiality: All data collected will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of the study only. All data collection tools will be identified will be kept under lock and key and electronic data secured with private pass word for a maximum period of 15 years. All paper based records will thereafter be destroyed with shredding and electronic data wiped off.

Research-related injury: No risk or harm to participants is expected. You may report harm if it occurs due to the study to the research council and to the researcher.

Persons to contact in the event of any problems or queries

Researcher: Mrs E. Moodley-Bhulaye **contact number:** 078 270 2688

Supervisor: Professor M. Rajkoomar **contact number:** (031) 3736776

Co-supervisor: Dr. M. Ngibe **contact number:** (031) 3735858

Complaints can be reported to the Acting Director: Research and Postgraduate Support on
researchdirector@dut.ac.za



CONSENT

Statement of agreement to participate in the research study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Egashnee Moodley-Bhulaye (Name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: **241/24**
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerized system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant	Date	Time	Signature	Right Thumbprint
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I, **Egashnee Moodley-Bhulaye** (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risk of the above study.

Full name of researcher	Date	Signature
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Full name of witness (If applicable)	Date	Signature
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Full name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)	Date	Signature
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ANNEXURE E: DUT IREC Clearance Letter



Institutional Research Ethics Committee
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate
2nd Floor, Berwyn Court
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus
Durban University of Technology

P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001

Tel: 031 373 2375
Email: irethead@dut.ac.za
http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics
www.dut.ac.za

4 December 2024

Mrs E Moodley-Bhulaye
17 Tynebridge Place
Stonebridge
Phoenix
4068

Dear Mrs Moodley-Bhulaye

Development of a digital system for the implementation of administration processes in community non-profit organizations (NPOs) in eThekweni Municipality
Ethical Clearance number IREC 241/24

The DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letter.

Please note that FULL APPROVAL is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the DUT-IREC according to the DUT-IREC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's).

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the DUT-IREC as outlined in the DUT-IREC SOP's.

It is compulsory for a student or researcher to apply for recertification on an annual basis. The failure to do so will result in withdrawal of ethics clearance. It is the responsibility of the researcher and the supervisor to apply for recertification.

Please note that you are required to submit a Notification of Completion of Study form together with an abstract to the DUT-IREC office on completion of your study.

Yours Sincerely

Professor P Mashau
Chairperson: DUT-IREC

ANNEXURE F: Gatekeeper's approval request letter



To:
Head Of Department
Department Of Social Development Province of KwaZulu-Natal
P.O Box 1503
Durban
4000

Request for Permission to Conduct Research

Dear Mrs. N.I. Vilakazi

My name is Egashnee Moodley-Bhulaye, a postgraduate student in Business and Information Management student at the Durban University of Technology. The research I wish to conduct is for my Doctoral thesis, which involves the development of a digital system for the implementation of administration processes in community non-profit organizations (NPOs) in eThekweni Municipality.

I am hereby seeking your consent to conduct the study in community non-profit organizations (NPOs) in eThekweni Municipality.

I have provided you with a copy of my proposal which includes copies of the data collection tools and consent and/or assent forms to be used in the research process, as well as a copy of the approval letter which I received from the DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Committee (DUT-IREC).

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on Tel: 078 270 2688 or on email: 20604423@dut4life.ac.za. You can also contact my supervisor, Professor M. Rajkoomar on Tel: (031) 3736776 or my co-supervisor Dr M. Ngibe on Tel: (031) 3735858.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Egashnee Moodley-Bhulaye
Durban University of Technology

Approved/Not Approved: _____

Date: _____

ANNEXURE G: Gatekeeper's Approval Letter



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DIRECTORATE: HUMAN RESOURCE UTILISATION & DEVELOPMENT

FAX	: 086 762 2427	174 Mayors Walk,
Telephone/ Ucingo /Telefoon	: 033 264 2103	Private Bag X9144
Enquiries / Imibuzo / Navrae	: Mr S.L. Sibisi	PIETERMARITZBURG
E-mail	: sibonelo.sibisi@kzndsd.gov.za	3200
Reference no.	: S6/2/1	

MS E. MOODLEY
Durban University of Technology
P.O Box 1334
DURBAN
4000

Dear Ms Moodley

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH UNDER A TOPIC "DEVELOPMENT OF A DIGITAL SYSTEM FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES IN COMMUNITY NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS IN ETHEKWINI MUNICIPALITY".

1. The permission authorizes you to: -
 - (a) To conduct the research at NPOs under Department of Social Development in eThekwini Municipality.
 - (b) Share your findings and recommendations with the Department.
2. The Head of Department wishes you all the best with your studies.

Yours Faithfully

MRS M. MHLANGA
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

DATE: 06 November 2024

ANNEXURE H:

Delphi methods

Title: Development of a digital system for the implementation of administration processes in community non-profit organisations (NPOs) in eThekweni Municipality.

Aim: The main aim of the research was to explore the administrative processes used by NPOs based in eThekweni Municipality in KwaZulu-Natal and to develop a digital system for the NPOs administrative processes to improve efficiency.

Delphi method: Open-ended questionnaire

Research objectives:

- To explore the current administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality.
- To establish what digital technologies are adopted by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality.
- To critically assess the factors that affect the administrative processes used by NPOs in eThekweni Municipality.
- To develop a digital system for efficient administrative processes for NPOs.

Questions

1. In your organisation, what are the key administrative tasks that you perform manually, and how do you believe a digital administrative system could streamline or enhance these processes?
2. How well does this digital system integrate with your NPO operational needs, and what gaps remain that a new digital administrative system could address?
3. What specific internal or external factors influence your ability to adopt and effectively use a digital administrative system?
4. What are the most critical features or functionalities you would like to see in a digital administrative system designed for your NPO's administrative processes?
5. As your NPO grows and evolves, what future administrative challenges do you anticipate that could be alleviated through the implementation of a robust digital administrative system?

ANNEXURE I:

Proof read letter

Letter confirmation for the editing of PhD Thesis

24 Frans Odendaal Street
Weavind park
Pretoria
0081

Dear Ms Moodley-Bhulaye

This letter serves to confirm that PhD Thesis titled: **Development of a digital system for the implementation of administration processes in community non-profit organisations (NPOs) in eThekweni Municipality**, had been edited. Below mentioned were met/recommended:

- Editing of 220 pages of the Thesis
- Layout & Structure
- Alignment
- Abstract
- Grammar, tense, rephrasing of certain parts of the Thesis to make it more coherent
- Standardization of the document in terms of words and numbers used
- Proof reading

Furthermore, suggestions had been made where necessary for changes to be implemented.

For any further queries or clarification feel free to contact me.

Kind Regards

Dr. Dhee Naidoo
Researcher & Academic
Email: dheenaidoo2@gmail.com
Cell: 0793316075