Dear Professor Buys

Thank you for the valuable feedback from the two reviewers. We have carefully worked through their comments and the revised paper is attached. Below we outline how we have addressed their concerns. Please convey our sincere thanks to the reviewers for their input which has resulted, we hope, in a much improved version.

**Reviewer A:**

* Thank you for your helpful comments and we hope that you find the revised paper addresses your concerns. The paper has been reworked and presented as more exploratory research - this was our intention from the outset but upon reading your comments we agree that this should be made clearer.
* The title has been simplified.
* As you suggest, we state the research methodology that is employed in the paper within the introduction.
* The link between the macro economic issues and our results was perhaps not explicit. In the revised version we make it clearer that the macro economic issues are presented mainly to provide the context and setting for the discussion and why the renewed interest in the co-operative model within South Africa. It is now only discussed in the introduction as background and context.
* As regards to methodology we agree that this should be more fully expounded and we have done so in this version. This was an issue raised by reviewer C as well and we outline the methodological revisions in more detail in our response to reviewer C below. The intention of our research is to examine the workings of the four cases and we agree that we need to be circumspect about generalising.
* Whilst we had permission for the use of the photograph we have decided to rather remove it from the revised version due to space constraints.
* The ethical processes are explained in this version.
* The results section has been reworked and is framed as exploratory research linked to the more micro-level issues of organisational management. Thank you for this suggestion. We are constrained by how much further we develop the analysis to keep the paper within the length guidelines of the journal but we hope we have struck the right balance in the attached.
* The editing and references have been addressed and thank you for pointing this out.

**Reviewer C:**

* Thank you for the positive feedback which has been helpful in revising the paper. We outline our response to your comments in the order in which they appear in your review.
* The minor editorial issues have been addressed including the numbering of the figures.
* The discussion of the conceptual model in figure 3 has been elaborated upon including the interface between the internal and external aspects.
* Your comments as regards methodology were very useful and we thank you for your suggestions. We are more explicit about who was interviewed, we present the actual research instrument, further expound upon the data collection and ethical protocols, and on the thematic analysis. This was a weakness in the earlier version and the section on the methodology is now substantially more detailed, mindful of the limitations imposed by word count.
* Both the limitations to the study and the recommendations for future research have been introduced in the revised version within the conclusion.

Thank you again for the opportunity to revise the paper and the constructive feedback.

Kind regards

The authors