

The Impact of COVID-19 on the Organisational Behaviour of Small Businesses in Malta

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Research Question and Objectives

“To what extent has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the organisational behaviour of small businesses in Malta?”

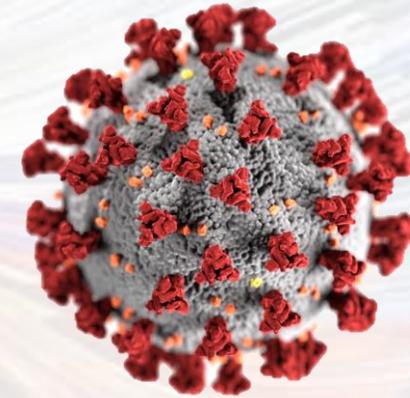
FOUR main objectives in answering this question:

1. Identify a reference **set of constructs** related to the impact of COVID-19 on the organisational behaviour of small businesses in Malta.
2. Evaluate and assess the constructs and **their inter-relationship**.
3. Create an initial **conceptual model** based on the constructs' inter-relationship.
4. Appraise the **implications** of the conceptual model created.



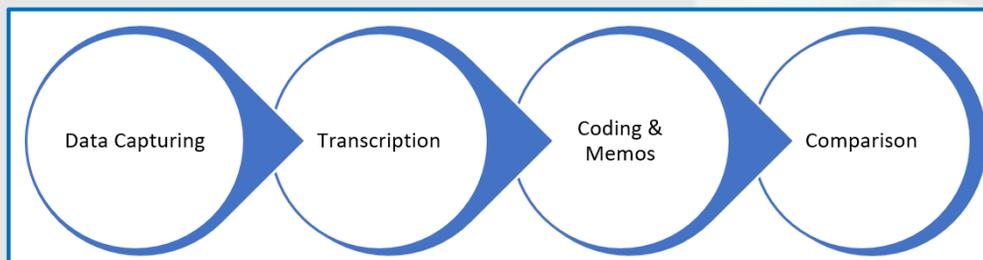
Methodology – Grounded Theory: Why?

- COVID-19's implications on **different facets of people's lives**.
- Organisational Behaviour being defined as:
*“The study of the structure and management of organizations, their environments, and the **actions and interactions of their individual members and groups**”* (Buchanan & Huczynski, 2017).
- Each **individual's uniqueness** leading to multiple **motivations** to the same behaviour (Maslow, 1954).
- GT as an **ideal** strategy for exploring behaviour in business environments and management issues (Goulding, 2002).
- GT being **a process** through which *“a robust interpretation is generated”* based on observations and resulting propositions (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

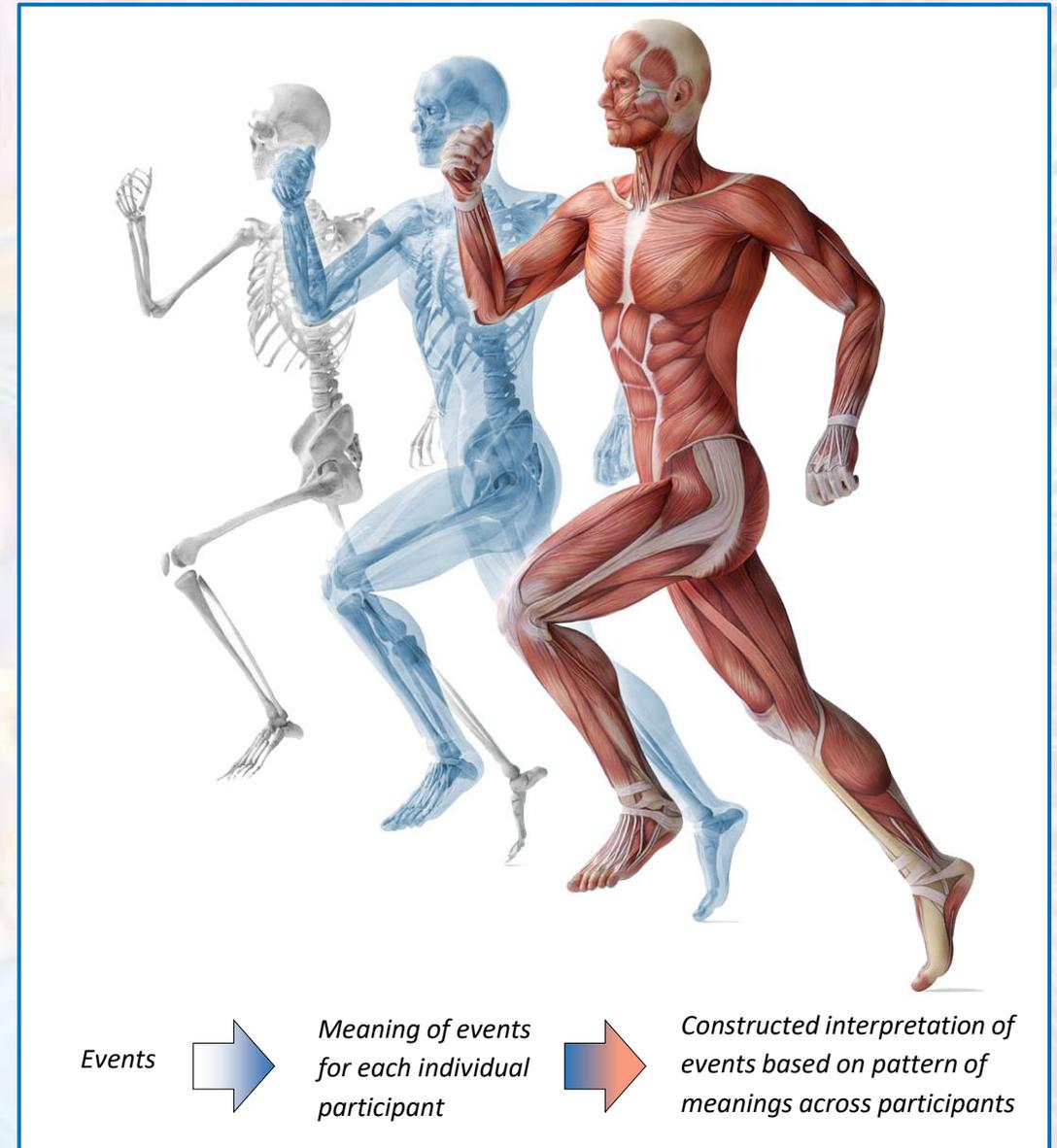


Philosophy and Approach

- An epistemology of **interpretivism** through which it is possible to look for meaningful data *“among people rather than objects”* and **construct** interpretations (Saunders, et al., 2007).
- An **inductive** approach to discover new aspects and realities from the data gathered rather than trying to prove any hypothesis which has been *“formulated in advance”* (Curran & Blackburn, 2001).
- Seven **expert interviews** conducted with owner-managers or employees of small businesses.
 - Mono-Method, Cross-sectional
 - Limitations by the pandemic

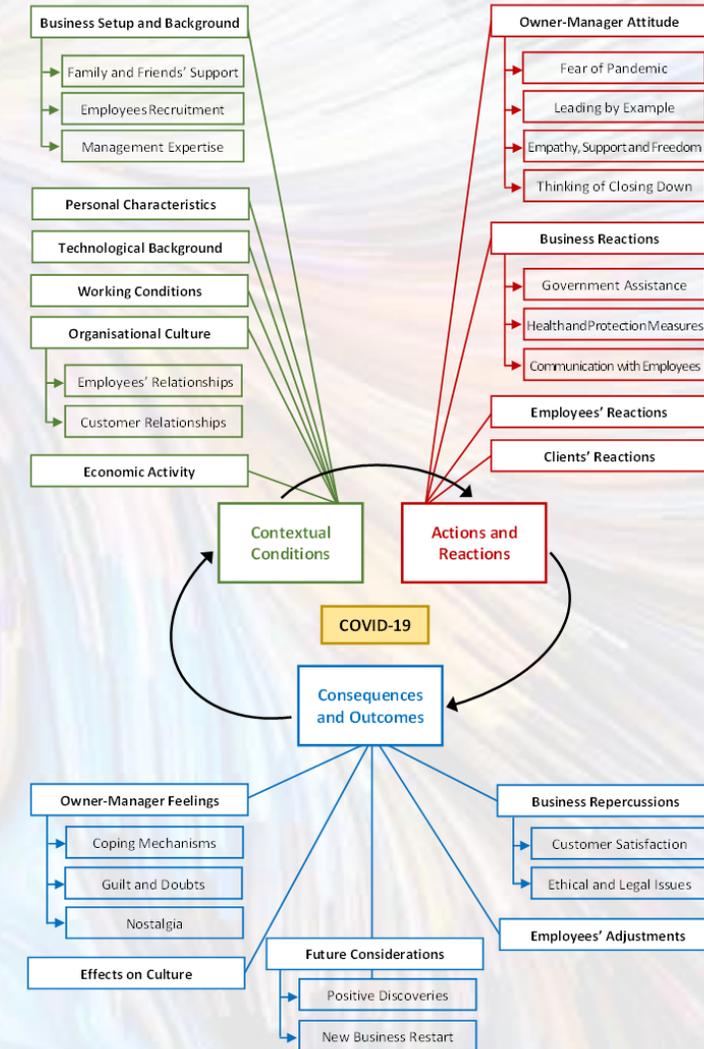
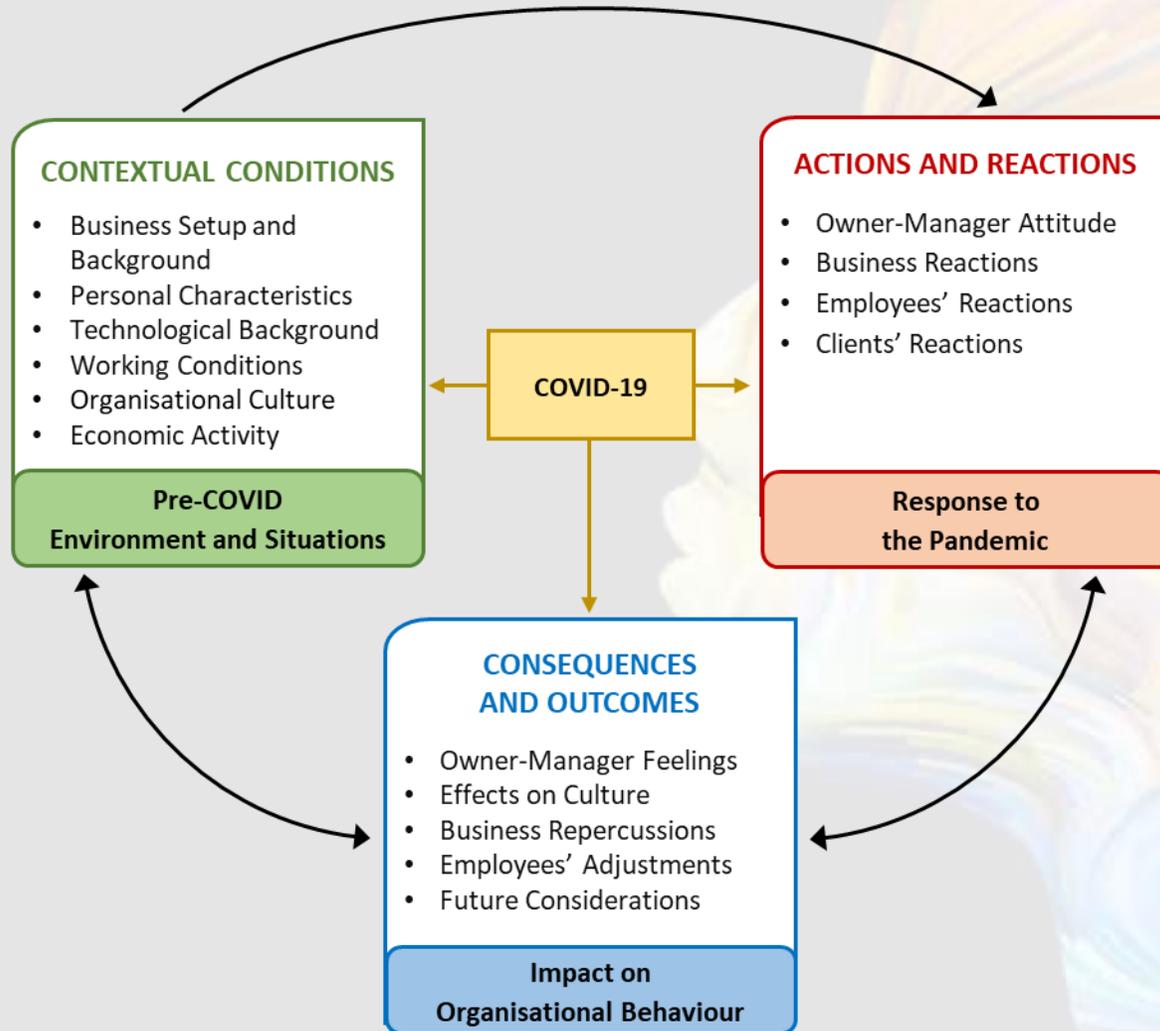


The Data Management & Analysis Process



A visual analogy of Constructivism (adapted from pngwing.com)

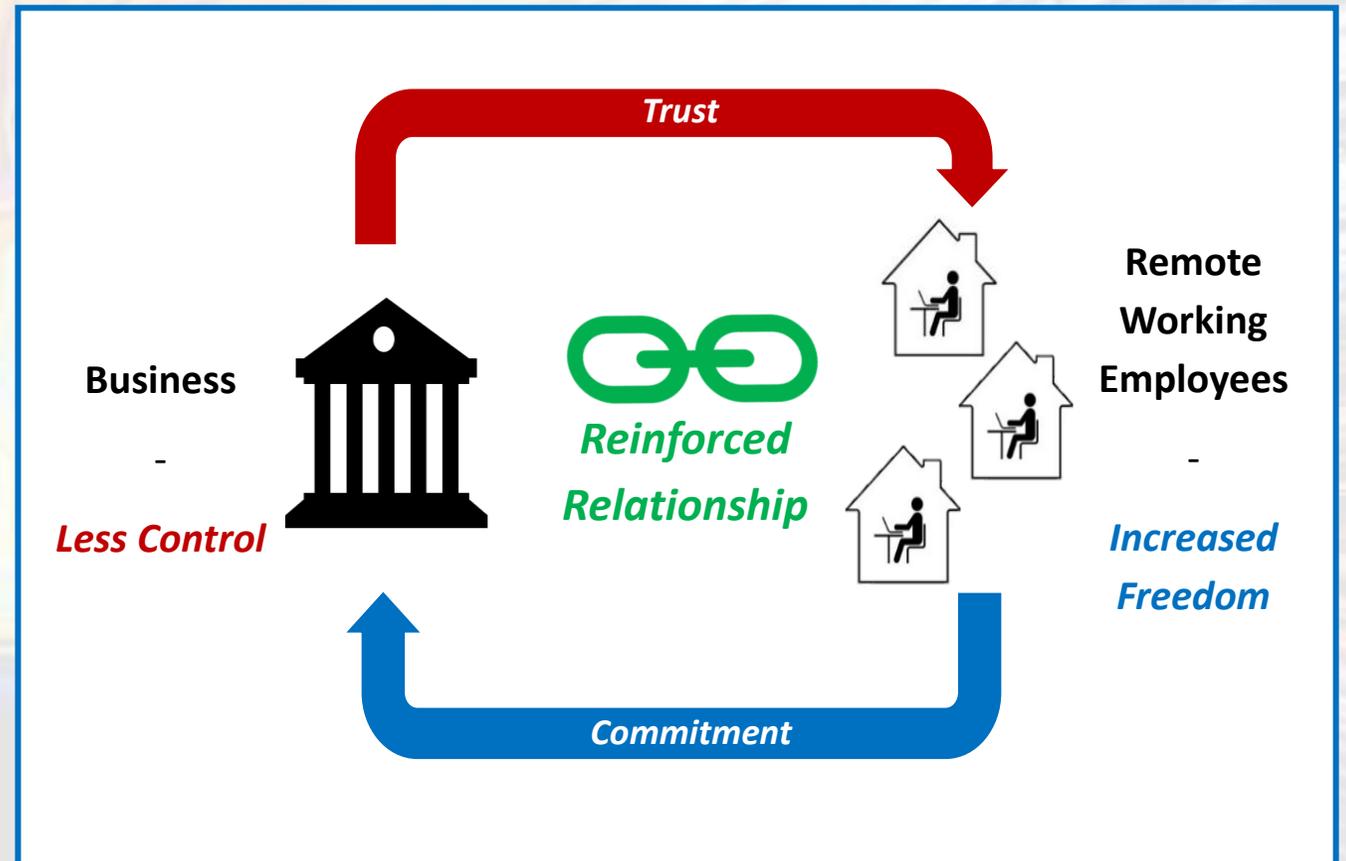
Use of Conditional Matrix Corbin and Strauss (2008)



Resulting Propositions

Main Elements

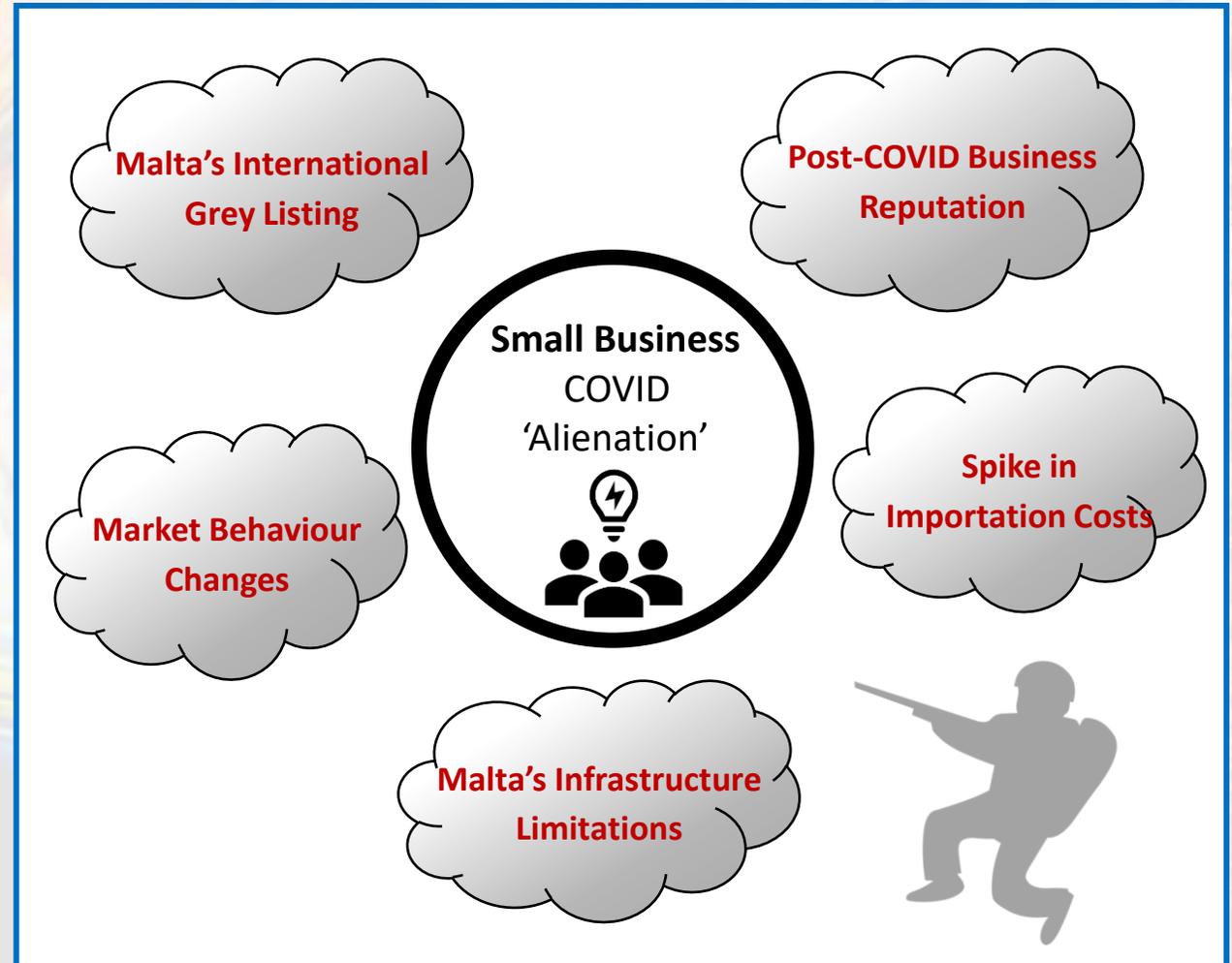
1. COVID-19 as a **catalyst** for business owners to shut down.
2. A heightened **sense of collegiality** within organisations where everyone is equally susceptible.
3. **Empowerment** of employees when allowed to work remotely.
4. Collateral damage on **mental health** which needs addressing.
5. **Effective communication**'s benefits particularly when drastic decisions are taken.



Resulting Propositions

Main Elements (contd.)

- Discovery of owner-managers' **creativity** and new forms of business operations.
- More **financial stability** where credit is given to 'smaller' business-to-business clients.
- Eye opener for employees about qualities for **job retention**.
- Perplexing decision over **vaccination** of employees.
- Alienation** from other possible risks threatening small business.



Recommendations

1. Extending the **time horizon** to observe the long-term effects.
 - Transitory vs. a complete shift in trajectories and mindsets
2. Include **more participants** from a wider spectrum.
3. Conduct studies with owner-managers and employees working together **in the same setting**.
4. Explore the conceptual and process **models' effectiveness and adaptability**
 - Develop a toolkit through which behaviour in times of crises could be projected or explained.
5. Carry out a **tracer study** on redundant workers' new employment in industry, if any.
6. In-depth probing on the importance that small businesses give to **mental health and the holistic wellbeing**.



Conclusion

- COVID-19 has undoubtedly **reconfigured our lives** – as small business owner-managers; as employees; as human beings.
- A **constant reminder to be thankful** for being alive and able to share our joys and sorrows, while looking forward to a brighter tomorrow, **together**.



Thank You



Any Questions?