

MASTER THESIS

The impact of a disruptive environment (COVID-19) on the organizational behavior towards organizational goal-setting

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Preface

In front of you lies the master thesis on the impact of disruptive environments on the organizational behavior towards organizational goal setting. I take great pride in giving you concrete experiences and examples of how organizations experience a disruptive environment in this case COVID-19. This thesis is the final part of the master Business Administration with the specialization Strategic Management at the Radboud University in Nijmegen. My motivation for this study originated from a personal experience gained when an organization I used to work for, got bankrupt due to the COVID-19 conditions. This experience and the provided initiative of Dr. Mirjam Goudsmit, was the start of a journey in discovering the worlds of behavioral theory of the firm, organizational goals and disruptive environments. Throughout this journey, from March 2021 to June 2021, my interest in the subjects grew and I have gained insights on how the perceived impact of COVID-19 and can reflect on my own personal experience, and I hope you can do that too.

In finalizing this research, I reflect on the people who have been of great influence on me during this thesis. Because of the expert knowledge and guidance of Dr. Mirjam Goudsmit, I was able to understand some tough subjects of the literature better and the critical gaze, there was always room for improvement. Also, I would like to thank the second examiner for reading and giving valuable feedback on my thesis. Furthermore, my thanks go out to all the respondents for their contribution, honesty, and great help in gathering the information required to answer my research question. Lastly, I am grateful to have caring family, girlfriend, and close friends who have supported me throughout the journey and raised my motivation in difficult times. Therefore, I will end this quote: "Anything is possible when you have the right people there to support you." - Misty Copeland.

I wish you great joy in reading my master thesis.

Simon Truyen - 21 June 2021

Abstract

A global pandemic that affects organizations, people and economies. That has become reality during the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet, interesting events, activities and behavior can occur during this period. Especially when looking at which direction organizations will pursue when confronted with such a disruptive environment. Thus, by asking the question: *‘How does a disruptive environment (caused by COVID-19) influence organizational behavior towards changes in organizational goals?’* This research strives to bring a better understanding of how these organizational goals are influenced, by whom and for what reason. Through qualitative research, in the form of semi-structured interviews conducted amongst 9 respondents from various sectors, data have been collected and analyzed in order to find the insight needed to answer the research question. This research shows that the disruptive environment does indeed impact organizational behavior towards organizational goals. Leaders tend to make choices based on perceptions and triggers from the disruptive environment. Some organizations set short-term goals as they have been influenced by the disruptive environment. Yet, some other organizations and branches are impacted in different ways and do not need to adjust any organizational goals. Therefore, Multiple factors are at work that influence the setting of organizational goals during times of disruptive environments. This research has created insights and has provided clear reasons why there needs to be more research conducted in this theme.

Key words: organizational goals, organizational goal setting, organizational behavior, disruptive environment, COVID-19

Table of contents

I. Introduction	5
II. Literature review	8
Organizational goals	8
Organizational behavior	11
Disruptive environment	13
Conclusion	16
III. Methodology	17
Research strategy	17
Research justification	17
Sample selection	18
Research process	20
Data analysis	22
Ethical considerations	23
Research validity and reliability	23
IV. Results	25
Organizational goals	25
Impact disruptive environment	29
Organizational behavior:	32
Future:	37
V. Discussion	38
Theoretical implications	38
Practical implications	41
Research limitations	42
Future research	43
Critical reflection	44
VI. Conclusion	45
Bibliography	47
Appendix	50
Interview invitation	50
Consent form	51
Interview topic guide	52
IV. Theme description	53
V. Quotes	57

I. Introduction

Most organizations use goals every day, conscious (e.g., targets set by management) or unconscious (e.g., employees' desire to finish tasks at the end of the day) (Sun, Peng & Pandey, 2014). Organizational goal setting is known and accepted as a way to improve organizational performance by giving guidance and creating effort towards a desired outcome (Kotlar, De Massin, Wright & Frattini, 2018). The literature establishes a connection between organizational goal setting and its environment. For example, Kotlar et al. (2018) state that goal setting is defining the desired relationship between an organization and its environment, a change in either requires adjusting, reappraisal and reflecting on the set goals.

The environment thus plays an influential role on organizational goals (Thompson & McEwen, 1958). Other literature also acknowledges the influence of (uncertain) environments and the fit organizations have to achieve with the environment (Baum & Dahlin, 2007; Stevens, Moray, Bruneel & Clarysse, 2015). However, Kotlar et al. (2018) discuss that little is known about the influence of multiple contexts on the antecedents, variety and outcomes of organizational goals. This context is explained by Kotlar et al. (2018) as external factors such as environments and institutions, including environmental instability. Within this research a category context is the chrono context and describes it as an environmental disruption in a moment of time of the organization. The global COVID-19 pandemic can be seen as such an environmental disruption. Corbo, Corrado and Ferriani (2016) call these events (e.g., the Great Depression or the economic crisis of 1970), that create a period of prolonged and widespread crisis, environmental jolts. Within this research the concepts of disruptive environments, environmental jolts, environmental shocks and exogenous shock have been found similar in meaning. Therefore, all these terms will be used interchangeably.

A disruptive shock in the environment, like COVID-19, can lead to financial threats and environmental uncertainties that could make an organization be at risk, but it can also introduce new opportunities to grow or increase its value in the market (Chakrabarti, 2015; Corbo et al., 2016). More generally, the external environment influences organizations and the ability in the organization to find or to create opportunities and the organizations' ability to exploit these opportunities as a source for competitive success (Corbo et al., 2016). A disruptive environment thus has a huge impact on the economy and the society (Contipelli & Picciau, 2020). To react to these unpredicted business environments, organizations need to learn and adapt in order to succeed (Chadwick & Raver, 2012).

Most organizations set aspirations or goals as a reference point that evaluates performance in a simplified way, making it possible to measure successes or failures (Baum & Dahlin, 2007). Throughout literature the concepts of aspirations, goals and reference points have been found similar in meaning (Shinkle, 2012). Therefore, all these terms will be used interchangeably. An organizational goal is generally defined as an expected level of an organizational outcome or performance, such as profit, that is measurable (Kotlar et al., 2018). As reference points organizations use the organizations own past performance and the desired performance. The manner in which a goal or aspiration has been accomplished or not, relative to the performance, is an important factor for organizations (Baum & Dahlin, 2007). When an organization is faced with underperforming outcomes, due to changes in the environment, an organization often signals this as an incentive for change (Greve, 2008). Hu and Bettis (2018) state that organizations use goals in order to learn and adapt based on the feedback that comes from these goals. Goals differentiate from profit based to performance and social based (e.g., productivity sales, market share and status) (Kotlar et al., 2018). These multiple goals can be set on an individual level and organizational level. The former meaning goals of an individual person (e.g., organizational member, employee) and the latter meaning goals that are set for the organization due to considerations from than one person that hold decision making positions (Clark, Kuppuswamy & Staats, 2018). In both these levels goals coexist and because of this, goals can start undermining the other, making tradeoffs necessary to solve the problem (Clark et al., 2018).

When performance and aspirations are not on the desired level, organizations can be inclined to change their behavior and thus learn from their previous action in order to reach the desired aspiration level (Gaba & Joseph, 2013). Organizations learn from experience and by doing, which is enabled by the motivation and the opportunity for an organization to do so (Clark et al., 2018). The gap in the current performance and aspired performance can be one source of motivation (Baum & Dahlin, 2007), while prior knowledge can be an important source of opportunity (Clark et al., 2018). When an organization performs below the aspired level the organization is more inclined to look for experimental, more distant solutions (e.g., acquisitions). When the performance is near aspiration level organizations tend to be more conservative and remain near the organization for closing the gap by small incremental changes in the organization (Baum & Dahlin, 2007). But what if an environmental shock suddenly shifts the organization into an uncertain environment?

Since a lack of understanding exists in how certain environments influence organizational goals, as mentioned by Kotlar et al. (2018) earlier, and Corbo, Corrado and

Ferriani (2016) also state it is still unclear how core actors respond to environmental shocks. The aim of this research is to add understanding towards this gap by zooming in on a specific case of disruptive environments and how this influences the usage of organizational goals. Thus, adding insights by bringing in real world context caused by the COVID-19 crisis. Therefore, the following research question has been set: *‘How does a disruptive environment (caused by COVID-19) influence organizational behavior towards changes in organizational goals?’* While focusing on the environmental context of organizational goals, organizational decision makers have been interviewed on how organizational goals are set including the organizational behavior (e.g., performance feedback). Secondly, this research question focuses on getting a better understanding on how the disruptive environment that COVID-19 has created, impacts organizations. Additionally, this research adds to the discussions on how managers act in disruptive environments; as discussed by Marino, Lohrke, Hill, Weaver, & Tambunan (2008), researchers posit opposite reactions wherein managers focus internally or externally to reduce uncertainty that results from economic change. Corbo, Corrado and Ferriani (2016) also state it is still unclear how core actors respond to environmental shocks. This research contributes to literature on disruptive environments and how it influences organizations by giving real world examples through empirical collected evidence.

The outline of this thesis is structured as follows. In chapter II relevant literature about the core concepts of this research are discussed, as well as presenting a conceptual framework. In chapter III an overview is given of the research methods. Within this chapter the research strategy, data collection, data analysis, quality and ethics are described. Chapter IV discusses the results and findings of the data, followed up by chapter V where the discussion, including implications, limitations, future research and critical reflection are covered. The research ends in chapter VI by presenting the main conclusions.

II. Literature review

This literature review is meant to provide sufficient knowledge and understanding necessary to answer the research question. The literature presented below gives a description of the current knowledge on the different subjects and makes it possible to answer the theoretical sub-research questions, namely: (1) What are organizational goals? (2) How are organizational goals set? (3) How do organizations' behaviors learn? (4) What is a disruptive environment? (5) How does a disruptive environment influence an organization? By answering these questions knowledge and understanding will be created that will act as the foundation of the empirical research.

Organizational goals

Throughout the literature the concepts of aspirations, goals and reference points have been found similar in meaning (Shinkle, 2012). Therefore, all these terms are used interchangeably. For completeness of the literature review, the concepts will be explained separately to increase the understanding of the reader for this research.

An aspiration level is a reference point that evaluates performance in a simplified way by altering continuous outcome measures into concrete measures of success or failure (Baum & Dahlin, 2007). These aspirations levels arise from a comparison between two reference points, namely: the organization's own past performance and the recent or desired performance of the organization's peer group (e.g., decision-makers) (Baum & Dahlin, 2007).

The aspiration level, thus the manner in which a target or goal has been accomplished or not, relative to the performance is a factor that affects the level of risk that managers are willing to take (Mezias, Chen, & Murphy, 2002). Research has shown that organizations that perform under the aspired level are more likely to take risks than organizations that perform above aspiration levels (Situmeang, Gemser, Wijnberg & Leenders, 2016). Those organizations even tend to avoid risk. More specifically, Situmeang et al. (2016) state that declining performance, and not just underperforming, positively affects the change of organizations partaking in risk-taking behavior. But prior to what aspirations or goals can do for an organization, the understanding of goals will be enlarged.

Goals are present in most organizations and will use goals in order to learn and adapt based on feedback that comes from these goals (Hu & Bettis, 2018). An organizational goal is generally defined as an expected level of organizational outcome that is measurable (Kotlar et

al., 2018). While former literature mainly focuses on the fact that there is only one, performance oriented, goal for an organization to obtain, more recent literature has stated that organizations pursue multiple and diverse goals at the same time that can be related or unrelated to each other (Hu & Bettis, 2018). Hu & Bettis (2018) concluded several conclusions for the hierarchy of the organizational goals, namely: (1) Goals exist in joint hierarchies/ particular shared environments. Meaning, goals are intertwined with each other and can exist in the same field (e.g., a subgoal of 'sustainability' is recycling resources, which in turn is connected to the goal of achieving higher efficiency). (2) With higher-level goals it is difficult to determine which activity contributes to a specific high-level goal. In other words, it is difficult to measure the contribution of an activity (e.g. to the high-level organizational goal. High-level can be described as a strategic level, such as sustainability or competitiveness (Hu & Bettis, 2018). (3) Opposite to high-level goals there are also lower-level goals, which are called operational goals. With these operational goals it is possible to measure the contributions of certain activities. Due to these operational goals and connecting them to the particular environments they belong in, higher level goals become measurable (Hu & Bettis, 2018).

As mentioned above, organizations seem to pursue a single goal (e.g., maximum profit), but the reality is that multiple goals need to be fulfilled in order to improve profitability for instance (Clark et al., 2018). Most of the goals that organizations may pursue, that are researched, are focused on profitability (Kotlar et al., 2018). The creation of profit has a direct impact on the managers income and thus it is understandable why this drives the decision making and as an effect, organizational behavior and outcome (Kotlar et al., 2018). But organizations also pursue other goals such as: productivity, sales, market share, and status (Kotlar et al., 2018) or: increase sales growth, decrease costs, improve customer satisfaction, increase research and development productivity or upgrade the product quality (Clark et al., 2018). While it would seem that these goals work together, research has shown that organizational goals like these are often not or weakly related (Clark et al., 2018).

Goals can be divided into individual and at organizational level. The former meaning the goals of an individual person and at an organizational level meaning goals that are set for the organization due to considerations of more than one person (Clark et al., 2018). At an individual level multiple unrelated goals can create choices that may cause one goal to be influenced negatively or positive by another goal, thus making the process of pursuing both goals difficult (Clark et al., 2018). Even in organizations with one individual who can decide the course of action, each action has implications for the multiple goals and one goal may start

undermining the other (Clark et al., 2018). Thus, making trade-offs is often necessary to solve the problem of deciding which organizational goal is more important than the other.

By having these problems and trade-offs it becomes challenging for individuals to choose between different actions that serve multiple goals. The individuals are forced to trade off one goal for another and due to this process comprises the experience that can be gained from the tasks (Clark et al., 2018). The individuals have less time to reflect on their actions since their energy is spent on completing other goals. This reflection phase contributes to experience, since it lets the individuals think about their actions and lessons taught, which has been found to make experience more productive (Clark et al., 2018). Such reflection is more complex when an individual has to contribute to multiple unrelated goals, creating difficulties dividing time amongst the goals and as an effect learning less experience from each action taken because of the missed chances of reflection (Clark et al., 2018).

Not only do multiple goals reduce the opportunity to learn from experience they can also reduce motivation (Clark et al., 2018). Multiple goals pose the need to switch between goals, this process is called cognitive switching and eventually exhausts the individual (Clark et al., 2018). Research has shown that individuals deal with multiple goals by focusing on only one goal, impacting the effort and attention towards the other goals (Clark et al., 2018). As a result, individuals lack the motivation to reflect on the tasks. So, when organizations increase the activities associated with an unrelated goal, the opportunity and motivation of individuals to learn (experience) may be undermined, and thus will not increase the experience that leads to performance improvements (Clark et al., 2018).

Multiple, unrelated goals at the organizational level can also conjure challenges that undermine knowledge transfer and coordination. The goal aspirations at an organizational level are central to the mindset of its leaders, which will influence the distribution of organizational resources (Clark et al., 2018). For example, the more mindsets leaders have to balance, the more they are forced to spread out organizational resources. Resulting in distributed and divided resources, time and energy that lessens the learning opportunity of the corresponding actions. But when organizational goals are closely related, it develops a strong culture and unified mindset that makes individuals share the understanding of the chosen type of action (Clark et al., 2018). When there is a central (unified) goal, individuals in an organization tend to have higher motivation to reflect and learn from the experiences. Also, this harmonious strive towards a common goal may reduce communication errors and other inconsistent actions between employees when implementing the chosen type of action (Clark et al., 2018). Which leaves even more opportunity to reflect and learn from the chosen action.

Organizational behavior

Performance feedback has been recognized as an important tool for adapting behavior of the organization. That is based on the theory that organizations learn from experience and alter actions based on their level of performance relative towards an aspiration or reference point (goal) (Gaba & Joseph, 2013). Critical in an organization and setting organizational goals is the concept of managerial attention. In other words, understanding the ways in which attention is allocated is critical for understanding decisions (Mazzelli, Nason, De Massis & Kotlar, 2019). This in turn will create understanding about when, where and how organizations collect information about problems, alternatives and the consequences that come with it (Mazzelli et al., 2019). How managers know how and where to act is partly due to the learning process of the organization. Aspirations or goals, which serve as targets for organizational performance, are also key elements in the learning process of organizations (Mezias et al., 2002).

Much like humans, organizations also keep learning and improving when repeatedly doing something. This is called “learning by doing” or “learning from experience” and it is one way for organizations to learn (Clark et al., 2018). Generally speaking, performance improvement will need a reason or desire (motivation) or as Shinkle and Kriauciunas (2012) call it the strength of aspiration and the ability or means (opportunity) to do so (Clark et al., 2018).

One source of motivation is the existence of a gap between the current performance and the aspiration levels (Baum & Dahlin, 2007). An important source of opportunity is the prior available knowledge for the persons that seek improvement (Clark et al., 2018). Prior knowledge is a part of experience and produces feedback about prior actions. Through experience there will also come forth information about the current performance levels. Feedback and information are important for what scholars have identified as problemistic search or in other words: search in response to a perceived problem (Clark et al., 2018). Actions that turn out to be successful are more likely to be chosen again than actions that result in failure. Organizations adapt to increase the likelihood of replicating success by consulting feedback on prior actions. The more experience organizations have the more organizations are able to refine feedback models that result in more effective remedies to perceived problems (Clark et al., 2018).

Organizations gaining experience is not the only opportunity for organizations to learn. However, research has also shown that organizations learn from experience from other

organizations (Baum & Dahlin, 2007). This method of learning is an exploratory learning method that is more likely to be used when the organization's own experience is not up for the task of dealing with new challenges and opportunities. That is when organizations look for other organizations and observe or imitate other organizations behavior that has been found successful (Baum & Dahlin, 2007). Yet not only the successful examples are valuable, learning from failure can be as, or even more valuable than success (Baum & Dahlin, 2007).

When organizations realize they need to adapt to their environments, organizations use searching for alternatives (Baum & Dahlin, 2007). Search is depicted as the problem of allocating attention and resources between exploitation and exploration (Baum & Dahlin, 2007). Exploitation means becoming better and efficient in their current operations, like, cost reduction or efficiency. Exploration means looking for new ways of doing things or new things to do. An organization that focuses too much on exploitation may become narrow and stagnate; an organization that focuses too much on exploration may become unfocused and unable to capture the value of the current operations (Baum & Dahlin, 2007). Organizations that perform near aspirations, earlier experiences are reinforced, current efforts are largely unchanged, the focus of learning is on local search and only minor adjustments are made in existing routines that promise small improvements (Baum & Dahlin, 2007). More exploratory actions are avoided (Baum & Dahlin, 2007). When organizations perform below aspirations, decision makers will look for more exploratory, distant searches and larger changes with the possibility to raise the performance of the organization closer to the aspiration level (Baum & Dahlin, 2007). Research has shown that performance below aspirations, leads towards more experimental solutions in order to identify new ways of doing things and new things to do (Baum & Dahlin, 2007).

The importance of an organization-environment fit indicates that environmental changes force pressure on organizations to adapt their behavior. The decision makers of an organization are thus more likely to be searching for solutions to adapt the organization to the environment, in volatile environments in contrast to stable environments (Stevens et al., 2015). Not only does the environment create pressure on an organization to adapt their behavior, it also provides incentives that focus the decision makers' attention and influence the strength of a response to the environment (Stevens et al., 2015).

Disruptive environment

An environmental shock can be defined as a sudden and substantial change in the environment of an organization. When a shock occurs, many organizations that are influenced by the shock need to develop new skills that are required in the new environment Corbo et al., 2016). Research has shown that organizations find it difficult to develop the new skills quickly (Corbo et al., 2016).

Exogenous shocks tend to expose rules that have been taken for granted and call into question the benefits of those rules. By examining those effects, new logics of action and interaction may come into existence that relocate resources and alter connections within an organization (Corbo et al., 2016), thus creating new possibilities. Yet, not in all cases can such opportunistic possibilities ease the impact of an exogenous shock. This creates a so-called “period of prolonged and widespread crisis in which actors struggle to reconstitute all aspects of social life” (Corbo et al., 2016: 7). Events of sorts include the French Revolution, the Great Depression and the economic crisis of 1970. In literature, those events are called environmental jolts and represent important moments in time that play a key role in enabling change. By disrupting control of resources, an environmental jolt provides opportunities for some and creates problems for others (Corbo et al., 2016). Corbo et al. (2016) state that not much is known about the way core actors respond to exogenous shocks. Do they turn their attention inwards to perfect that they have or do they look for other opportunities to seek legitimacy and resources? One thing is certain, exogenous shocks create uncertainty and alter the configuration of the resource space (Corbo et al., 2016).

The COVID-19 crisis creates a unique opportunity to study organizational crisis reactions. That an organization has a fundamental relationship with its external environment has been well studied and recognized by researchers (Marino et al., 2008). Tensions exist, originating from the environment providing resources and creating uncertainty for an organization (Marino et al., 2008). Empirical research has shown how environmental uncertainty influences a wide scale of organizational factors including structure, environmental scanning and alliance formation (Marino et al., 2008). Marino et al. (2008) also state that it is known that a fundamental challenge for organizations consists of the reduction of environmental uncertainty.

The impact of an environmental jolt on organizational activities is a complex process. A jolt causes the environment to become uncertain which may create crises or create opportunities for organizations and their performance (Hu, Zhang, Song & Liang, 2019).

Managers of an organization are therefore bound to make attempts to reduce this uncertainty. However, the way that managers act remains a point of discussion in studies. Researchers posit opposite reactions wherein managers focus internally or externally in order to reduce uncertainty that results from environmental change or decline in organizational performance (Marino et al., 2008). On one hand, studies have found that when organizations are confronted with perceived uncertain/ uncontrollable environments, managers turn inwards; supposedly towards an environment where they can exercise a greater form of control (Marino et al., 2008).

In this response, described in some research as a ‘threat-rigidity’ response, organizations will centralize authority. These organizations rely on past decision routines, restrict outside information flow, and in some cases, escalate commitment to failing strategies (Marino et al., 2008). For example, Marino et al. (2008) discuss that organizations in mature economies show a rigidity response when facing environmental instability. Also, in other literature about emerging markets, also supports the response of internal focus during declining performance (Marino et al., 2008).

Alternatively, other research suggests that when faced with uncertainty, organizations try to manage critical resource dependencies and gather information in order to reduce uncertainty (Marino et al., 2008). Specifically, two theories both posit an external focus, namely: Resource dependency theory and information process theory. The first one describes that managers try to deal with external dependencies in order to gather and maintain critical resource flows. For example, one strategy organizations use to reduce the environmental uncertainty and gain access to essential resources is to work with other organizations in forms of non-equity alliances or joint ventures (Marino et al., 2008). So, an organization that is involved in technological uncertainty will look for technological alliances in order to keep important resource flows. The information process theory posits that organizations need to collect and process information when faced with environmental uncertainty. Marino et al. (2008) describe that organizations tend to look for strategic alliances in order to gain additional information. Also, in emerging markets, researchers have found this reaction where organizations in an uncertain environment tend to form external alliances in order to gain access to critical resources and overcome the lack of information (Marino et al., 2008).

Further research has stated that whether and how organizations and their managers react to environmental change might depend on the type of change they think they face (Marino et al., 2008). Those changes can be divided into the duration: temporary versus permanent, and its shape: continuous versus discontinuous (Marino et al., 2008). First temporary change might result from short term jolts such as labor union strikes or economic recessions, permanent

changes may be caused by factors such as regulatory or technological changes. With temporary change organizations make incremental short-term changes (for example: layoffs) whereas the latter may cause the organization to act in strategic change (for example: entering new product markets) in order to fit again with its environment (Marino et al., 2008). Next, continuous changes (e.g., demographic shifts) are not as disruptive as discontinuous changes (for example: economic crisis), because firms can slowly adjust strategies to small changes in the environment. This in contrast to discontinuous changes that are more disruptive for an organization's environment (Marino et al., 2008).

Environmental shocks may be temporary or permanent but always result from discontinuous change (Marino et al., 2008). When facing a sudden shock, managers should react quickly and decisively in order to assure an organization's viability. In this case small incremental changes, even in large numbers might not produce the necessary changes to adjust the organization to the new environment (Marino et al., 2008). For SMEs in particular this might be problematic, because even with their strategic flexibility, their available resources are often lacking to cope with the major environmental shifts (Marino et al., 2008).

Organizations that have organizational slack can spread out the impact of the shock through actions such as drawing on cash reserves or laying off personnel (Marino et al., 2008). Organizational slack means that an organization has an excess of resources that allows an organization to adapt to internal or external pressures or initiate changes in strategy to fit to the external environment more quickly than organizations that do not have slack (Wan & Yiu, 2009). Not only can an organization use slack to postpone or soften the blow of a shock, it can also be used to quickly capture new opportunities (Wan & Yiu, 2009) In this way, organizations can redirect resources and postpone or even avoid making major strategic changes (Marino et al., 2008). In contrast, organizations that do not have the luxury of extra slack resources may have fewer options to respond and must often quickly find a solution to overcome the shock (Marino et al., 2008).

When confronted with a major environmental shock, the perceived environmental uncertainty is expected to significantly increase. Yet, due to differences in individuals, managers from organizations can act differently since they perceive these changes differently (Marino et al., 2008). One factor that influences this perception and interpretation of the environment is the organization's strategic posture (Marino et al., 2008), which can range from entrepreneurial (risk taking in the face of uncertainty), to conservative (conserve what there is, in the face of uncertainty). With entrepreneurial posture it is not that they try to exploit

essentially risky situations, but that they see opportunities instead of uncertainties (Marino et al., 2008).

Conclusion

Organizations and their environment are fundamentally connected with each other. The organization needs to react and adapt itself to the environment and the changes that are created by the environment. Normally, organizations use organizational goals to set performance ambitions and make performance measurable. Through these organizational goals it is possible for the organization to recognize if the organization is fitting to the environment or if the organization needs to alter and adapt their behavior in order to create the fit with the environment. In the literature mentioned above, it is clear disruptive environments create unstable and uncertain situations for the organization and that there is a need for organizations to quickly react to these changes in the environment in order to survive or to strive. However, how does the disruptive environment influence the organizational goals? This question still remains unanswered (see figure 1). Although the literature review discusses: that a disruptive environment can create threats and opportunities that impact the organization, that managers or decision makers' perception of the environment impacts the organizational behavior to the environment and that organizations use experience or observations to learn and take action to achieve the desired situation (e.g., achieving an organization-environment fit). It is possible that these factors have influenced organizational goals in a disruptive environment, but still little is known. This master thesis will contribute to the understanding of this phenomena and add to the ongoing literature of organizational goals and disruptive environments.

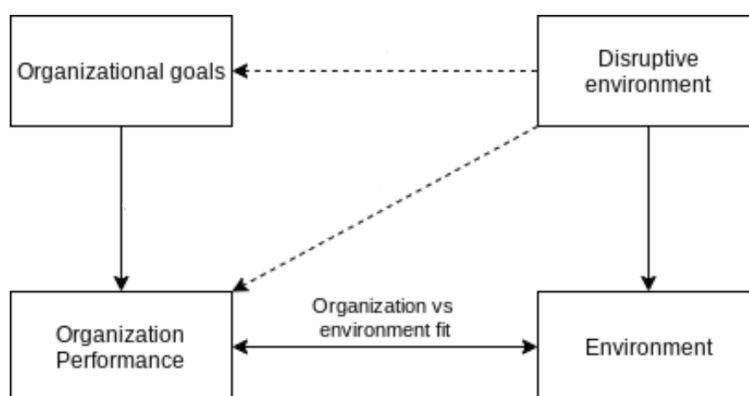


Figure 1: *Conceptual framework.*

III. Methodology

This chapter includes the research methodology. In detail, this section outlines the research strategy, the research method, the research approach, methods of data collection, selection of the sample, the research process, type of data analysis, the ethical considerations and reliability and validity of the research

Research strategy

Denzin and Lincoln (2005), state that a research strategy is determined by the form of the research question and the subject that is being investigated. Thus, the method used should contribute to answering the research question. This thesis was aimed at understanding the way a disruptive environment influences the organizational goal setting in organizations and is thus explorative in nature. The aim of this study was not to find an absolute truth about the topic but rather contribute to the existing literature of organizational goal setting and provide an enriched view on the influences of a disruptive environment that makes organizations set goals in a particular way. In addition to the literature review, empirical research was conducted that added real world' context to the existing literature on organizational goals.

For this thesis a qualitative research method was chosen. This approach investigates the understanding and interpretations as well as the intentions of the human interaction of the thesis subject. Data is collected by using semi-constructed interviews. In the upcoming paragraphs a detailed justification will be given for selecting the approaches and methods.

Research justification

The characteristic of qualitative research is that it is appropriate for small samples (Silverman, 2018). It can cover a complete description and analysis of the research subject, without the change of limiting the scope of the research and the content of the participant's responses (Collis & Hussey, 2003).

In qualitative research, the objective is more exploratory and descriptive rather than explanatory (Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015). The focus on description gave the researcher the chance to describe the experiences of the participants which would follow or contradict the researcher's assumptions that exist from the literature review (Meyer, 2001). In addition, the descriptive nature enables the readers of this research to understand the experiences of the participants, the core of the problem and the impact of it (Meyer, 2001).

Qualitative research has approximately three large categories of data collection according to Silverman (2018) namely, participant observation; interviewing; and the use of personal documents. In this study interviews acted as the main method of data collection. A semi-structured interview approach was deemed the best fit for collecting the understanding and experience of the problem from the perspective of the participants (Meyer, 2001). A fully structured interview did not fit the social experience of the subject and did not give room for the researcher to deviate from a question if an important subject related to the research topic was touched upon (Meyer, 2001). The unstructured interview approach made it difficult for the researcher to compare the collected data of the participants (Meyer, 2001). With an experienced researcher this would not be the case, but with the current researcher there have been cases that the participant took over the interview and steered it in a direction that was not wished for.

A one-on-one interview method allowed the researcher to interact with the participants and observe nonverbal cues during the interview process (Silverman, 2018). The researcher has experience with the research topic because he was in an organization itself that was impacted by the disruptive environment and forced to change its goals. Because the researcher could share his own personal experience the possibility was increased that the researcher was able to build trust and rapport with the participant. Because of this trust it made it a bit easier for participants to share their own experiences without fear of being judged (Stanley & Wise, 1990).

Sample selection

Since this research used a qualitative approach, the focus usually lies on relatively small samples (Emmel, 2013). The participants were selected because they were able to provide rich and detailed descriptions of their experiences and were able to motivate them. Therefore, providing information that is crucial to broaden the researcher's understanding (Silverman, 2016). As for this research the method of purposive sampling was used to develop the sample of research. According to this method, sample members are selected on the basis of their expertise, knowledge and relationship with the research subject (Freedman et al., 2007).

For this research, all the participants have relations with the subject since they are the leader of, or are strategically involved with an organization that is influenced by the disruptive environment and they have knowledge about the goal setting procedure since they make the decisions for the organization. The participants of this study are 9 Dutch organizations differing in size and market. In an optimal situation the number of participants would be set up until the

point that the data collected reaches a point of saturation, where no new themes emerge, so that the researcher could decide that no further interviews are necessary (Saunders et al., 2018). Yet due to time considerations this was not possible.

This selection had been chosen to identify a broad understanding of multiple and different organizations, see table 1. Each organization has experienced the disruptive environment in different manners. The sample has not been chosen randomly, but reflects specific cases to extend the theory to a broad range of organizations. Eisenhardt (1989) followed a similar sample method by reflecting the selection of specific cases that allowed findings to be replicated within categories of diverse sampling. By having diverse participants more comparisons can be made and possibly new factors can be found for explaining or increasing the understanding of the research topic.

Function	Organization branches	Number of employees	Description	Reference in results chapter
Owner	Textile	2	Trade agents for a certain type of fabric that is exported throughout Europe	Respondent 1
Owner	Consultancy	1	Consult's start-ups and entrepreneurs	Respondent 2
Shared owner	Healthcare	14	Treats and rehabilitates people by physiotherapy	Respondent 3
Operational manager	Retail	21	Supermarket located in a town	Respondent 4
Owner	Consultancy	5	Consults Human Resource activities for organizations	Respondent 5
Strategic partner	Electrical industry	35	Installation technology company mainly focused on logistics	Respondent 6
Owner	Consultancy	2	Consults people for setting up a will and living will	Respondent 7
Strategic partner	Retail	2	Distributes drinks towards the catering	Respondent 8

			industry	
Owner	Construction	3	Contracting company for small to medium home improvements	Respondent 9

Table 1: *Overview of respondents*

Research process

The interviews were held with executives of the organizations mentioned above. These participants have been approached via mail or telephone and asked to participate with the research after explaining the purpose and scope, see appendix I. For the participating respondents the interviews were set in May and June of 2021. The interviews took place in the office of the executives, by phone or via an online video calling software and lasted approximately 32 to 51 minutes (see table 2). During the interviews, the researcher has kept notes and, in addition, the conversations had been recorded for the researcher to transform the recording into transcripts.

Respondent	Length of interview	Way of conducting interview	Date of interview
Respondent 1	41 minutes	Online video call	21 May 2021
Respondent 2	43 minutes	Face to face	21 May 2021
Respondent 3	51 minutes	Face to face	24 May 2021
Respondent 4	34 minutes	Face to face	25 May 2021
Respondent 5	41 minutes	Face to face	27 May 2021
Respondent 6	35 minutes	Face to face	28 May 2021
Respondent 7	39 minutes	Face to face	28 May 2021
Respondent 8	47 minutes	Online video call	1 June 2021
Respondent 9	32 minutes	Telephone	3 June 2021

Table 2: *Time and way of conducting interviews*

The semi-structured interviews covered questions based on the topic guide which is operationalized through the literature used in the literature review (Hancock, Ockleford &

Windridge, 2001). The operationalization can be seen in table 3. The choice for a topic guide instead of fully formulated questions is made because this gives the researcher more freedom in asking questions about the topics (Hancock et al., 2001). The topic guide can be found in the appendix III

Concept	Variables	Sources	Example question
Organizational goals	Ambition Goals Aspirations Type goals	(Kotlar et al., 2018); (Baum & Dahlin, 2007); (Hu & Bettis, 2018); (Clark et al., 2018)	What goals are set? (prior and during disruptive environment) (e.g., Performance focused or social)
	Motivation	(Clark et al., 2018); (Baum & Dahlin, 2007)	Why are they set? (prior and during disruptive environment)
	Related goals Importance goals Hierarchy goals	(Hu & Bettis, 2018); (Clark et al., 2018)	Ranking in importance? based on the theory of multiple goals Reasoning included.
Organizational goal setting	Goal-setting Antecedents Context Stakeholders	(Baum & Dahlin, 2007); (Clark et al., 2018); (Kotlar et al., 2018)	How are the goals set? (what is the influence) And why? Who is involved? (important stakeholder) And why?
Disruptive environment	Perception Experiences Opportunities Threats Size of impact	(Clark et al., 2018); (Corbo et al., 2016); (Marino et al., 2008)	How does the environment impact the organization? Ask example
			How big is this impact? And why?
			How do you experience the environment? And why?
Organizational behavior	Triggers Learning-moments	(Hu & Bettis, 2018); (Gaba & Joseph, 2013); (Mezias et al., 2002); (Stevens et al.,	How does the disruptive environment impact the organizational goals? And why?

	Performance-feedback	2015); (Marino et al., 2008)	How did you know the goals needed to change? And why?
	Shifting goals		Are particular goals more important now? And why?
	Organizational-attention		How do you alter the goals? And why?
Vision on future	Future vision Future goals Adjusted goals		How do you interpret the future? And why? (if possible, make connect to goal-setting)

Table 3: *Operationalization of the concepts*

Data analysis

To analyze the data which was gathered from the personal interviews, a thematic content analysis method was applied. Silverman (2016) describes that content analysis is simply an analysis of the data for recurrent instances of some kind. In order to begin with this method, the interviews needed to be transcribed into texts or transcripts. After this step the content analysis could begin, which consists of steps stated by Silverman (2016). First, the researcher got familiar with the data, meaning reading and rereading the transcripts. The first couple transcripts were read completely to complete the next step, which is First Cycle coding (labeling) the text (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). During this step the researcher descriptively coded data to a summarization in a word or a short phrase. This has eventually created an inventory of topics that helps indexing and categorizing the data (Miles et al., 2014). The codes have been created inductively, meaning that the codes emerge progressively during data collection (Miles et al., 2014). This better suited the research since the participants indirectly create the codes and not the literature (making codes that need to fit with the data collected). Next, the researcher has revised the codes and changed them accordingly. For example, some codes contained too much data creating a meaningless bulk of data (Miles et al., 2014). To resolve this problem the researcher had to break down the codes into subcodes (Miles et al., 2014). The next step was Second Cycle coding.

Where First Cycle coding is creating and summarizing segments of data, Second Cycle (Pattern coding) coding is grouping those summaries into smaller numbers of themes (Miles et al., 2014). These themes consist of more meaningful units of analysis (Miles et al., 2014). The

Pattern codes usually consist of four summarizers: (1) categories or themes, (2) causes/explanation, (3) relationships among people and (4) theoretical constructs. Still, it might be the case that new codes emerge or codes need to be revised. The interviewer has tested these Patterns on new participants in order to check if the patterns still hold (Miles et al., 2014). Lastly, after collecting all the themes with the corresponding data, the researcher has interpreted the data and created narratives that include quotes from the interviews (Miles et al., 2014). In appendix IV, the list of themes, descriptions and examples has been presented.

A downside that has to be taken into account is the human error that can be involved in the content analysis. There is a risk that the researcher has misinterpreted data and therefore got unreliable conclusions (Krippendorff, 2018). To counter this risk, the researcher checked and confirmed data given with the participant in the interview and for the transcripts (Miles et al., 2014).

Ethical considerations

During this research, several ethical considerations are taken into account that ensures that the study is conducted in an appropriate fashion. The participants that took part of this research all needed to provide consent (appendix II) to be interviewed and to be recorded. The participants all knew what the subject was and the scope of the interviews. They were, in no circumstances, forced to answer questions they did not want to answer and had the ability to state sentences in private, off record.

Furthermore, it has been explained to the participants that their information is processed confidential and the content of the individual interviews would only be discussed with the supervisor of the research, if need be. In the final report the identity of the participants has been removed and pseudonyms were used for the respondents.

At the end of the interview the participants and the researchers reflected by talking about the interview process itself and the impact that it has given. The aim of this reflection was to ensure that the participants were not left with unanswered statements or questions and were emotionally healthy. The feedback gathered by the participants was reflected on by the researcher and the interview process has been adjusted if deemed fit.

Research validity and reliability

Validity is usually a construct that is associated with quantitative research and measures the extent to which the theories derived from research data are true and correctly capture the

phenomenon (Gibbs, 2002). In qualitative research however, validity is determined by the extent to which the data obtained from the participants have been consistent (Gibbs, 2002; Schurink, 2003) thus, when the data collected becomes repetitive or irrelevant for the research. In this research, the researcher has used a topic guide that ensured that the most important themes were discussed.

The reliability of this research is the matter in which data that is collected is generalizable (Gibbs, 2002). By semi-structured interviews the content of the interview and thus data collected has been roughly the same for each participant. The researcher also remained the same during the study. Since, this research has researched a theme that was still ongoing in the time of the interviews, participants could change answers in course of time. To have reliable research, all the interviews have been recorded and transcribed to prevent interpretation errors and potential data losses. Furthermore, the researcher has selectively selected participants in order to increase the generalizability. Yet, due to the absence of some similar branches in the respondents, interpretations are not fully generalizable.

IV. Results

This chapter contains the results of the thematic content analysis, based on the interviews conducted. The results are composed out of nine transcripts. Based on the topic guide, used for conducting the data collecting, results are shown in the global themes of organizational goals, organizational behavior, and impact environment. Within the global themes, quotes of the respondents are used to give a more detailed description of the collected data. This can be found in appendix V where the quotes from the respondents have been translated from Dutch to English.

Organizational goals

In examining which and how organizations use organizational goals, different reactions emerged with some goals that overlap with other respondents. The respondents each acknowledge that they use organizational goals. Interesting enough some respondents mention that they do not use organizational goals or at least unconsciously, like respondent 9.

"I don't really work with objectives. Or you should say that I do work with goals, but that goes on autopilot for me." - Respondent 9

Yet when asked what the respondent would like to achieve in their organization a clear purpose was given. Therefore, all respondents have goals they want to achieve. Yet where they differ is the type of goal they set and the duration of these organizational goals. 8 of the 9 respondents have mentioned they want to grow their company. This can be in the number of employees, in the number of customers or in the location of the organization. For example, respondent 2 states the desire to expand its organization by increasing its customers which form a network.

"Well I just explained a little bit what I do but what I would like to work towards is that I have a kind of customer base and I am now working really well there. and that is a plan that I want to achieve spread over five years." - Respondent

“So, I mainly focused on building a network, building trust. brand awareness, that's also something, and also growing my own network. I want to deliver the right quality. I really want to be a partner. Maybe that's it, that realization comes now, I want that very consciously. I want to enter into a long-term relationship.” -

Respondent 2

The only respondent that does not have this growth ambition is respondent 9. According to the respondent, due to past experiences, growth is not an important goal in the organization anymore.

Interesting enough, only 1 of the 9 respondents mention that their organization has a financial goal as their main objective. Although respondent 4 states that the organization only focuses on making a profit, its ambition states another more social goal.

“Well the ambition of the company, what we try to be is a kind of community center of the village. We are the only place where people still meet and see each other every day and we try to keep it that way and support it. and we are always looking for customer contact and that is what we stand for. ” - Respondent 4

Now that it is known that organizations set goals and what kind of goals they set, the next objective is to understand why goals are being set. According to the respondents' goals are being set as a point in the future where they can work toward. It gives handles to the organization and sets a clear path where to build towards. Respondent 2 explains this, and mentions that, because of its vague ambition, goals give direction. Also, goals give the opportunity to measure the progress of ambition.

“Well why am I setting those goals? They are very supportive of me. I know roughly what I want to work towards, so because my ultimate ambition is quite fleeting or vague, I still have certain goals that are a bit more specific, so for example those 10 entrepreneurs in a year, that is really something I can work towards and that contributes specifically contribute to the growth of the company. and that can be measured. And that's really what it all comes down to. ” - Respondent 4

As mentioned above, ambitions tend to harbor organizational goals. They make it more measurable and create a path to be followed. Yet goals do not mean that the path is set

in stone, as respondent 7 discusses. There is a desire for the respondents to remain flexible in its goals.

"We do have that dot on the horizon, only if there is something on the left then I want to go there and if something happens on the right I can go there. So do set a goal but we're not like okay I'm going there and I don't assume other things. We have a goal, but if things come our way in the meantime, such as the settlement of the estates, we are certainly open to that." - Respondent 7

The data mentions that indeed, also other respondents use some form of flexibility in an organizational goal. Just like respondent 1 indicates that, because they are a startup, they require a flexible goal so they can take up chances and opportunities once they arise.

Yet organizational goals do not appear out of thin air. The data shows that there are multiple factors included in the goal setting process. In the case of respondent 1 minimizing risks is fairly important and achieving a balanced structure next to their ordinary work. Another factor in the data is intuition, in this data respondents state that the owner makes goals based on intuition but in addition these owners also do research and use knowledge and experiences available to them, as has been stated by respondent 6.

"Yes, that mainly depends on feeling. But he also reads a lot, he sees a lot and asks a lot, hears a lot, has many conversations with end customers and also an enormous amount of knowledge, so that a lot is created from his ideas." - Respondent 6

Where some goals are set by looking at the environment or are created by a need to expand in order to improve the quality of the organization (respondent 3), other organizations, like respondent 4 partake in a different way of setting goals. Due to being part of a franchise the focus lies on financial performance and thus goals are set in order to divide the revenue needed to reach the financial targets of the year.

"They are simply budgeted at the beginning of the year. or I just say, there a budget is made with sales and turnover targets, per department such as kw or fresh. and that is again subdivided into department contribution so then you have a total percentage and part of that is dry groceries and another part is fresh, so vegetables

sausage cheese bread. The focus is usually on fresh because that is something that has changed in recent years. and within that, that budgeted turnover for a year is converted into days or weeks and then you also receive a turnover contribution per department that you have to achieve.” - Respondent 4

According to the data, one more important factor in setting organizational goals is the person that sets the goals. Respondents describe that the owner or owners are usually the person that sets the goal. These owners are the founders of the organization and know which way they want to go. Yet there is a difference in goals they set. This is interesting since some ambitions are similar. One of the reasons that an owner makes certain decisions is because of the experience he/she possesses. As made clear by respondent 1, because the owner knows the product, has the connections and actively helps the supplier in making the product, the owner chooses the direction where to go. Only the intern goals are made up in consultations with the other owner. This is also the case in the organization of respondent 8 where the ideas and setting of the goals is done by the owner and the internal processes and way of achieving goals is done by a strategic partner.

“(Name) is the owner and he has a number of things that need to be done and of which he also knows about oh sister and that's how I want to do it and I was especially the sparring partner because some things he has a certain image on then say I think you better do that differently. Because sometimes he just looks too positively at things that actually can't work out. or at least not that way. He has more insight into what exactly needs to be done in general. But how it happens, that is mainly what I focus on.” - Respondent 8

Yet in not all cases the owner has the sole responsibility in setting goals. They often consult other people in order to critically reflect their goals. The data shows that (external) advisors, people who are not in the market, and employees are consulted in making up goals. Respondent 7 states that because they are so committed and passionate about the organization, tunnel vision can occur and unrealistic goals are set. So, because of these critical views, realistic, achievable goals are set.

“We always have something like that that we have to be careful not to end up in a tunnel. watch because the two of you sometimes get tunnel vision. and then we

notice that it is sometimes good to present a plan to someone who comes all the way from the industry. so, for example, my sister or my mother, someone from the outside can look at it completely differently and have different ideas and practice.” -

Respondent 7

Not only do the goals set by the respondents come in different sizes, types, and durations. They are also rated in different manners based on importance and relate differently toward other goals. In the data a clear example is made by respondent 3 where it is explained that the most important goal of quality has multiple dimensions in the service to the customers, own expertise and in the story you project outwards. Not only does a goal have multiple dimensions, according to respondent 3, they are also connected with each other. Since the main goal is quality, the other goals contribute towards this main goal. Which will in the end even transform into a better financial position.

“Because the treatment average, if you go to someone, for example you say about that sitting position and someone immediately raises the screen and is no longer bothered by it after 1 session, yes that makes a huge difference in the rehabilitation process and therefore also the treatment average. And the treatment average ultimately ensures that we get a higher rate, so it is anyway. When we talk about the entrepreneurial story and the financial picture, quality ultimately ensures that you have a better financial position. ” - Respondent 3

Impact disruptive environment

Although an organization's goals are set with consideration of the environment, the environment can also impact the goals that are already set. Such is made clear by the respondents and data collected. Especially in the disruptive environment that COVID-19 has created. What has become clear in the interviews is that every organization experience and perceives the disruptive period differently. And in addition, as the disruptive period lasts, the experiences change. Every respondent has had a similar reaction in the beginning of being afraid or uncertain what it would mean for their organization. Although the reaction is the same, the magnitude of this reaction is different for the respondents. For example, the

perception of respondent 9, who has had no negative impact on their business and market states that he felt like the global pandemic did not exist.

"A nice example, In the first peak of corona we stood in the middle of a meadow, and there we were making a horse stable from oak, the sun was shining it was cold it was freezing, but the sun was shining and we looked around and then we said to each other: unbelievable hey that we don't notice anything from corona because we looked around us and there was no one there just the two of us and the work we had to do and then we just went home in the evening after a day hard work"
- Respondent 9

This is a large contrast if comparing the reaction of respondent 7 who has lost most of their customers. Or respondent 8 who has the continued uncertainty because they were dependent on the government measurements. Although the beginning was thus uncertain and unclear for the respondents, an observation of the data shows that most of the respondents have adjusted in a short time after the first impact of the environment. This is confirmed if the numbers are compared, that they have given the COVID-19 period. In the beginning most of the respondents give a score of 4 or 5 on a scale of 1 to 5, that measures the impact of the COVID-19 environment. The scores decrease overtime and the impact shifts from high to overall neutral. At the time of conducting the interviews, all except one respondent mention that they feel that the impact of COVID-19 is absent or it has become a new normal.

"If I'm honest, we already noticed at the beginning of January that people weren't so concerned with it anymore. So, the 1st 2 waves had been and the vaccination story started to run. People have less anxiety and you actually noticed that January February we had a good turnover and in March the hospitals started to rise again and then we noticed that the older population came to the practice less. but it hasn't given us less sales anymore. so, we haven't really been complaining since 2021." - Respondent 3

The impact of the disruptive environment has thus created multiple changes and events. Respondents indicate that projects have accelerated due to COVID-19, an increase in potential customers, a decrease in customers, an increase in the prices that consumers are

willing to spend, and also triggered respondents to look more efficiently towards their own organization. To give examples on how it impacted the organization, respondent 2 has indicated that because of the disruptive environment most people were forced to sit at home, and they made choices to start businesses. These were the customers of respondent 2 so there were a lot of new customers to be found for him.

“But as soon as corona came you noticed that many people sat at home. Sometimes the work closed completely and people could not do anything. They couldn't go to work, they couldn't really do things outside. And that's why I noticed from the market that small entrepreneurs are springing up everywhere. They jumped out of the ground like coal. They arose in front of me, I really noticed that.” - Respondent 2

Yet, the disruptive environment does not always create new groups of customers. It is also possible for an organization to lose a lot of their customers due to the environment. As is experienced by respondent 7, their organization has seen a large drop in their potential customers due to the measurements of the government. They lost 80% of their customer stream and the growth of the organization stopped overnight. This is one concrete example of the impact the disruptive environment can have on an organizational goal. And it is also present with other respondents. Because of the closure of the main market and thus, loss of their customers, respondents 8 had to adjust and postpone their growth goal. Even when the market opened again, they encountered another impact of the COVID-19 period namely, their customers were reserved towards the service of the organization of respondent 8.

“And now that it's open, it's all small orders, say a bit moderate, people are reluctant to spend immediately because of course they have had no income at all for a number of months. Also little goes out. In that respect, those goals are also delayed because entrepreneurs are still quite reluctant.” - Respondent 8

Interestingly enough, as mentioned earlier, not all branches have experienced the disruptive environment as negatively or intensely as for example the food and drinks branches of respondent 8. When looking at the data gathered, some indication can be seen towards the branches. Respondents from the electric installation, textile, retail (supermarket), contractors, and some consultancy branches state that they do not have experienced that much

negativity from the disruptive environment. Yet, mention that other parties in their branch had different impacts. Like respondent 9, who mentions that larger organizations have had trouble with the previous branch-based crisis and with the current disruptive environment.

“Because due to the construction crisis that existed before the corona and now with corona again, many large contractors have disappeared or you see that mass contractors, there people are a number. and people want to be a person when they seek a partnership with a construction company. because yes, it is their own thing that they want to renovate, so it is very important that you are accessible for that. we are very close to the people.” -

Respondent 9

Organizational behavior:

Organizational goals are the guidelines or points where the organization wants to work towards, that has been made clear by the respondents. But organizations do not live in a carefree world without influences. So, organizations tend to take opportunities or respond to threats, react to the environment and alter goals in the process. Moments like this give the organization changes to learn and adapt, according to the data.

Throughout this study, the theme has emerged regarding responding to threats or taking opportunities. The respondents mention several examples that they have experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, which have impacted their organization and goals.

According to the respondents, multiple opportunities have surfaced because of COVID-19. Where in some cases it is reaching a new audience, taking more risk, or performing in a different role. In other cases, opportunities have presented itself in the form of minimizing the damage that COVID-19 has brought with itself. This is the case of respondent 3, where he had to close due to the measurements given by the government, but found a new source of income in the form of subsidies for an IT related project. This has given them the room to survive and even perform better than expected.

“So, we were actually able to bridge that period. so, we had made a new budget. And so, in the end, with the money we received from the health insurance plus those 50,000 euros, we even made a very small profit. So, we were very happy. And

we were even able to pay holiday pay this year, so that really saved us.” - Respondent

3

Yet sometimes, it is just pure luck in what field you were working in prior to COVID-19, as is the case with respondent 1. In searching for different products to sell, luck has it that they focused on mouth masks for a specific market. During COVID-19 the demand for mouth masks, especially in the beginning, had risen dramatically and the respondent jumped into the gap and set a short-term goal for making the most of the situation.

“So, we first started with mouth caps against pollen and particulate matter. (...). We started experimenting with that and our luck was that corona broke out last year and that we were asked about mouth caps at once. then we dived into that and we also sold three-layer face masks, k95, to healthcare institutions to hospitals always as an agent so we never owned those goods we were only involved in transactions and commercial activities” - Respondent 1

Although opportunities have come in different sizes for the respondents, there were also threats that have impacted the organizations. As the data has indicated that due to COVID-19, some markets have been impacted which present organizations with difficult scenarios they have to deal with. Respondent 8, has mentioned that, at one point in the corona crisis their customers were forced to close, due to government measurements. This threat, which it was since the revenue of the organization has almost come to a halt, also presents an opportunity for them to look at the internal processes which ultimately resulted in a more efficient way of working. And more respondents have had similar moments, respondent 6 discusses the possible threat that their employees were forced to work from home. This triggered an opportunity to accelerate the digitalization of the company and made them more efficient and up to date.

“That is the chance that you constantly have the chance that the entire office will be at home. And for that you have to set up a lot of everything and we first did that with the old IT administrator and that all worked halfway. but we just had to make sure it's possible. that if we all have to go home, we will take the laptop or take the laptop at home and you can continue working. That really was the trigger to get everything in order here, to make everything more streamlined. That was the first step

in digitization. and we have already been working on that to do less in folders and store more digitally. That also went faster because people were at home and we had to go to the files.” - Respondent 6

In reaction to the environment organizations tend to alter or adjust their way of working and their goals. Where in some moments the focus from the ambition is set towards achieving small goals like making profit and exploiting the situation given by the disruptive ship. Like respondent 1 mentions making the choice in the beginning to enter the mouth mask business, and explaining that it is a difference in how they acted then and how they are working towards a future now.

“And you are more concerned with how can we keep things running as efficiently as possible and you are not so concerned with that in advance because then earning money and keeping the shop running is a side issue because it is a hobby, that's the difference now.” - Respondent 1

Another example of how to react to the environment is given by respondent 5, They noticed that the current path of growing their customer base did not work, and jumped into the need for advice for other organizations stuck in the disruptive environment. Yet when they offered their advice, the response was not what they hoped it to be. Thus, altering their way of working again and at that moment new customers began to come. Yet, a period later, the same method did not work anymore and they made the decision to end the extra provided service, since it did not yield the results, they wanted.

“At first, we did this for a reduced rate, but we soon noticed that we shouldn't have to spend a lot of money here because few calls came in. Then we decided to make it free, so the first appointment companies have just been able to schedule for free and request consultation or advice. This would have been a smart move for us because less than a few days later we ended up getting calls from all kinds of companies.” - Respondent 5

Not only does the disruptive environment make organizations look for opportunities or adjust a way of working, it also forces organizations to look inwards. Since some

organizations could not make the revenue, they used to, they needed to look at what and where the costs were going out. Respondent 7 says that this was triggered by corona.

“Now we thought okay wait a minute, so really because of corona, every month so much money went out and we didn't use it. so, for now we pulled the plug and put it on hold but like I said you don't normally look at that. but now you are more or less forced to look at it. “- Respondent 7

And more organizations are looking inwards toward the internal processes and recognize that more steps can be made in order to create a more efficient, more flexible organization that, even in times of less work, still finds work that contributes towards profits in the future. That can be ascertained in multiple respondents. Due to triggers of signals coming from the disruptive environment, like the fear of closing or the loss of customers. Just like the organization of respondent 5 who have spent time working on their online presence and developed the plans for a marketing plan that could be rolled out when the moment presented itself.

“Yes, in terms of assignments, nothing new came in, sometimes a request or advice about what to do with an employee who had become ill, but those were more day-to-day moments that we lost with it. So, then we decided to focus more internally. Because we actually started quickly and got customers, the website was still a bit behind and internal processes could be streamlined a bit more. “- Respondent 5

Sometimes the focus on the internal processes is needed in order to build the foundation to which the opportunity to grow can originate. This is the case for respondent 8, who has focused on making the internal processes and infrastructure efficient and returning towards pre COVID-19 financial resources in order to begin or rather resume the organizational goal of growth.

In the data it repeatedly comes forth that respondents choose to work with short term goals in the disruptive environment. Respondent 4, mentions that these short-term goals are the reason why they can shift their focus so fast, by looking at the day-to-day spending's of their customers and only looking forward a month, they can shift fast if there are any unforeseen factors. This is due to the day-to-day spending's of the customers according to respondent 4. But there are also other cases where respondents chose to work with short-term

goals in order to cope with uncertainty or other effects from the market. One example has already been given by respondent 1 in taking the opportunity and setting the goal to make the most of it. Other examples are given by respondent 8, their organization has trouble with the uncertain environment so pursuing long term goals is not a possibility, and they just have to make do with the current situation.

“I think the main thing is that we make sure we get it right now with what we have. and the goal we have to go to Eindhoven is still only the way in which will always be adjusted in the short term. because we don't know what it will look like a week or a month later. That would be nice, but unfortunately it isn't. In principle, I think if that is clearer from the short term, then we will respond more to it. “-
Respondent 8

This focusing on the short term does not always mean that the grand or long-term goal also needs adjusting. It is possible for an organization to focus on short-term goals and still be on track for the set goals over a long period. As is the case with respondent 5, who are now, later on in the COVID-19 period back on track with the old level that they had before COVID-19 and continue the pursuing of the set goals in their 5-year plan.

When analyzing the data, it is clear that lots of respondents have gained experience whilst going through the disruptive environment period created by COVID-19. Through adjusting goals, experiencing impacts from the environment, confronted with new behaviors of customers, being confronted with shortcomings of the organization, or looking towards other organizations and seeing how they experience this period, a lot of lessons have been learned. Respondent 3, shares an experience where other choices could have been made. During the time they closed, due to government measurements, they did not fill the time in efficiently, says respondent 3 in hindsight. They had seen a competitor renovate and update their buildings and equipment and wished they had done the same thing. Now the respondent has decided to renovate their office as well but it will be by compromising time elsewhere.

Another example of a learning moment experienced specifically by the disruptive environment is that the world is a hard place. In times of crisis, consultancy companies can be considered redundant in some cases, making their organization vulnerable. Respondent 5 mentions this in an example, and adds the learned lesson that due to the size of their organization, they have the possibility to take more chances and be more flexible in the choices they can make.

“But we have also learned, for example, that things can turn very quickly. because that way you have, for example, 50 new assignments and the next week it will be completely silent. You just can't look ahead with what the future will bring and that just makes responding to certain situations very difficult. You really have to try things out. And I think that's what makes us unique or at least one step ahead of other companies. We are small enough that we can just try things out and get out quickly if it doesn't work.” - Respondent 5

Future:

Lastly, the data shows how the respondents look towards the future and what goals or ambitions they have set upon themselves. Through lessons learned in the disruptive environment some respondents have found new customers, have created new activities, and have seen a new image of what they would like the organization to look like. For example, respondent 1 comes to the conclusion they want continuity and not serving the market where it chooses. So, they want to achieve that they are the biggest trading agent in the textile market, but even though the signs are good, they have the security of income and want to grow their company but there are still lots of steps between that goal and they want to achieve it as safely as possible so they can profit optimally.

“Yeah, and we're going into it completely. However, there are still many intermediate steps if you want to achieve that. So, we want to strive for it, but in a safe way and can benefit optimally” - Respondent 1

Other respondents indicate they look to a promising future due to corona. As it is with respondent 2 who, by investing in an online presence, has new customers begin to present itself and the main goal of building a network begins to close in. The same goes for some other respondents, like respondent 4, who thinks they can expect to keep a proportion of the higher profits.

“To be honest, I think we will maintain part of our turnover increase, not as it is now, but slightly higher. And I think, we are positive. because I assume that during this period, we have shown what we can do, our store then. I can't say we came out

badly or that we did badly, not at all. so, I do think that we will continue to keep part of the turnover increase for the time being. absolutely. So, I'm hopeful." - Respondent 4

Not every respondent expects large changes in the future. Respondent 6 thinks that their organization goes back to normal but with the change that there have been considerable steps in the digitalization of the organization. And that helps if the organization wants to work towards the future goals like data driven performance and energy transition and then take the role of project management, which is similar to the experience of another respondent. Through the disruptive environment, respondent 7 has seen that it is not only possible to survive without the activities prior to COVID-19 but found a whole new activity to add to their repertoire. In addition, they foresee a future in which they take a new role to uphold, namely as lead provider.

"Well, I think first of all that, so not only giving lectures, but also really being seen as a lead provider. And not only with the member organizations such as a care group, but also with other companies such as that large transport organization. and they can roll it out throughout the Netherlands, yes, we can't handle point 1, because you have to stay in your own region a bit, so that has to be done as a lead processor. and therefore, giving lectures at companies and entering that is a new market." - Respondent 7

Although most of the respondents see to the future with great promise. Respondent 8 has a cautious vision of the future. They even state that the growth goal is still an ambition but has been set on the back burner. This comes because of the uncertainty of the environment they still experience.

V. Discussion

Theoretical implications

The central theme addressed in this research focuses on the impact that a disruptive environment (COVID-19) has on organizational behavior, regarding organizational goals setting.

Within this context, it is necessary to zoom in on the separate constructs before covering the central theme.

First, Kotlar et al. (2018) state that an organizational goal is an expected level of organizational outcome that is measurable. Although confirmed in this research, there is a nuance to the extent that it is measurable, some organizations set strict goals and other vaguer guidelines. Additionally, Hu & Bettis (2018) state that there are different levels of goals, and in this study, this is confirmed. Smaller, more operational goals are used that make higher level goals, such as quality, more measurable. Yet, Hu & Bettis (2018) make it appear this process happens deliberately, which is not always the case. Some organizations make choices and set goals based on personal feelings and have no clear indication to operationally measure these higher-level goals. This might be due to the small organizational size, which gets its impact directly from its company and does not need to operationalize its goals.

Next, in this study it is clear that organizations follow multiple goals, as stated by Clark et al. (2018), that coexist in order to improve the performance. Yet, as already confirmed in other research, goals do not only have to be financial. In this study a variety of different goals has been set, which is in line with the notion of more types of goals according to Kotlar et al. (2018) and Clark et al. (2018). Interestingly enough the financial goal seems to be one of the least mentioned goals in this research. This could indicate the decline in importance of financial goals and the increase in other more social or value-based goals.

According to Clark et al. (2018) with having multiple goals, there are bound to be tradeoffs in which goal to follow. This could not be confirmed in this research. Respondents indicate they have multiple goals that coexist yet do not mention that one goal undermines the other. Goals that the respondents mention often relate or enforce towards other goals, this contradicts the notion of Clark et al (2018) that organizations deal with multiple goals by focusing on one goal and impacting the time and effort put into other goals.

Based on literature the thought was that organizations learn when the performance levels deviate from the aspiration goals (Situmeang et al., 2016). This motivates the organizations to undertake action in order to close the gap (Baum & Dahlin, 2007). Yet, in this research this does not clearly show. That may be because of the goals that the participants have set, since some are not as clearly measurable than others. Or it could be due to the influence of the disruptive environment. But based on the data, it is more likely that this change stems from the perception of the owners that make their organizations react by setting or altering goals. Respondents sometimes react by “learning and doing”, this way the organization gains experience of working in the disruptive environment and is consistent with the theory of Clark

et al. (2018). Clark et al. (2018) also states that more experienced organizations are able to refine feedback models that result in more effective remedies to perceived problems. Yet, it is unclear what makes an organization experienced. Especially, when looking at the disruptive environment, since this period is something that does not occur regularly so the theory only applies in specific cases. It is not known if the more experienced organizations do take the most effective remedies.

When organizations realize they need to adapt to their environments, organizations use searching for alternatives, allocating attention and resources between exploitation and exploration (Baum & Dahlin, 2007). In this research, this is seen by respondents switching goals to partake in new markets and take up opportunities to improve their internal processes. Yet, the notion of Baum & Dahlin (2007), that only minor adjustments are made in existing routines, is not solely for organizations that perform near aspirations. This also occurs within organizations that are far below aspirations. Therefore, a more nuanced view is needed for this assumption.

This research has shown that organizations and organizational goals tend to get impacted by disruptive shocks in different manners, depending on multiple factors. Some organizations do indeed develop new skills in order to fit to the new environment and set goals that take in motion this new way of working, as Corbo et al. (2016) suggested. Yet, there are also some organizations that do not get the need to develop new skills and can continue as they were even in disruptive environments. This notion is in line with the assumption that the disruptive environment creates opportunities for some and problems for others (Corbo et al., 2016), but with the added knowledge that some organizations do not get impacted at all.

When a shock occurs, many organizations that are influenced by the shock need to develop new skills that are required in the new environment (Corbo et al., 2016). Corbo et al. (2016) is right in saying that disruptive shocks tend to expose rules that have been taken for granted, since in this research respondents were forced to look at their own spending's and reflect critically on them.

Corbo et al. (2016) state that not much is known about the way core actors respond to exogenous shocks. In this research it comes forth that core actors have an impact on the organizational direction and goals during times of disruption. As seen through this research, perception is one of the antecedents for the core actors much remains unknown and is needed to investigate further. As it is for the notion of Marino et al. (2008) that managers react to uncertainty in different ways, some look inwards and others look outward of the organization. Especially in a disruptive environment every owner seems to make decisions based on their

own experience and emotions. They do however tend to allocate resources towards more promising goals and be more critical in what goal to follow, as is also stated by Marino et al. (2008). Yet their notion of looking for resources by form of joint ventures and alliances is not recognized in this literature. It may be that SMEs are the exception in this statement.

The importance of organizational slack proved to be of great value during environmental shock and the pursuing of (new) organizational goals. This confirms the theory proposed by Wan & Yiu (2009) that organizations have more options with organizational slack and can even dampen the effect of the shock. And indeed, for organizations that do not have the available resources, it impacts the way they react to the environmental shock, as can be seen in the data.

Practical implications

Research on the impact of disruptive environments on organizational goal setting is critical, as relatively little research has been conducted on this specific matter (Kotlar et al., 2018). Even Corbo et al. (2016) state that not much is known about the way core actors respond to exogenous shocks. This research allows leaders of organizations to have a better understanding on how organizations have endured an environmental shock and how this resulted in behavior that impacted organizational goals. There is no one size fits all answer in what is the best approach to an environmental shock. Leaders should be alert for opportunities and ready for threats that might occur. When there is no opportunity to look outwards to experimental activities, leaders should look inwards toward their internal processes in order to achieve efficiency and gain benefits later on.

Furthermore, this research has given insights on how the different types of goals work together. For example, a respondent can't achieve a long-term goal due to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis, thus a disruptive environment, and choses to work with more short-term goals in order to reduce the uncertainty in the environment. Although the long-term goal has received some delay, the achievement of the short-term goals can still contribute to the pursuit of the long-term goal, in terms of, internal efficiency, building foundation, and having gained more experience.

Lastly, a disruptive environment remains a period of great uncertainty. Yet, confirmed by this research, these periods are moments in time and at some point, will go away. Each branch is impacted differently and each organization will follow different paths during this period. For leaders of organizations, it is good to keep in mind that organizational slack offers

a safety net in times of crisis. That and the addition of keeping a keen eye on opportunities to improve the organization could lead to positive outcomes for organizations, as can be seen in this research. As mentioned earlier, a disruptive environment will pass and an ambition for the future helps in guiding the organization and the perception of the threats. Creating part of the foundation for dealing with a disruptive environment.

Research limitations

This research has several limitations, originating from the methodology and the developments that occur during the research. First, since the researcher has chosen qualitative research, multiple general limitations are in order. Even by the effort of the researcher to increase the generalization of the research, by the critical composition of the sample, it still remains limited due to the qualitative nature of the research. Furthermore, the subject of failing might be avoided by respondents and might have provided socially desirable answers, despite the guarantee of anonymity and trust that the researcher has stated.

Other limitations have occurred during the data collection and analysis. First, due to the global pandemic (COVID-19), it was difficult to reach out to organizations and increase the sample size. Lots of effort has been put into gathering participants, yet due to disinterest, prioritization or lack of time, lots of organizations refused to take part in the research. As a result, this research has a limited sample on which data is gathered. Therefore, a lot of insights and understanding could be missing from this research. In addition to the difficulty of increasing the sample, COVID-19 has forced that a portion of the interviews have been conducted in an online format, which could have influenced the data gathering and outcome, thus eventually influencing the quality of the data.

Furthermore, the sample consists of small medium enterprises. Due to too little time, the researcher was not able to include larger organizations to the sample. Partially because the larger organizations had no time or too far in the future which would lead to time shortage for the researcher to include the data gathered. Since the literature review is partially based on the research on larger organizations, it is necessary for future research to include larger organizations into the sample.

Another limitation is that the research takes place during a disruptive environment. Although this could lead to interesting data from the respondents, the full experience of the disruptive environment remains unknown. Moreover, the research is conducted at one moment in time. As already mentioned in the research, time is of great influence on how respondents

and thus, organizations perceive and are influenced by the disruptive environment. The information provided by the respondents cannot be updated as they endure the environment further. Thus, at some point it is possible that respondents no longer relate to the data provided in the past.

Future research

This research introduces new directions for future research. First, the disruptive environment created by COVID-19 offers multiple opportunities for research in many directions. A general recommendation for conducting research on this event creates more insights and understanding on how these disruptive environments influence organization. A more specific recommendation that originated from the data is what is the influence of governments in times of a disruptive environment and what impact does this have on organizations

Furthermore, branches have been impacted differently by the disruption environment as could be seen in the results. How does each branch get impacted, and do some characteristics of branches are unique in dealing with a disruptive environment? This would be an interesting new research proposal that contributes to the way organizations get influenced by disruptive environments. This direction is suited for quantitative research and by surveys the researcher can collect respondents from different branches and cross reference them with each other for interesting results.

Another possibility for future research could be based on researching the differences in leaders' perception towards the COVID-19 period, and thus a disruptive environment and connecting them to which organizational goals have been set. Were the goals more explorative or exploitative orientated for example. In this research the subject of perception has briefly been touched but not much discussed. Although, relations have not yet been proven it could be interesting to find out how much and which perception influences the organizational goals the most.

Lastly, this research has its focus on a Dutch sample in order to increase the generalizability. It might be interesting to explore the possible cultural differences in reacting to disruptive environments and how this influences the organizational goal setting. Other values in other cultures can influence the acting of leaders and influence the behavior of the firm. By researching this subject, more understanding and insights can be made that adds to some of the

results of this research and contributes to the subjects of organizational goal setting, disruptive environments and organizational behavior.

Critical reflection

The course of the research did not go as smoothly as the researcher had hoped. Difficulties occurred in the literature review, in the data collection and in the data processing. While some difficulties were due to the circumstances created by COVID-19, other difficulties were due to the researchers own choices.

Looking at the literature review and the global theme of this research, the researcher has struggled to find qualitative theory to base the research on. This is partly due to the fact that the difference between organizational goals and organizational goal setting, remained unclear until late in the thesis. The researcher should have consulted experts or converged the literature in order to obtain a clear and sound research theme. This would have saved time and effort in collecting and adjusting literature, and would have resulted in a more defined foundation for the data analysis. That, looking back at it, is still too broad and does not cover the explicit research question.

In hindsight, the researcher should have directed the study in a more focused manner. This would have resulted in a clearer image in what sample to use and in a better operationalization of the literature. For example, the researcher has gathered a sample of respondents who classify as small medium enterprises. But the researcher did not focus on small medium enterprises in the literature review, thus missing possible crucial information that could have contributed towards a study of greater quality. Not to mention the relevant data that could be of influence in why organizations react the way they reacted to the disruptive environment. Furthermore, based on the data collected, the branches and the leader itself is an important factor on how organizational goals are set in times of a disruptive environment. Yet, due to the choices the researcher has made in the beginning of the research there was insufficient time to include and consult the literature on the matter. Thus, missing important information that could be used in interpreting the data processing and eventually could have added more explicit value to the existing literature.

During the data collection it became clear that respondents had difficulties with keeping organizational goals in mind while answering the questions. The researcher should have been stricter in asking the questions, a more structured interview could have been a solution. This might also be a consequence of the broad research question. Despite the researcher's aim to

guide the interview towards the impact on the goal setting or goals itself, respondents mention the impact on the organization more. How it affected their ambitions and how they responded in terms of work. Although this can be traced back to the literature of goals and organizational behavior, data of higher quality could have been collected if the researcher made clearer links to the relevant literature in the data collection.

In the literature it became clear that a disruptive environment has an impact on the way organizations need to act and that it is of influence on which and how organizational goals are set. Within this research, the researcher has seen the similarities with the respondents and the literature but only in a moment of time. Since COVID-19 is a disruptive environment that takes longer than most previously studied events, and is still ongoing in times of writing this thesis, it is difficult for the researcher and the participants to give a final verdict on how they have experienced it. Perhaps the researcher could have made the distinction clearer in how the organization acted in the first peak of the COVID-19 where the impact was the largest according to the participants and when the organization has gotten used to the environment. This would possibly have resulted in a clearer image of how goals were changed or not and then could be explicitly questioned why and how this process went. Yet, taking into account the time that it would take to ask all the questions in the interview, it was not feasible in this research.

Lastly, the researcher could have chosen to enrich its data more. This could have been done in different ways, one would be to collect documents and take more interviews with other employees of the organization of the respondent. This would make the data collected more robust and more detailed, that could be beneficial to the data processing. Another way would have been to collect data quantitatively, via surveys. Although, due to this method, it would not be possible to dive deeper into the information provided by the respondents. It could be valuable to cross analyse the data gathered with the data provided from the in-depth interviews. Yet, again this would take up more time and thus was only possible if the researcher thought of it at the development of the research methodology.

VI. Conclusion

The conclusion below gives an answer to the central question of this research: *“how does the disruptive environment (COVID-19) influence the organizational behavior towards organizational goals setting?”*

To answer this question, this research focused on providing insights and examples of organizational goals during the disruptive environment and the way an organization has responded to the shock in order to continue to pursue the organizational goals. This research has shown that a disruptive environment is an uncertain time for organizations, especially in the beginning of the shock. The feeling experienced by organizations was that COVID-19 was an imminent threat for the performance of the organization. The way organizational goals were impacted by the disruptive environment differs for each organization. Where some respondents mention that the original goal prior to COVID-19 is still operational, other respondents indicate that a goal has been put on hold because the environment remains too uncertain. During a disruptive environment, organizations take note of and feel the impact of certain events that are caused by the environment.

This research has confirmed that these are the moments that some organizations use as triggers to alter goals and ways of working. Some organizations respond to shock by setting short-term goals and other organizations look towards the future and deviate from the goal if need be. This indicates that during a disruptive environment the characteristic of goal flexibility seems an important factor. As is the leader of an organization. Research has shown that leaders have an important role in guiding the organization through the uncertain period. Different leaders give different approaches and different approaches tend to pursue different goals.

One example on how organizational goals are used by organizations is given by a respondent. When the organizational goal of growth was not possible anymore due to a loss in customers by the disruptive environment, this triggered the organization in not able to achieve the aspiration. The respondent chose to pursue another goal namely, brand awareness. This goal, though it differs from the first goal, is still related and contributes towards the growth of the organization. This indicated that organizations may choose to deviate from set goals to other goals that are in the same dimension but differ in activities. To come to a conclusion, this research has concluded that a disruptive environment does indeed influence the organizational behavior towards organizational goals. On the subject of how organizational goals are influenced by the disruptive environment, this research cannot give a clear answer. There are multiple ways of the environment, that each has its factors like the government, branche, period of shock, and each influences organizations and organizational goals in a different manner. Disruptive environments can create changes in organizational goal setting and influence the way leaders perceive threats and opportunities. Yet, to create a better understanding and obtain better insights more research should be conducted on this theme.

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Appendix

I. Interview invitation

Beste,

Mijn naam is Simon Truyen en momenteel ben ik bezig met mijn afstudeeronderzoek voor de master Bedrijfskunde op de Radboud Universiteit. Mijn onderzoek richt zich naar de invloeden van de onzekere omgeving (die de corona pandemie heeft veroorzaakt) op organisaties, specifiek gericht op organisatiedoelstellingen. Door middel van deze mail wil ik graag contact leggen met de manager, directeur of eigenaar die op strategisch niveau beslissingen maakt.

Door de COVID-19 pandemie is de omgeving waarin organisaties opereren veranderd in een onzekere en onvoorspelbare omgeving. Deze ontwikkeling, hoewel vervelend, creëert een unieke kans om actuele informatie te verzamelen over de invloeden die de pandemie heeft op de organisatiedoelen. Door middel van dit interview wil ik onder andere inzichtelijk krijgen wat de verschillen zijn voor én tijdens de corona periode, overwegingen van organisatiedoelen en wat de perceptie van de omgeving is. Ook is het interessant om te horen hoe een organisatie kijkt naar en reageren op bedreigingen en/of kansen die deze crisis (heeft) veroorzaakt.

Graag wil ik u uitnodigen om deel te nemen aan het onderzoek door middel van een interview. Gezien de maatregelen die gelden, stel ik voor om de interviews per videogesprek te laten plaatsvinden. Het gesprek zal ongeveer +- 45 minuten duren en de verkregen informatie zal vertrouwelijk en anoniem worden verwerkt. Na afronding van het onderzoek, zullen de uitkomsten naar u terug worden gecommuniceerd. Hopende dat dit ook voor u nuttige informatie en inzichten brengt. Ik streef ernaar om de interviews z.s.m. af te nemen. Uw deelname zal van grote waarde zijn voor mijn onderzoek.

Bij deelname zult u aanvullende informatie toegestuurd krijgen zodat u zich goed kan voorbereiden. Mocht u behoefte hebben aan aanvullende informatie voordat u de keuze maakt om deel te nemen, dan kunt u contact met mij opnemen via de mail of telefonisch.

Ik zie graag uw reactie tegemoet. Bij voorbaat dank!

II. Consent form

Dear Respondent,

You have participated in the research, by Simon Truyen, about the impact of COVID-19 on organizational goals. This study is part of the master Business Administration: Strategic Management at Radboud University, Nijmegen and is supervised by Dr. M. Goudsmit.

Beneath you will find a series of statements where you can give a YES/NO answer. The statements asked are based on protecting your privacy. By no account you should feel obligated to consent to these statements. This is your decision and yours alone. If any matters remain unquestioned, please reach out to me (phone number).

Name:	Date: 17/06/2021	
I hereby declare that I understand the purpose of this research and the information that is asked of me.	YES	NO
I hereby declare that I have the opportunity to ask questions and the option refuse to answer questions	YES	NO
I give consent to the researcher for: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Audio recordings- Processing branche and confidential data- My transcripts to be used in future data	YES	NO
I hereby am aware that my information will be anonymized and that none of the results can be traced back to me personally	YES	NO
Signature:		

III. Interview topic guide

Organizational goals

1. What are the ambitions of the organization? (to start the thinking process)
2. What goals are set? (prior and during disruptive environment) (e.g., Performance focused or social (Kotlar et al., 2018))
3. Why are they set? (prior and during disruptive environment)
4. Ranking in importance? (based on theory of multiple goals (Clark et al., 2018)) Reasoning included.

Organizational goal setting

5. How are the goals set? (what is of influence) (Kotlar et al., 2018) And why?
6. Who/ what is involved? (important stakeholder) (Clark et al., 2018) And why?

Disruptive environment

7. How does the environment impact the organization? Ask examples
8. How did you perceive the environment? And why?
9. How big is this impact? And why?
10. How do you experience the environment? (Marino et al., 2008) And why?

Organizational learning

11. How does the disruptive environment impact the organizational goals? And why?
12. How did you know the goals needed to change? And why?
13. Are particular goals more important now? (Hu & Bettis, 2018) And why?
14. How do you alter the goals? (Mazzelli et al., 2019) And why?

Vision on future

15. How do you interpret the future? And why? (if possible, make connect to goal-setting)

IV. Theme description

Global Theme	Selective Codes	Descriptions	Quotes
Organizational goals	Goals	A respondents' goal for their organization. A fixed point in time where they want to have achieved something	Dus is ons doel eigenlijk om alle horeca die niet vastzit aan een brouwerij, om die binnen te slepen als klant. Dat is in eerste instantie ons doel hier voor voor weert. Daarna willen wij, is voor ons het doel om voor ons naar eindhoven te gaan. Om eerst hier alles op de rit te hebben en daarna uit te breiden naar eindhoven. Omdat er in EHV heel veel markt zit. Respondent 8
	Future vision	A respondents' wishes or vision towards the future and what they want to achieve	waar ik graag naar toe wil, ik wil een netwerk hebben met allerlei verschillende ondernemers, bedrijfjes en initiatieven dat vind ik ook prima. en als ik dan dat netwerk heb dan wil ik dat zij zelf ook een eenheid vormen zodat ze er zelf ook kennis uit kunnen halen. een soort kruisbestuiving kijk je dan. Nu is dat wel een toekomstvisie maar ik zou dus zeker nog een aantal klanten erbij willen hebben en ook de groei daarvan meemaken, dus het meegaan op het succes van mijn partners. Respondent 2
	Setting organizational goals	A respondent indicating what makes up a organizational goal	Nou de doelen kwamen dus vooral af van de eigenaar, tuurlijk ik scherpte ze aan of gaf mijn mening er over maar zij bepaalde welke kant we op zouden gaan. Dus wat van invloed was was denk ik vooral het gevoel wat zij, de eigenaar dus, er bij had en wat ze wil met het bedrijf maar ook wat de omgeving vraagt. Respondent 5
	Goal relations	A respondent indicates that different goals have relations with each other	Want het behandelgemiddelde, als je naar iemand, je zegt bijvoorbeeld over die zithouding en iemand heeft daarna meteen het scherm omhoog

			gezet en heeft na 1 sessie geen last meer van, ja dat scheelt dat gigantisch in het valideringsproces en dus ook het behandelgemiddelde. En het behandelgemiddelde zorgt uiteindelijk weer voor dat we een hoger tarief krijgen dus het is dan sowieso. Als we het hebben over het ondernemersverhaal en het financiële plaatje dan zorgt kwaliteit er ook voor uiteindelijk dat je een betere financiële positie hebt. Respondent 3
Organizational behavior	Opportunities/ Threats	A respondent indicates how and what opportunities and threats have occurred during the COVID-19 period	Daar zijn we mee begonnen met experimenteren en ons geluk was dat vorig jaar dus corona uitbrak en dat we in een keer over bevraagd werden over mondkapjes. toen zijn we daar in gedoken en hebben we ook drielaags mondkapjes verkocht, k95, aan zorginstellingen, aan ziekenhuizen. Respondent 1
	Organizational perception	A respondent indicates how the organization perceives COVID-19 and the environment that comes with it.	Een leuk voorbeeld, In de eerste piek van corona stonden wij midden in een weiland, en daar waren we van eikenhout een paardenstal aan het maken, de zon scheen het was wel koud het vriesten, maar de zon scheen lekker en we keken om ons heen en toen zeiden we tegen elkaar: ongelooflijk he dat we helemaal niks merken van corona want we keken om ons heen en er was helemaal niemand alleen wij twee en het werk wat we moesten doen en daarna gingen we s avonds gewoon weer naar huis na een dag hard werken. Respondent 9
	Altering goals	A respondent indicates why they have altered their goals in relation to the disruptive environment	er is niet echt een specifieke datum maar als wij zo door bleven gaan als we eerst deden, dus bijvoorbeeld niet overgestapt van it beheerder en daar is corona dus een grote rol in gespeeld door de problemen enzo dan hadden we nog 4 jaar er aan kunnen moderen. en nu hebben we het goed en kunnen we verder werken dus kan nu ook dat plan komen voor de

			komende 5 jaar dat was daar een trigger van. Respondent 6
	Reacting to environment	A respondent indicates how they have reacted to the disruptive environment created by COVID 19	En als je gaat kijken hoe wij daarop hebben gereageerd dan hebben wij ervoor gezorgd dat we uren weinig inzetten en veel voorwerk gedaan om ervoor te zorgen zodra het zou kunnen dat al het voorwerk gedaan is en alles vloeiend kan verlopen. en dat je dus kan focussen op de taken in plaats van dat er andere zaken nog gedaan moeten worden. Respondent 8
	Learning	A respondent indicates key learning moments during the disruptive period in the environment	want dan ben je bezig en dan ga je met de flow mee en nu ga je echt buiten je hokje denken en dan komen er dit soort ideeën. En dat klinkt altijd heel makkelijk want dan moet je omdenken of hoe ze dat ook noemen, maar wij zijn toen echt op die conclusie komen dat het echt wel is. Want zonder corona waren wij, ofja dat weet je nooit, maar nooit op dit idee gekomen. Respondent 7
	Short-term goals	A respondent indicates why and what short term goals they have set due to COVID-19	ik denk dat dat vooral is dat we ervoor zorgen dat we het nu op de rit krijgen met wat we hebben. en het doel wat we hebben om naar eindhoven te gaan staat nog steeds alleen de manier waarop zal steeds op korte termijn aangepast gaan worden. omdat we niet weten hoe het er uit gaat zien een week of maand later. Dat zou wel fijn zijn maarja dat is helaas niet. Ik denk in principe als dat vanuit korte termijn duidelijker is dan gaan we daar meer op inspelen. Respondent 8
Impact environment	Accelerate	A respondent indicates why and how their organization has accelerated due to COVID-19	Ja dat is toen echt in een sneltrein gegaan he want ik ondersteunde 4 klanten en ik denk een goede 4 maanden later tenminste een tijd na die eerste klap. had ik opeens 14 nieuwe klanten die ik kon begeleiden. Respondent 2

	Impact COVID-19	A respondent explains what the impact is on their organization due to COVID-19	nou ja de persconferentie was voorbij op die dinsdag, en het nieuws was voorbij en binnen het uur stond de hele winkel vol en die is niet meer weggegaan tot aan sluitingstijd zeg maar. en die eerste, ja dat waren die periode van dat hamsteren, dat waren de eerste 4 a 6 weken dat mensen wel rare dingen insloegen. Respondent 4
	Phases	A respondent indicates that they experience the disruptive environment differently in phases	Nou echt aan het begin van de corona hadden wij er nog maar weinig last van want toen waren de horecagelegenheden gewoon nog open. Dus wat dat betreft was er nog niet heel veel impact voor ons. Respondent 8
	Branche	A respondent indicates that the branche they work in is impacted in a certain way due to COVID-19	Maar ik denk ook dat het in de aard van de branche zit. tenminste in onze winkel zelf kun je heel snel acteren heel snel handelen snel reageren en je kunt ook bijna meteen resultaat zien en meten. Als je vandaag iets doet kun je morgen al het resultaat zien, dus dat kan heel snel dat is wel echt de aard van de branche. dat snel kunnen schakelen en meteen het resultaat zien van je probeersels. zodat je snel kan bijsturen als het moet. Van oké we hebben iets fouts gedaan nou dan proberen we iets anders. Respondent 4
	Organizational market	A respondent indicates that the market/customers they serve are impacted by COVID-19	Ja die markt was onzeker en er zaten een beetje vage types zaten daar in. Dat merkte je heel snel in het nieuws. en dat klopt ook wel want dat zag je ook terug. Het werkte van twee kanten. je kreeg allemaal aanbiedingen om je oren vliegen om zaken te doen. En aan de andere kant kreeg je zelf als je een goed aanbod had voor een klant en je kent die klant niet zo goed dat je dan toch nauwelijks binnenkwam. (Respondent 1)

V. Quotes

Theme	#	Original quote	Translation
Organizational goals	9	"ik werk eigenlijk niet echt met doelstellingen. Of je moet zeggen dat ik wel met doelen werk maar dat gaat dan bij mij op automatische piloot."	"I don't really work with objectives. Or you should say that I do work with goals, but that goes on autopilot for me."
	2	" Nou ik heb je net al een klein beetje uitgelegd wat ik doe maar waar ik naartoe zou willen werken is dat ik een soort klantenbase heb en daar ben ik nu ook wel echt goed aan het werken. en dat is een plan wat ik ongeveer verspreid over vijf jaar wil behalen. "	" Well I just explained a little bit what I do but what I would like to work towards is that I have a kind of customer base and I am now working really well there. and that is a plan that I want to achieve spread over five years. "
	2	"Dus ik heb het vooral gericht op het bouwen van een netwerk, vertrouwen opbouwen. naamsbekendheid, dat is ook iets, en ook mijn eigen netwerk laten groeien. Ik wil de juiste kwaliteit leveren. ik wil echt een partner zijn. Misschien is dat het wel, dat besef komt nu, ik wil dat heel bewust. Ik wil een langdurige relatie aan gaan."	"So I mainly focused on building a network, building trust. brand awareness, that's also something, and also growing my own network. I want to deliver the right quality. I really want to be a partner. Maybe that's it, that realization comes now, I want that very consciously. I want to enter into a long-term relationship."
	4	"Nou de ambitie van het bedrijf, wat we proberen te zijn zeg maar is een soort gemeenschapshuis van het dorp. We zijn de enige plek waar mensen nog dagelijks bijeenkomen en elkaar zien en dat proberen we ook wel zo te houden en te ondersteunen. en we zoeken ook altijd klantencontact en daar staan we ook voor. "	"Well the ambition of the company, what we try to be is a kind of community center of the village. We are the only place where people still meet and see each other every day and we try to keep it that way and support it. and we are always looking for customer contact and that is what we stand for. "
	2	" nou waarom zet ik die doelen? ze hebben mij heel erg een houvast. Ik	" Well why am I setting those goals? They are very

		<p>weet ongeveer waar ik naartoe wil werken dus omdat mijn ultieme ambitie vrij vluchtig of vaag is, heb ik toch bepaalde richt doelen die iets specifiek zijn dus bijvoorbeeld die 10 ondernemers in een jaar, dat is echt iets waar ik naartoe kan werken en dat draagt dan specifiek bij aan de groei van de onderneming. en dat is ook te meten. En daar komt alles eigenlijk bij kijken. "</p>	<p>supportive of me. I know roughly what I want to work towards, so because my ultimate ambition is quite fleeting or vague, I still have certain goals that are a bit more specific, so for example those 10 entrepreneurs in a year, that is really something I can work towards and that contributes specifically contribute to the growth of the company. and that can be measured. And that's really what it all comes down to. "</p>
	7	<p>"We hebben wel die stip op de horizon alleen als er links zich voordoet dan wil ik daar naartoe en als zich rechts iets voordoet kan ik daar naartoe. Dus wel een doel uitstippelen maar we zijn niet zoiets van oké ik ga daar naartoe en andere dingen neem ik niet meer aan. we hebben een doel maar als er op een tussenliggende tijd dingen op ons pad komen, zoals bijvoorbeeld de afwikkeling van de nalatenschappen dan staan we daar zeker voor open. "</p>	<p>"We do have that dot on the horizon, only if there is something on the left then I want to go there and if something happens on the right I can go there. So do set a goal but we're not like okay I'm going there and I don't assume other things. We have a goal, but if things come our way in the meantime, such as the settlement of the estates, we are certainly open to that."</p>
	6	<p>" Ja dat gaat vooral op gevoel. Maar ook hij leest heel veel hij ziet heel veel en vraagt veel hoort veel, veel gesprekken met eindklanten en ook een enorme bak aan kennis waardoor er heel veel ontstaat vanuit zijn idee."</p>	<p>" Yes, that mainly depends on feeling. But he also reads a lot, he sees a lot and asks a lot, hears a lot, has many conversations with end customers and also an enormous amount of knowledge, so that a lot is created from his ideas."</p>
	4	<p>"Die worden gewoon in het begin van het jaar gebudgetteerd. ofja ik zeg wel gewoon, daar wordt een begroting gemaakt met afzet en omzet doelen, per afdeling zoals kw of vers. en dat wordt weer onderverdeeld in afdelingsbijdrage dus dan heb je een totaal percentage</p>	<p>"They are simply budgeted at the beginning of the year. or I just say, there a budget is made with sales and turnover targets, per department such as kw or fresh. and that is again subdivided into department contribution so</p>

		<p>en een deel daarvan is dus droge kruidenierswaren en een ander deel is vers, dus groenten worst kaas brood. de focus ligt meestal op vers omdat dat iets is wat de laatste jaren wel is omgeslagen. en daarbinnen wordt dus die begrote omzet voor een jaar wordt omgezet naar dagen of weken en dan krijg je dus ook per afdeling een omzetbijdrage die je moet halen.”</p>	<p>then you have a total percentage and part of that is dry groceries and another part is fresh, so vegetables sausage cheese bread. The focus is usually on fresh because that is something that has changed in recent years. and within that, that budgeted turnover for a year is converted into days or weeks and then you also receive a turnover contribution per department that you have to achieve.”</p>
	8	<p>“is de eigenaar en hij heeft vanuit zichzelf een aantal dingen die moeten gebeuren en waarvan hij ook afweet van oh zus en zo wil ik het gaan doen en ik was met name de sparringpartner want sommige dingen waar hij dan een bepaald beeld op heeft dan zeg ik dat je dat beter anders kan doen. Want soms kijkt hij gewoon te positief naar zaken die eigenlijk niet kunnen lukken. of in ieder geval niet op die manier. Hij heeft meer inzicht op wat er precies moet gebeuren over het algemeen. Maar hoe het gebeurd dat is vooral waar ik mij op richt.”</p>	<p>“Is the owner and he has a number of things that need to be done and of which he also knows about oh sister and that's how I want to do it and I was especially the sparring partner because some things he has a certain image on then say I think you better do that differently. Because sometimes he just looks too positively at things that actually can't work out. or at least not that way. He has more insight into what exactly needs to be done in general. But how it happens that is mainly what I focus on.”</p>
	7	<p>“ We hebben zelf altijd zoiets dat we moeten oppassen dat we niet in een tunnel komt. kijk want samen met zijn tweeën krijg je wel eens een tunnelvisie. en dan merken we dat het ook wel eens goed is om iemand een plan voor te leggen die helemaal uit de branche komt. dus bijvoorbeeld mijn zus of mijn moeder, iemand van buitenaf kan daar totaal anders tegenaan kijken en hebben andere ideeën en kijken uit de praktijk.”</p>	<p>“We always have something like that that we have to be careful not to end up in a tunnel. watch because the two of you sometimes get tunnel vision. and then we notice that it is sometimes good to present a plan to someone who comes all the way from the industry. so, for example, my sister or my mother, someone from the outside can look at it completely</p>

			differently and have different ideas and practice.”
	3	<p>“want het behandelgemiddelde, als je naar iemand, je zegt bijvoorbeeld over die zithouding en iemand heeft daarna meteen het scherm omhoog gezet en heeft na 1 sessie geen last meer van, ja dat scheelt dat gigantisch in het revalideringsproces en dus ook het behandelgemiddelde. En het behandelgemiddelde zorgt uiteindelijk weer voor dat we een hoger tarief krijgen dus het is dan sowieso. Als we het hebben over het ondernemersverhaal en het financiële plaatje dan zorgt kwaliteit er ook voor uiteindelijk dat je een betere financiële positie hebt. ”</p>	<p>“ Because the treatment average, if you go to someone, for example you say about that sitting position and someone immediately raises the screen and is no longer bothered by it after 1 session, yes that makes a huge difference in the rehabilitation process and therefore also the treatment average. And the treatment average ultimately ensures that we get a higher rate, so it is anyway. When we talk about the entrepreneurial story and the financial picture, quality ultimately ensures that you have a better financial position. ”</p>
Impact disruptive environment	9	<p>“Een leuk voorbeeld, In de eerste piek van corona stonden wij midden in een weiland, en daar waren we van eikenhout een paardenstal aan het maken, de zon scheen het was wel koud het vriesten, maar de zon scheen lekker en we keken om ons heen en toen zeiden we tegen elkaar: ongelooflijk he dat we helemaal niks merken van corona want we keken om ons heen en er was helemaal niemand alleen wij twee en het werk wat we moesten doen en daarna gingen we s avonds gewoon weer naar huis na een dag hard werken.”</p>	<p>“ A nice example, In the first peak of corona we stood in the middle of a meadow, and there we were making a horse stable from oak, the sun was shining it was cold it was freezing, but the sun was shining and we looked around and then we said to each other: unbelievable hey that we don't notice anything from corona because we looked around us and there was no one there just the two of us and the work we had to do and then we just went home in the evening after a day hard work</p>
	3	<p>“Als ik heel eerlijk ben hebben we al begin januari dat we hebben gemerkt dat mensen er niet meer zo mee bezig waren. Dus de 1e 2 golven waren geweest en het verhaal van de vaccinatie begon te lopen. mensen</p>	<p>“If I'm honest, we already noticed at the beginning of January that people weren't so concerned with it anymore. So the 1st 2 waves had been and the vaccination story started to</p>

		<p>hebben minder angst en je merkte eigenlijk zo januari februari hadden we een prima omzet en in maart kwam toen dat de ziekenhuizen weer ging stijgen en toen merkte we dat de oudere populatie minder naar de praktijk kwam. maar het heeft ons niet meer minder omzet gegeven. dus we zijn eigenlijk al sinds 2021 niet meer aan het klagen.”</p>	<p>run. People have less anxiety and you actually noticed that January February we had a good turnover and in March the hospitals started to rise again and then we noticed that the older population came to the practice less. but it hasn't given us less sales anymore. so we haven't really been complaining since 2021."</p>
	2	<p>“Maar zodra corona kwam merkte je dat veel mensen gingen thuis zitten. soms ging het werk helemaal dicht en konden de mensen dus niets doen. Ze konden niet naar werk toe, ze konden niet echt buiten dingen doen. En daardoor merkte ik vanuit de markt dat er overal kleine ondernemers opspringen. Die sprongen als kolen uit de grond. Ze ontstonden waar ik bij stond, dat merkte ik wel echt.”</p>	<p>“But as soon as corona came you noticed that many people sat at home. Sometimes the work closed completely and people could not do anything. They couldn't go to work, they couldn't really do things outside. And that's why I noticed from the market that small entrepreneurs are springing up everywhere. They jumped out of the ground like coal. They arose in front of me, I really noticed that.”</p>
	8	<p>“En nu het open is zijn het allemaal kleine bestellingen, zegmaar een beetje matig, mensen zijn terughoudend willen niet meteen uitgaven omdat ze zelf natuurlijk een aantal maanden helemaal geen inkomsten hebben gehad. Gaat er ook weinig uit. Wat dat betreft worden die doelen ook best wel vertraagd doordat de ondernemers nog best terughoudend zijn”</p>	<p>“And now that it's open, it's all small orders, say a bit moderate, people are reluctant to spend immediately because of course they have had no income at all for a number of months. Also little goes out. In that respect, those goals are also delayed because entrepreneurs are still quite reluctant.”</p>
	9	<p>“Want door de bouwcrisis die er is geweest voor de corona en nu met corona ook weer zijn er veel grote aannemers weggevallen of je ziet dat massa aannemers daar zijn mensen een nummer. en mensen willen een persoon zijn als ze een samenwerking zoeken met een</p>	<p>“Because due to the construction crisis that existed before the corona and now with corona again, many large contractors have disappeared or you see that mass contractors there are people a number. and people want to</p>

		<p>bouwbedrijfje. want ja het is toch een eigen iets wat ze willen laten verbouwen dus dan is het heel belangrijk dat je daar toegankelijk voor bent. we staan heel dicht bij de mensen.”</p>	<p>be a person when they seek a partnership with a construction company. because yes it is their own thing that they want to renovate, so it is very important that you are accessible for that. we are very close to the people.”</p>
Organizational behavior	3	<p>“daarmee hebben we dus eigenlijk die periode mee kunnen overbruggen. dus we hadden een nieuwe budget begroting gemaakt. En uiteindelijk hebben we dus, met het geld dat we van de zorgverzekering gekregen hebben plus die 50.000 euro hebben we zelfs nog een hele kleine winst gedraaid. Dus we waren heel erg blij. En we hebben zelfs vakantiegeld kunnen betalen dit jaar dus dat heeft ons ook echt gered.”</p>	<p>“So we were actually able to bridge that period. so we had made a new budget. And so in the end, with the money we received from the health insurance plus those 50,000 euros, we even made a very small profit. So we were very happy. And we were even able to pay holiday pay this year, so that really saved us.”</p>
	1	<p>“Toen zijn we dus eerst begonnen met mondkapjes tegen pollen en fijnstof. (...). Daar zijn we mee begonnen met experimenteren en ons geluk was dat vorig jaar dus corona uitbrak en dat we in een keer over bevraagd werden over mondkapjes. toen zijn we daar in gedoken en hebben we ook drielaags mondkapjes verkocht, k95, aan zorginstellingen aan ziekenhuizen altijd als agent dus we zijn nooit eigenaar geweest van die goederen we waren alleen maar bij transacties en bij commerciële activiteiten”</p>	<p>“So we first started with mouth caps against pollen and particulate matter. (...). We started experimenting with that and our luck was that corona broke out last year and that we were asked about mouth caps at once. then we dived into that and we also sold three-layer face masks, k95, to healthcare institutions to hospitals always as an agent so we never owned those goods we were only involved in transactions and commercial activities”</p>
	6	<p>“Dat is de kans dat je constant kans hebt dat het hele kantoor thuis komt te zitten. En daarvoor moet je heel veel vanalles inrichten en dat hebben we eerst met de oude it beheerder gedaan en dat werkte allemaal half. maar we moesten er gewoon naar toe dat het sws kan. dat mochten we met</p>	<p>“That is the chance that you constantly have the chance that the entire office will be at home. And for that you have to set up a lot of everything and we first did that with the old IT administrator and that all worked halfway. but we</p>

		<p>zijn alle naar huis moeten gaan dan pakken we de laptop of pak de laptop thuis en je kunt verder werken. Dat is wel echt de trigger geweest om hier alles op orde te krijgen, alles beter gestroomlijnd te maken. Dat is wel de eerste stap geweest in de digitalisering. en we zijn daar sowieso al bezig mee geweest om minder in klappers te doen en meer digitaal op te slaan. ook dat is nog een keer harder gegaan omdat mensen thuis zaten en we bij de bestanden moesten gaan. “</p>	<p>just had to make sure it's possible. that if we all have to go home, we will take the laptop or take the laptop at home and you can continue working. That really was the trigger to get everything in order here, to make everything more streamlined. That was the first step in digitization. and we have already been working on that to do less in folders and store more digitally. That also went faster because people were at home and we had to go to the files.</p>
	1	<p>“En je bent meer bezig met hoe kunnen we op een zo efficiënt mogelijke manier de boel draaiende houden en van te voren ben je daar niet zoveel mee bezig want dan is het geld verdienen en de toko runnende houden is bijzaak want het is een hobby, dat is het verschil nu.”</p>	<p>“And you are more concerned with how can we keep things running as efficiently as possible and you are not so concerned with that in advance because then earning money and keeping the shop running is a side issue because it is a hobby , that's the difference now.”</p>
	5	<p>“Eerste deden we dit voor een verkort tarief maar al snel merkte we dat we hier niet op de centen moesten zitten omdat er weinig belletjes binnen kwamen. Toen hebben we besloten om het gratis te maken, dus de eerste afspraak hebben bedrijven gewoon gratis kunnen plannen en overleg of advies kunnen aanvragen. Dit was voor ons een slimme zet geweest want nog geen paar dagen later kwamen we om in de telefoontjes van allerlei bedrijven.”</p>	<p>“At first we did this for a reduced rate, but we soon noticed that we shouldn't have to spend a lot of money here because few calls came in. Then we decided to make it free, so the first appointment companies have just been able to schedule for free and request consultation or advice. This would have been a smart move for us because less than a few days later we ended up getting calls from all kinds of companies.”</p>
	7	<p>“nu dachten we van oke wacht eens even, dus echt door corona, elke</p>	<p>“Now we thought okay wait a minute, so really because of</p>

		<p>maand ging er zo veel geld uit en we gebruikte het niet. dus voor nu hebben we de stekker eruit gehaald en on hold gezet maar wat ik al zei daar kijk je normaal niet echt naar. maar nu wordt je min of meer gedwongen om er wel naar te kijken. “</p>	<p>corona, every month so much money went out and we didn't use it. so for now we pulled the plug and put it on hold but like i said you don't normally look at that. but now you are more or less forced to look at it. “</p>
	5	<p>“Ja qua opdrachten kwam er niets nieuws binnen, soms een keer een aanvraag of advies over wat te doen met een medewerker die ziek was geworden maar dat waren meer dag momenten die we daar mee kwijt waren. Dus toen hebben we besloten om ons meer intern te richten. Want omdat we eigenlijk al snel begonnen waren en klanten kregen liep de website nog een beetje achter en konden er interne processen wel wat meer gestroomlijnd worden. “</p>	<p>“Yes, in terms of assignments, nothing new came in, sometimes a request or advice about what to do with an employee who had become ill, but those were more day-to-day moments that we lost with it. So then we decided to focus more internally. Because we actually started quickly and got customers, the website was still a bit behind and internal processes could be streamlined a bit more. “</p>
	8	<p>“ik denk dat dat vooral is dat we ervoor zorgen dat we het nu op de rit krijgen met wat we hebben. en het doel wat we hebben om naar eindhoven te gaan staat nog steeds alleen de manier waarop zal steeds op korte termijn aangepast gaan worden. omdat we niet weten hoe het er uit gaat zien een week of maand later. Dat zou wel fijn zijn maarja dat is helaas niet. Ik denk in principe als dat vanuit korte termijn duidelijker is dan gaan we daar meer op inspelen. “</p>	<p>“I think the main thing is that we make sure we get it right now with what we have. and the goal we have to go to Eindhoven is still only the way in which will always be adjusted in the short term. because we don't know what it will look like a week or a month later. That would be nice, but unfortunately it isn't. In principle, I think if that is clearer from the short term, then we will respond more to it. “</p>
	5	<p>“Maar we hebben bijvoorbeeld ook geleerd dat het heel snel kan omslaan. want zo heb je dus bijvoorbeeld 50 nieuwe opdrachten erbij en de volgende week ligt het helemaal stil. Je kunt gewoon niet vooruit kijken met wat de toekomst</p>	<p>“But we have also learned, for example, that things can turn very quickly. because that way you have, for example, 50 new assignments and the next week it will be completely silent. You just</p>

		<p>nog brengt en dat maakt het inspelen op bepaalde situaties gewoon heel moeilijk. Je moet echt dingen uitproberen. En dat is denk ik wel wat ons uniek maakt of in ieder geval waarin wij een stap voor hebben op andere bedrijven. Wij zijn klein genoeg dat we gewoon dingen kunnen uitproberen en er snel weer uit kunnen stappen mocht het niet werken.”</p>	<p>can't look ahead with what the future will bring and that just makes responding to certain situations very difficult. You really have to try things out. And I think that's what makes us unique or at least one step ahead of other companies. We are small enough that we can just try things out and get out quickly if it doesn't work.”</p>
Future	1	<p>“Ja en gaan we er volledig in. Maargoed er zitten heel veel tussenstapjes nog wil je dat bereiken. Dus we willen er naartoe streven maar wel op een veilige manier en optimaal kan profiteren”</p>	<p>“Yeah, and we're going into it completely. However, there are still many intermediate steps if you want to achieve that. So we want to strive for it, but in a safe way and can benefit optimally”</p>
	4	<p>“Ik denk dat we eerlijk gezegd wel een deel van onze omzetstijging wel vast gaan houden, niet zoals die nu is maar wel iets hoger. En ik denk dat we wel positief zijn. want ik ga er vanuit dat we in deze periode hebben laten zien wat wij kunnen, onze winkel dan. Ik kan niet zeggen dat we er slecht uit zijn gekomen of dat we het slecht gedaan hebben, helemaal niet zelfs. dus ik denk wel dat we een deel van de omzet stijging voorlopig nog wel blijven houden. absoluut. Dus ik heb goede hoop.”</p>	<p>“To be honest, I think we will maintain part of our turnover increase, not as it is now, but slightly higher. And I think we are positive. because I assume that during this period we have shown what we can do, our store then. I can't say we came out badly or that we did badly, not at all. so I do think that we will continue to keep part of the turnover increase for the time being. absolutely. So I'm hopeful.”</p>
	7	<p>“Nou ik denk allereerst dat, dus niet alleen het geven van lezingen, maar ook echt als lead verstrekker gezien worden. En dan niet alleen met de ledenorganisaties zoals een zorggroep maar ook bij andere bedrijven zoals die grote transportorganisatie. en die kunnen dat uitrollen in heel nederland, ja dat kunnen we punt 1 niet aan, want je moet wel een beetje in je eigen regio</p>	<p>“Well, I think first of all that, so not only giving lectures, but also really being seen as a lead provider. And not only with the member organizations such as a care group, but also with other companies such as that large transport organization. and they can roll it out throughout the Netherlands, yes we can't</p>

		<p>blijven dus dan moet dat als lead verwerker. en dus bij bedrijven lezingen geven en binnen komen dat is wel een nieuwe markt.”</p>	<p>handle point 1, because you have to stay in your own region a bit, so that has to be done as a lead processor. and therefore giving lectures at companies and entering that is a new market.”</p>
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