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Business Sustainability Among Women Entrepreneurs in Ghana

Gabriel Yaw Asante
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Management and Human Potential

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Gabriel Yaw Asante

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Business Sustainability Among Women Entrepreneurs in Ghana

by

Gabriel Yaw Asante

MA, University of Ghana, 2005

BA, University of Ghana, 1996

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

November 2022

Abstract

Women entrepreneurs in Ghana are not prepared for entrepreneurship and face individual and contextual barriers that include social, cultural, economic, political, demographic, institutional, and technological perceived support. Guided by the institutional theory, the purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to explore business strategic information that women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. Ten successful women entrepreneurs from 5 industries in Ghana, who had the training, experience, and information on the causes of business failure and had applied that information to gain business sustainability beyond 5 years, were recruited. Data analysis involved methodological triangulation, member checking, and Yin's 5 steps. Key findings were change management and adaptation, agility and flexibility in operations, comprehensive analysis of stakeholders, creation of business policies and objectives, designing and executing digital implementation plan, developing, and supporting corporate culture, developing, and measuring performance standards, and enhancing internal control and processes. Findings may be used to reduce poverty and increase women's employment, sustainability in women-owned businesses, community development, and the standard of living. The implication to social change includes increase in women employment, poverty reduction among women and community, community development, and improvement of living standard for women population.

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Dedication

I wholeheartedly dedicate this PhD milestone to the Almighty God for the life, strength, and knowledge to complete this journey. This dissertation is largely devoted to my immediate family (Jane, Beatrice, Edward, and Blessing) for their prayers, patience, and tremendous support. It is equally dedicated to my parents and siblings for their encouragement. I share this dissertation with all entrepreneurs; your contributions drive the growth of our economies and ensure that the teaming youths are fully engaged. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to my friends and all of my professional and academic associates for their support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Women entrepreneurs are driving economic growth globally by focusing on innovation and business sustainability. Existing research has focused on gender differences in work–life balance in self-employment, while less attention has been paid to the heterogeneity among women entrepreneurs (Song & Li, 2021). The limitations to business growth of women entrepreneurship heighten gender differences in business success (Mohammed et al., 2017). Initiatives to promote women entrepreneurship have not yielded equal access to business opportunities for women and men (Ilie et al., 2021). Most research initiatives followed an economic approach, and information related to women’s progress tended to focus on income and wage breaches and, to a lesser extent, on social perceptions on the access to participation in other areas of civic, political, and economic life (Ilie et al., 2021).

There was insufficient information about women’s perceptions to strengthen their capacities, to improve their contributions to society, or to assess the efficiency of policies implemented to increase their business development (Ilie et al., 2021). Despite several articles on women entrepreneurship, none addressed business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to ensure business sustainability beyond 5 years of business formation. In Chapter 1, I present the problem statement and purpose of the study with a description of the gap in the literature, the research question, the conceptual framework, and the alignment among them. I also discuss the nature of the study, assumptions, scope and delimitation, limitations, definitions of key terms used,

significance, and possible contributions to positive social change. I conclude the chapter with a summary and transition.

Background of the Study

Al Mamun et al. (2019) identified the causes of business failure among Malaysian women entrepreneurs that included personal life events, intensive competition, and loan inflexibility to internal causes, which were related to lack of resources, poor financial management, and personal dissatisfaction with their business performance. Boateng (2020) noted that although many women are venturing into family businesses in Ghana, there are challenges that hinder their economic empowerment. Business owners in Ghana are confronted with challenges such as finances, market, inputs, economic and regulatory frameworks, and the sociocultural setup of the country (Boateng, 2020). These challenges become compounded for women leading to small business sizes with little expansion and stagnation in the business venture (Boateng, 2020).

Boateng explored how small- and medium-scale businesses could result in wealth creation in developing countries such as Ghana. The study findings revealed that in many emerging economies, owning and operating a small, medium-scale business is essential in the creation of wealth, empowering business owners, and helping to address the developmental challenges of the society (Boateng, 2020). The gap that the current study addressed was based on research done by Ilie et al. (2021), whose study revealed that the perception of lack of equality increases the gender gap even if there are specific and effective policies in a society that attempts to eliminate the gender gap in terms of the role of women in the home or positions of power. The current study addressed the gap in

the previous research by exploring business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to overcome challenges and to ensure sustainability beyond 5 years.

Shukla et al. (2019) identified the causes of business failure among women from South Asia, which included family pressure in fulfilling relevant requirements such as financing the venture. Inferences were drawn as to how these requirements may be affecting the growth of women in the sectors. Gok and Kurtul (2021) appraised entrepreneurial motivation, success factors, start-up challenges, business growth, the role of family and social network in reducing stress, and professional satisfaction among entrepreneurs. The study explored the motivations to start a business, factors that support their success, problems that occur during start-up and growth of the business, the role of family and social network in creating a less stressful working environment, and the overall level of satisfaction with the profession (Gok & Kurtul, 2021). The study findings indicated those economic concerns were more important reasons for starting a business than career and personal motives (Gok & Kurtul, 2021). Gok and Kurtel (2021) identified some of the reasons for seeking to become an entrepreneur, such as personal need for achievement, desire to contribute to an enterprise's success, and desire for higher earnings. Other reasons included the motivation to work hard to gain independence at work and access better economic opportunities (Gok & Kurtul, 2021). The study findings may help provide direction to understand women entrepreneurs in Ghana.

The chance of business failure can prevent pioneering efforts or an opportunity to learn and grow (Wannamakok & Chang, 2020). Although gender differences have been found to play a minor role in the connection between fear of failure and entrepreneurial

activities, the role congruity theory indicates that women are more prone to doubt the outcomes of new venture creation and be less prepared for future entrepreneurial activities (Wannamakok & Chang, 2020). International development partners have over the past 3 decades participated in local economic development, though the academic literature has barely focused on this area (Azunu & Mensah, 2019).

Little is known about how partner-led local economic development as supervised by women entrepreneurs have translated into poverty reduction and economic prosperity (Azunu & Mensah, 2019). Azunu and Mensah (2019) provided empirical assessment and impact of development partners' role in conceptualizing, implementing, and monitoring local economic development interventions in Ghana. The study findings showed that women entrepreneurs' partner-led work projects led to the creation of jobs and enabled participants to improve their businesses, improve their economic situation, meet their health needs, and adopt strategies to pull themselves out of poverty (Azunu & Mensah, 2019). This study findings may be significant to women entrepreneurs to achieve business sustainability.

Tandrayen-Ragoobur and Kasseeah (2017) appraised that men entrepreneurs tend to perform better than their women counterparts, with a positive and significant coefficient of the order of 0.54. Further, lower education level was linked with lower likelihood of high annual turnover of women entrepreneurs (Tandrayen-Ragoobur & Kasseeah, 2017). Kabonga et al. (2021) explored the challenges that confront young informal traders in Bindura Town, Zimbabwe. The study was motivated by the lack of attention to the challenges confronting young informal traders by the governing

authorities at local and national level. The study findings extended the understanding of the challenges confronting young informal traders, drawing on their everyday experiences and the navigation of the complex challenges they experience.

Kabonga et al. (2021) evaluated how young women informal traders face a perception challenge, usually from clients who are older. Older clients are skeptical of young traders bringing quality products to the market, leading to low business. As a result of the negative perception problem, the young informal traders suffer from low business because of the perception from older clients. This study's finding revealed issues that may confront women entrepreneurs attempting to achieve business sustainability in Ghana. Boateng (2020) noted that although many women are venturing into family businesses in Ghana, there are challenges that hinder their economic empowerment. Business owners in Ghana are confronted with challenges such as finances, market, inputs, economic and regulatory frameworks, and the sociocultural setup of the country (Boateng, 2020).

Wang et al. (2019) observed how cultural differences produce differential development and expression of the self, which determines an individual's cognition, emotion, and motivation. The ways individuals view, and address problems are culturally contingent (Wang et al., 2019). Wang et al. found that individuals with an independent cultural orientation perceive promotion-focused information as more important than prevention-focused information, and social goals yield more avoidance behaviors and lower willingness to improve after failure for them.

Okeke-Uzodike and Subban (2019) examined the role that cluster initiative management can play for women entrepreneurs in small and medium enterprises in the South African informal sector economy as forms of employment. The study findings provided recommendations for the provision of a favorable environment for cluster initiatives to flourish and drew attention to key policymakers in decision making that support sustainability of women entrepreneurs toward self-employment in informal sectors of the economy. The study may be significant to women entrepreneurs to be sustainable in the informal sector.

Other study findings revealed that women have less intention to participate in Ghana's formal entrepreneurial activities due to cultural limitation (Anlesinya et al., 2020). Longkumer and Bokth (2021) evaluated how Ao Naga women's subordinate position to men can be traced not only to the prevailing customary laws and traditions but also to factors in their societal affairs, which include village formation where men play a prominent role and the traditional political seat in the village is denied to women.

The opposite is true for individuals with an interdependent cultural orientation (Wang et al., 2019). Women entrepreneurs are confronted with additional barriers that are unique to them in firm growth (Wang et al., 2019). The cultural impact on women's cognition is significant to make their perceptions of the difficulties more diverse (Wang et al., 2019). Wentrup et al. (2019) noted that despite the growing rates of internet penetration and inflow of returnee entrepreneurs from Silicon Valley, there are few examples of successful digital entrepreneurship ventures from emerging markets reaching international markets. The study finding revealed that Moroccan digital entrepreneurship

is driven by well-educated returnees with working experience from the United States and Europe. The study findings also indicated that the dominance of the returnees creates vulnerability in the local digital ecosystem; reluctance of the indigenous business community to engage in the digital sector; and a lack of domestic investors, programmers, and start-up clusters. The local digital start-ups struggle with the fierce competition among the global internet firms, which benefit from an underdeveloped policy framework. The study finding may help women entrepreneur in Ghana identify competition and how to survive in a fierce competition among global firms.

Abebe et al. (2020) mentioned that necessity and opportunity factors are known to drive some individuals to engage in commercial entrepreneurship. Some of the causes of business failures are the degree of competitive intensity and environmental munificence that contribute to the failure of new entrepreneurial ventures (Abebe et al., 2020).

Nunfam et al. (2020) noted that the connection between personality traits, entrepreneurship curriculum, and entrepreneurial intention had received inadequate research consideration among students in Africa to inform policies and curriculum development. Nunfam et al. identified individual and contextual factors that influence entrepreneurship decisions. Individual and contextual factors include social, cultural, economic, political, demographic, institutional, and technological perceived support, or barriers. These factors account for variations among personality characteristics, entrepreneurship education, entrepreneurial intention, and behavior in different settings. This study's finding may help shape how women entrepreneurs appraise their personalities and context in reaching entrepreneurship decisions.

Livani and Solotaroff (2019) investigated how practitioners and policymakers have overlooked gender issues in the trade space, which in recent decades had suggested that trade is not gender neutral. The study was conducted to explore how to increase women's participation in entrepreneurship. Further, Livani and Solotaroff informed trade policies in South Asia and promoted women's and men's equal participation in and benefit from enhanced trade and investment. The study findings supported the need to strengthen women-dominated export sectors and implement trade facilitation measures to increasing women's access to training, productive resources, information, transportation, and trade networks. Livani and Solotaroff identified several services provided by women entrepreneurs, including education, health, accountancy, and legal services, as well as information and communication technology services in data entry and processing, software, call centers, and geographical information systems. The significant of this study was to provide areas of business diversity for women entrepreneurs in Ghana and globally.

Zimmerman and Chu (2013) examined some of the motivations for entrepreneurs in Venezuela. Success factors identified in the study included good general management skills, appropriate training, accurate record keeping, and political involvement. Zimmerman and Chu mentioned competition, a weak economy, and foreign exchange limitations as challenges confronting entrepreneurs. Zimmerman and Chu provided multiple dimensions of entrepreneurs in a single context and offered an integrated analysis. Zimmerman and Chu expanded the understanding and knowledge of other researchers by outlining some of the perceived success factors that confront

entrepreneurs. The methodology used in the study was simple and educative; the survey questionnaire consisted of 26 questions that were divided into four sections. The study findings may provide the desired information for women entrepreneurs in Ghana to remain sustainable.

Ahsan et al. (2020) examined the entrepreneurial persistence of opportunity-motivated entrepreneurs in Ghana. Ahsan et al. developed a theoretical model focusing on the relationships among perceived institutional support, entrepreneurial persistence, and small venture performance, including how entrepreneurial networks condition the relationship between institutional support and entrepreneurial persistence. The study findings revealed an integrative understanding of the relationships among perceived institutional support, entrepreneurial persistence, and venture performance in an adverse environment. Ahsan et al. noted that although existing evidence suggested that supportive institutional environments enable entrepreneurial activities and improve firm performance, evidence provided limited insights on how these factors influence opportunity-motivated entrepreneurs operating in historically adverse conditions. The study findings inspired me to explore the influence of an entrepreneur's perception of the prevailing context on their cognition and behavior.

Problem Statement

There is a problem among women entrepreneurs in Ghana, which is caused by the unprepared nature for entrepreneurship among women's individual and contextual training that includes social, cultural, economic, political, demographic, institutional, and technological perceived support, or barriers to succeed in entrepreneurship (Nunfam et

al., 2020). Women in Ghana are confronted with challenges such as unemployment, lack of training, discrimination from unfavorable laws, family expectations, and cultural beliefs (Anlesinya et al., 2020). Anlesinya et al. (2020) disclosed that women are disadvantaged with respect to their participation in formal entrepreneurial activities; only 4.5% of women compared to 13.4% of men operate in the formal sector.

The general problem was that women entrepreneurs are underprepared for individual and contextual training that includes social, cultural, economic, political, demographic, institutional, and technological perceived support, or barriers to succeed in entrepreneurship (Nunfam et al., 2020). The specific problem was that some women entrepreneurs in Ghana do not understand the business strategic information required to overcome challenges and to ensure sustainability beyond 5 years. Aspiring women entrepreneurs in Ghana may use the results to develop programs that will promote business sustainability beyond 5 years. The findings may create a platform that provides the needed strategies for skill development, monitoring, and access to marketplace for women entrepreneurs. This may increase the number of women entrepreneurs in Ghana and close the gender gap. Closing the gap in business opportunities may be essential not only for women's empowerment but also for Ghana's economic growth, structural transformation, and poverty reduction.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to explore business strategic information that women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. The unit of analysis was 10 successful women

entrepreneurs from 5 industries in Ghana who had the training, experience, and information on the causes of business failure and had applied that information to gain business sustainability to operate for more than 5 years.

The target variable of interest was women entrepreneurs who had (a) operated a business for more 5 years, (b) had 15–50 employees, (c) had a profit after tax of \$50,000 U.S. dollars (equivalent of ₵280,000 Ghana cedis), and (d) had businesses registered in the name of the woman entrepreneur. The 5 industries were (a) education, (b) agriculture, (c) textile, (d) manufacturing, and (e) health sector. Two women entrepreneurs were selected from each sector to be interviewed in the data collection process.

Research Question

The research question was the following: What business strategic information do women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years?

Conceptual Framework

The theory that grounded this study was the institutional theory developed by Vossenberg (2013). According to institutional theory, in low-income economies women entrepreneurs are expected to play a more prominent role in self-employment and job generation to develop a viable private sector and provide women with successful careers. This concept aligned with the problem, purpose, and research question because the topic I was exploring was business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to overcome challenges and to ensure sustainability beyond 5 years. Ilie et al. (2021) revealed that institutions are embedded within societies and produce normative

expectations that determine right or wrong behavior. Institutions govern behaviors and interactions and promote social norms and political systems within which entrepreneurs operate (Ilie et al., 2021).

Institutions provide set of political, social, and legal ground rules that establish the basis for production, exchange, and distribution where entrepreneurs operate (Ilie et al., 2021). Ilie et al. (2021) noted that institutions incorporate common beliefs to promote legitimacy and stability in society. Legitimacy in society can ensure that people act within a value system that works as a contract between the different actors in a society. For women entrepreneurs, the perception of social legitimacy provides security and results in the entrepreneurial self-efficacy necessary for venture growth. Regarding the entrepreneurial gender gap in the context of institutional theory, there were three levels that included the regulatory system (legal and policy environment of entrepreneurs), the normative system (stereotypes of men and women, family framework, gendered expectations, belief systems, cultural factors), and the cognitive system (education, training, and technology; Ilie et al., 2021). These levels promote social thought and action, which provide legitimacy and facilitate entrepreneurship (Ilie et al., 2021). Gender beliefs are often analyzed as part of the women entrepreneurship gap because women do not usually identify themselves with entrepreneurship and do not consider this possibility. I used the institutional theory to develop the interview questions on the regulatory, normative, and cognitive systems in which women entrepreneurs operate.

Nature of the Study

There are three research methodologies that include qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Qualitative studies involve data collection in a natural setting through interviews to satisfy the purpose of the study. Quantitative methods involve the examination of causes and reasons by investigating hypotheses related to variables' characteristics or relationships (Gammelgaard, 2017). Quantitative methodology was not suitable for the current study because researchers use the quantitative method to investigate relationships, cause-effect phenomena, and conditions. Mixed-method studies involve the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (McManamny et al., 2015). Mixed methods were not suitable for the current study because there was no quantitative component in the study. When a researcher is interested in an in-depth understanding of a case, the qualitative method is preferable to the quantitative method (Gammelgaard, 2017). I used the qualitative method to explore strategic business information women entrepreneurs in Ghana require to ensure business sustainability beyond 5 years.

There are 5 qualitative research designs that include (a) case study, (b) phenomenology, (c) narrative, (d) ethnography, and (e) grounded theory (Yin, 2018). I used the multiple case study design to conduct interviews with knowledgeable entrepreneurs who provided details on the study topic in 5 industries that included (a) education, (b) agriculture, (c) textile, (d) manufacturing, and (e) health sector. I used the multiple case study design because of the 5 sectors involved in the study. The semistructured interview process was conducted using Zoom. I used a multiple case study

design because the participants were recruited from 5 different industries as registered by the Registrar General's Department in Ghana. I also relied on snowball sampling when recruiting participants who met the inclusion criteria.

Stake (2006) recommended that seven to 12 participants may be sufficient in a qualitative case study because two to three cases may not show in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. I did not use phenomenological design because phenomenology is used to study the lived experience and participants' personal meanings (see Yin, 2018). Researchers use the ethnographic design to understand participants' cultures (Yin, 2018). The ethnographic design was not suitable for the current study. Researchers use narrative designs to engage in participants' storytelling as a means of data collection (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The narrative design was not suitable for the current study. Researchers use grounded theory to develop a theory for explaining observed phenomena from the data to be collected (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Grounded theory was not suitable for the current study because I was not developing a theory from the study; rather, I was exploring the business strategic information that women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. The multiple case study design was suitable for the study.

Definitions

I provide definitions so readers understand the operational terms used throughout the study. Terms that may not have been well known to readers are defined to give the reader an understanding of the terms. Some of these terms had a specific meaning in the context of this study. I attribute definitions to their peer-reviewed sources.

Empowerment of women entrepreneurs: Empowerment of women entrepreneurs could be described as a conceptualization of financial independence, education and skill acquisition, and the removal of barriers from women at various levels in society (Boateng, 2020).

Entrepreneurial activity: Entrepreneurial activity is the enterprising human action in pursuit of the generation of value through the creation or expansion of economic activity by identifying and exploiting new products, processes, or markets Boateng, 2020).

Gender-specific barriers: Gender-specific barriers refer to constraints specific to the women gender (Mahmood et al., 2012).

Successful women entrepreneurship: Successful women entrepreneurship refers to the ability of women to earn an income and the competency to sustain a profitable business for at least 5 years, drawing from parameters of success such as work–life balance, ability to earn an income, easy access to funding, increased literacy and education skills, easy access to customers, suppliers and business partners, and global presence (Boateng, 2020; Mohammed et al., 2017).

Women entrepreneurs: Women entrepreneurs is a term used interchangeably with the term women entrepreneurs, which describes a woman or a group of women who initiate, create, organize, operate, and actively manage a business; own at least 50% of the firm; and have been operating for over 1 year (F. S. M. A. Hassan & Almubarak, 2016).

Assumptions

Assumptions are the unconfirmed assertions that support a study to shape the research toward the findings (Kirkwood & Price, 2013). The first assumption in the current study was that the participants would be knowledgeable in the area and would provide honest, relevant, in-depth information related to strategies they used to achieve business sustainability beyond 5 years. The second assumption was that the participants would provide clear, accurate, and high-quality data. Such assumptions were needed to enhance the validity and credibility of findings. The third assumption was that, with adequate preparation, the participants would be available for the interviews and that the participant selection criteria and study design would be appropriate to achieve the purpose of the study. The fourth assumption was that participants would understand the intent of the study, and that they would read and understand the informed consent. I also assumed that participants would sign the informed consent form that contained confidentiality measures, purpose of the study, data collection method, and data use provisions.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study refers to the parameters under which the study will be operating (Simon & Goes, 2013). The scope of the current study was 10 women entrepreneurs who had operated a business for more than 5 years, with employee strength of 15–50, with profit after tax of \$50,000 U.S. dollars (equivalent of ₵280,000 Ghana cedis), and with the business registered in the name of the woman entrepreneur in Ghana.

Two women leaders were recruited from each of 5 industries: (a) education, (b) agriculture, (c) textile, (d) manufacturing, and (e) health sector.

Delimitations are the boundaries imposed by the researcher on the scope of the study (Simon & Goes, 2013). In the current study, I explored business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to ensure their business sustainability beyond 5 years. The population included women entrepreneurs who had successfully operated a business for more than 5 years in Ghana, with profit after tax of \$50,000 U.S. dollars, and with the business registered in the name of the woman entrepreneur. The population excluded women entrepreneurs whose businesses had not succeeded beyond 5 years of operation. The theory that ground this study was the institutional theory developed by Vossenberg (2013). Ilie et al. (2021) revealed that institutions are embedded within societies and produce normative expectations that determine right or wrong behavior. Institutions govern behaviors and interactions and promote social norms and political systems within which entrepreneurs operate (Ilie et al., 2021). The institutional theory limited the lens used for this study and may restrict transferability of findings. Polit and Beck (2010) highlighted that naturalistic realization aids understanding of the transferability of research findings to new contexts. I allowed readers to determine the transferability of findings.

Limitations

The limitations of a study relate to the possible intent and procedural weaknesses of the study (Mitchell & Jolly, 2013). The first limitation was that qualitative research is subjective, and the findings may not be generalized. The current study was particular to

the interviews and details shared by women in Ghana, and findings may not be applicable to the entire country. Generalization of findings is a crucial difference between qualitative and quantitative research. Furthermore, I carried out this study in Accra, Ghana; a similar study in a different location in Ghana may produce different results. To reduce any unintended bias in the study, I remained objective and neutral throughout the study and removed personal opinions and ideas from the data collection and analysis process. Other limitations included access to participants; due to the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing had become the norm. Having access to participants in a face-to-face interview was restricted. Another limitation was the fact that participants who may have allowed access to physical documents may not have provided such documents through the internet. To reduce this limitation, I ensured that all participants sign an informed consent form prior to requests for any form of documentation. Finally, a limitation was posed by the fact that requirements for storing data may be excessive and expensive, thereby creating a limitation to storage.

Significance of the Study

The findings may be significant to women entrepreneurs who are confronted with challenges to business survival and growth. The government of Ghana may find the study findings and the recommendations worthy of implementation to improve the standard of living among women in Ghana and to improve employment and women empowerment. The findings may create the platform that provides the needed strategies for skill development, monitoring, and access to marketplace for women entrepreneurs, which may increase the number of women entrepreneurs in Ghana and close the gender gap.

Closing the gap in business opportunities may be essential not only for women's empowerment but also for Ghana's economic growth, structural transformation, and poverty reduction. Entrepreneurship is a viable method to improve economic activities and a means of wealth creation; women entrepreneurship may provide benefits to their immediate families and society.

Significance to Practice

The study may be significant to future researchers in the education, agricultural, textiles, manufacturing, and health sector who may want to expand the body of knowledge on women entrepreneurship across Africa and the world. The study may also be significant to the government of Ghana in supporting women entrepreneurs to develop and achieve their potential by providing support that may be revealed in the findings. The study may also be significant to positive social change. Women entrepreneurs may increase business sustainability, employment may increase because of business sustainability, poverty reduction may be experienced in Ghana, community development may be enhanced, and the standard of living may be improved.

Significance to Theory

The findings of this study may improve existing knowledge about women entrepreneurship strategies for business sustainability. The theory that grounded this study was the institutional theory developed by Vossenberg (2013). According to the institutional theory, in low-income economies women entrepreneurs are expected to play a more prominent role in self-employment and job generation to develop a viable private sector and provide women with successful careers. Ilie et al. (2021) revealed that

institutions are embedded within societies and produce normative expectations that determine right or wrong behavior. Institutions govern behaviors and interactions and promote social norms and political systems within which entrepreneurs operate (Ilie et al., 2021). This framework serve as lens to understand gender-specific factors that influence entrepreneurship and sustainability strategies of women entrepreneurial ventures in Ghana. Culturally designated positions, beliefs, perceptions, entrepreneurial barriers, access to resources, and leadership may differ. This study may be significant in projecting the institutional theory of entrepreneurship as relevant in deepening understanding of factors of influence women entrepreneurship and gender-specific empowerment strategies that may advance previous studies.

Significance to Social Change

Due to Ghanaian women's primary responsibilities to childcare and keeping the home, many are hindered from progressing in their careers because they have to attend to the needs at home before focusing on the needs of a career (Boateng, 2020). The predominant sociocultural restrictions relating to women's ownership of assets and resources prevent many women from accessing loans that would help to expand women entrepreneurship (Boateng, 2020). The extended family system, which is common in the Ghanaian setting, puts pressure on businesswomen to take care of family members in the extended family (Boateng, 2020). Due to this, family-owned businesses tend to have little money for operation and expansion because most of the income is spent on family members' needs. The current study may be significant to positive social change. Women entrepreneurs may increase business sustainability, employment may increase as a result

of business sustainability, poverty reduction may be experienced in Ghana, community development may be enhanced, and the standard of living may be improved.

Summary and Transition

In Chapter 1, I discussed the challenges to the sustainability of women entrepreneurship in Ghana. I presented the research question, nature of the study, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study. Also, I introduced the conceptual framework that guided this study, which was the institutional theory developed by Vossenberg (2013). Ilie et al. (2021) revealed that institutions are embedded within societies and produce normative expectations that determine right or wrong behavior. Institutions govern behaviors and interactions and promote social norms and political systems within which entrepreneurs operate (Ilie et al., 2021).

In Chapter 2, I present a literature review and examine the institutional theory, which provided a conceptual framework for the assessment of women entrepreneurship in Ghana. I synthesize previous literature and findings on entrepreneurship, gender and entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurship in West Africa, women entrepreneurship, and economic development in Ghana. I also review the extant literature on business sustainability of women entrepreneurship in Ghana and identify gaps in previous studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The specific problem was the need to explore the requirements of women entrepreneurs in Ghana to determine whether they need to learn business strategies to ensure the sustainability of their business beyond 5 years. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to explore business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to be learn to overcome challenges and to ensure sustainability beyond 5 years. Business owners in Ghana are confronted with challenges that relate to finances, market, inputs, economic and regulatory frameworks, and the sociocultural setup of the country (Boateng, 2020). These challenges become compounded for women, leading to small business sizes with little or no expansion and general stagnation of their family businesses (Boateng, 2020).

In Chapter 2, I present my literature search strategy and the conceptual framework that supported the research. I analyze and synthesize knowledge from the scholarly literature and present evidence of the unique context of challenges faced by Ghanaian women entrepreneurs. I discuss the institutional theory framework, which was used to view the sustainability of women entrepreneurship in Ghana.

Literature Search Strategy

The research question was founded on the literature review, which indicated the gap to explore and authenticated as capable of adding to existing literature. The goal of this literature review was to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate scholarly literature using higher order critical writing on the topics of women entrepreneurs, growth and sustainability of women-owned businesses, and strategies used to overcome business

failure before 5 years. I conducted searches of Walden University Library databases that included Google Scholar, ProQuest, ABI/INFORM Complete, Sage Premier, Science Direct, EBSCOhost, Business Source Complete, and Emerald.

The keywords that were in the searches included *women entrepreneurship*, *women entrepreneurs in Ghana*, *barriers confronting women entrepreneurs in Ghana*, *strategies for growing and sustaining women entrepreneurial business ventures*, *successful women entrepreneurs in Nigeria*, *empowerment of women entrepreneurship in Ghana*, and *women entrepreneurship theories*. Certain key terms were combined to identify more relevant results: *women entrepreneurship AND gender*, *women entrepreneurship AND institutional theory*, *empowerment theory AND women entrepreneurship AND qualitative multiple case study AND women entrepreneurship*. Some of the scholarly and peer-reviewed publications used in this study included journal articles from publications such as *Gender in Management*, *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, *Journal of Small Business & Entrepreneurship*, *World Journal of Entrepreneurship Management and Sustainable Development*, and *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*.

In this literature review, I present prior research regarding entrepreneurship, gender and entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurship in Africa, women entrepreneurship, and economic development in Ghana. I synthesized, analyzed, and evaluated literature on sustainability strategies for women entrepreneurial business ventures in Africa. The Sage database was used to identify germane scholarship on women entrepreneurship. In cases where there was little recent research and few

dissertations or conferences proceedings, I used Google Alert to inform me of new articles on women entrepreneurship.

Conceptual Framework

The theory that grounded this study was the institutional theory developed by Vossenberg (2013, as cited in Munir, 2019). The concept presented by Vossenberg is that in low-income economies, women entrepreneurs are expected to play a more prominent role in self-employment and job generation to develop a viable private sector and provided women with successful careers. This concept aligned with the problem, purpose, and research questions because the topic I was exploring was business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to overcome challenges and to ensure sustainability beyond 5 years. Ilie et al. (2021) revealed that institutions are embedded within societies and produce normative expectations that determine right or wrong behavior. Institutions govern behaviors and interactions and promote social norms and political systems within which entrepreneurs operate (Ilie et al., 2021).

Institutions provide political, social, and legal ground rules that establish the basis for production, exchange, and distribution where entrepreneurs operate (Wurth et al., 2021). Wurth et al. (2021) noted that institutions incorporate common beliefs to promote legitimacy and stability in society. Legitimacy in society can ensure that people act within a value system that works as a contract between the different actors in the society. For women entrepreneurs, the perception of social legitimacy provides security and results in the entrepreneurial self-efficacy necessary for venture growth. Regarding the entrepreneurial gender gap in the context of institutional theory, there were three levels

that included the regulatory system (legal and policy environment of entrepreneurs), the normative system (stereotypes of men and women, family framework, gendered expectations, belief systems, cultural factors), and the cognitive system (education, training, and technology; Drori, 2019). These levels promote social thought and action, which provide legitimacy and facilitate entrepreneurship (Drori, 2019). Gender beliefs are often analyzed as part of the women entrepreneurship gap because women do not usually identify themselves with entrepreneurship and do not consider this possibility. I used the institutional theory to develop the interview questions on the regulatory, normative, and cognitive systems in which women entrepreneurs operate.

Institutional Theory

Institutional theory as applied to entrepreneurship posits that entrepreneurs must conform to existing institutions to gain endorsement and legitimacy and resources from important referent audiences and stakeholders (Munir, 2019). Eijdenberg et al. (2018) emphasized that the tenets of institutional theory as applied to entrepreneurship suggest that entrepreneurs must conform to existing institutions to gain endorsement and legitimacy and resources from important referent audiences and stakeholders.

Entrepreneurs aim to gather essential human and financial resources by convincing potential resource constituents of the legitimacy, appropriateness, and desirability of their proposed activities relative to one or more socially constructed systems of evaluation (Eijdenberg et al., 2018). Entrepreneurs gather essential human resources by structuring the attention and action of other entrepreneurs, customers, suppliers and investors, and institutions (Eijdenberg et al., 2018).

Common institutional factors that influence entrepreneurial activities are market conditions and property rights, family structure, formal policy, and the availability of capital (Munir, 2019). Inadequate institutional development can complicate new venture development while a more developed institutional environment with overly restrictive regulation can hamper activities (Munir, 2019). Eijdenberg et al. (2019) and Munir (2019) found that informal relationships, such as small associations and local networks, may help to fill in the gap that exists in institutions resulting from an inadequate formal institutional infrastructure.

Through informal institutions such as building connections with key government officials and other managerial ties, entrepreneurial activities may be possible even when they are not legally recognized, although these ties can also be costly and hinder new venture development (Munir, 2019). The institutional theory is concerned with the interaction of groups and organizations with the social structure to secure legitimacy and stability (Munir, 2019). The theory aligned with the current study's problem statement, purpose, and research question to addresses regulatory, social, and cultural systems that impact the behavior of groups and organizations such as women entrepreneurship.

Institutional Theory in Previous Studies and the Benefits to the Current Study

Esteban-Lloret et al. (2020) used the quantitative method to examine the relationship between employee training and performance in 374 Spanish firms. The objective was to analyze the drivers and outcomes of manager training. Drawing on institutional and economic-rational perspectives, Esteban-Lloret et al. explored the reasons why firms train their managers and which outcomes improve in response to

training to explain the ambiguity of the training effect on performance. The findings revealed that manager training is driven by institutional forces, particularly normative and mimetic forces, and to a lesser extent by competitive factors. That implies two different kinds of outcomes are achieved by training managers: improved organizational legitimacy and improved organizational performance.

Langevang et al. (2018) examined how women entrepreneurs navigate complex and challenging institutional environments. Langevang et al. drew on institutional theory and the concept of response strategies to institutional pressures to explore the institutional barriers that women entrepreneurs encounter and highlight the strategies women employ to overcome them. Using semistructured interviews with nine women, Langevang et al. revealed that advocacy through women's business associations, bootstrapping, semi-informal operations, colocation of homes and business, spouse involvement in the business, downplay of gender identity, reliance on persistence and passion, and networking are some of the strategies women entrepreneurs used to achieve sustainability in Tanzania.

Gawel and Mroczek-Dabrowska (2021) verified how industry specificity influences the gender pay gap and its relation to women entrepreneurship using panel regression models. The study findings revealed that industry specificity plays a significant role in the relation between the pay gap and women entrepreneurship. Gawel and Mroczek-Dabrowska concluded that the gender pay gap as a measure of gender inequality is dependent on industry specificity. The dependence is especially visible in the breakdown of male- and women-dominated industries (Adom & Anambane, 2020).

Adopting the occupational choice theory perspective, labor market discrimination against women should become a factor pushing women toward entrepreneurship (Adom & Anambane, 2020).

Mehrzaad et al. (2021) explored the perceptions of Afghan women engineers regarding opportunities and barriers to starting their own engineering and construction company in Kabul through three career trajectory chokepoints related to training through higher education, the engineering workplace, and entrepreneurship. The three themes that emerged from the in-depth interview were entering and studying engineering, career development, and starting their own engineering business. The different methodologies used in related studies provided insight into women entrepreneurship in various countries, which informed the current study.

Entrepreneurship

Chowdhury et al. (2018) described entrepreneurship as changing the yield of resources for value creation. Entrepreneurs who engaged in the act of entrepreneurship used innovation and creativity to build multi-billion-dollar enterprises from humble beginnings (Chowdbury et al., 2018). Entrepreneurship depends on institutional and policy support and availability of capital and entrepreneurial culture (Holmquist & Sundin, 2021).

Schumpeter (1934) articulated that innovation is a process of industrial mutation. Innovation revolutionizes the economic structure from within by destroying the old one and creating a new one (Holmquist & Sundin, 2021; Strikanth et al., 2021). An entrepreneur indulges in creative destruction and is considered a positive change agent in

the process of economic development of a nation (Schumpeter, 1934). Schumpeter noted that

the function of entrepreneurs is to reform or revolutionize the pattern of production by exploiting an invention or, more generally, an untried technological possibility for producing a new commodity or producing an old one in a new way, by opening a new source of supply of materials or a new outlet for products, by reorganizing an industry and so on. (p. 132)

Based on cognitive perspective, an entrepreneur has special traits and abilities such as achievement motivation, tolerance for ambiguity, and risk-taking propensity (Strikanth et al., 2021). According to the theory of social change, an entrepreneur is an innovator and a creative personality with an urge for achievement, order, and autonomy, and becomes a problem solver in the process of social transformation (Strikanth et al., 2021). Innovation is the nucleus of entrepreneurial processes that hinge on the discovery, creation, and commercial exploitation of market opportunities (Felzensztein & Gimmon, 2021).

Entrepreneurship will promote economic development if a proper institutional setting is in place (Henrekson & Sanandaji, 2019). Entrepreneurship in most developing countries is survival entrepreneurship, which does not make any significant contribution to gap filling, structural change, and cost discovery (Henrekson & Sanandaji, 2019). Some institutional obstacles that neutralize the effects of entrepreneurship are (a) starting new businesses; (b) skill deficit; (c) access to finance, especially risk capital; and (d) networking and organizational learning (Nungsari et al., 2021). An entrepreneurial

ecosystem requires the involvement of many public- and private-sector organizations such as academic institutions for generation of ideas, training, and capacity-building facilities; skilled human resources; banks and financial institutions; capital and insurance industry associations; setting benchmarks and bargaining on a collective basis; government agencies; and regulation (Nungsari et al., 2021).

Chowdhury et al. (2018) noted that entrepreneurship contributes to the economy with varying significance in the quality and quantity of entrepreneurship across developing and developed countries. Entrepreneurs often rely on their personal wealth or inheritance. Entrepreneurs may also use informal networks such as friends and family to acquire financial resources or formal networks such as customers and suppliers (S. Hassan et al., 2021). Entrepreneurs are often confronted with difficulties in obtaining external financial sources due to a lack of collateral, legitimacy, and asymmetry of information (Meeralam & Adeinat, 2021). Meeralam and Adeinat (2021) appeared to agree with S. Hassan et al.'s (2021) assertion that lack of financial resources often leads to a lack of investment in activities needed for high-growth entrepreneurship.

Women Entrepreneurship

Mokline (2021) formulated an analytical framework to identify the determinants of business opportunities in the field of women entrepreneurship (FE) based on a triple perspective, such as subjectivist, objectivist, and constructive. Mokline (2021) described subjective perspective of FE to explain essential cognitive process of recognizing or perceiving opportunities that depends on the personality and thought patterns of the future entrepreneur. The second perspective is objectivist which represent the available

information and the entrepreneur's vigilance as factors influencing the process of identifying and/or discovering opportunities (Rugina, 2018). The third perspective is constructivist, which explains the creation and development of opportunities through the learning processes that can take place through social and relational networks (Rugina, 2018). Mokline described FE as women who, alone or with partners, has founded, purchased, or inherited a business, assumes all financial, administrative, and social risks and responsibilities, and participates daily in its day-to-day management.

Gender discrimination is the unequal distribution of opportunities, resources, and rewards according to gender and it is usually based on the perception and belief that there is a lack of equality because of gender rather than other personal characteristics (Ilie et al., 2021). Also, as a consequence of depriving women of fundamental freedoms, researchers argued that gender discrimination affects social development outcomes, causing poor governance and lower economic growth (Ali et al., 2021). Ilie et al. (2021) divulged that these inequalities are related to gender roles rooted in institutions.

Ghosh (2020) explored how sociocultural factors, economic determinants, and policies in support of entrepreneurship impact women entrepreneurs in the tourism and allied industries in the EU over the period 2006–2016. Women entrepreneurship (FE) in the tourism sector is confronted with intense gender discrimination, particularly for women in the age-cohort of marriage and family upkeep (Ghosh, 2020). Ghosh (2020) discovered that even though the number of women students is rising in almost all European tourism management schools, and women often outnumber men as employees

in the tourism industry, they are still marginal when it comes to management and decision-making.

Historically, entrepreneurship has been associated with a masculine construction, which is deeply embedded in the sociocultural context (Ghosh, 2020). Traditionally, gender roles restrict women in exploring their abilities as entrepreneurs (Ghosh, 2020). Women are subject to a significant burden of domestic responsibilities compared to men (Ghosh, 2020). Against the backdrop of the constraints that women are confronted with the challenges of homecare and income generating functions, which the governments in many European countries have designed pro-work–family policies (Ghosh, 2020). A policy-induced cultural change has been induced, for example, by creating role models based on successful women business leaders to encourage women’s participation in enterprises that may boost economic growth and are employment friendly (Ghosh, 2020). Government intervention is yet to be experienced in Ghana, as women in Ghana are still confronted with challenges such as unemployment, lack of training, discrimination from unfavorable laws, family expectations, and cultural beliefs (Anlesinya et al., 2020). Previous studies reveal how male dominated business environment had affected the women counterpart, leading to business failure in several countries. There remains a gap to the strategies used in Ghana by women entrepreneurs to remain sustainable beyond 5 years in business.

Strategies for Growing and Sustaining Women Entrepreneurial Ventures

Opute et al. (2021) identified innovation and strategic entrepreneurship marketing as strategic focus that leverages social network foundation towards driving productive

entrepreneurship for sustaining economic growth and reducing unemployment. The strategy embraces a network viewpoint of entrepreneurial ecosystem that takes into consideration the social network factors that can interact within a network entity leading to innovation: behavioural, interactional, contextual, and structural factors (Opute et al., 2021). To enhance economic growth and impactful entrepreneurship, the entrepreneurs must endorse the active approach, where the entrepreneur, is innovation focused and strategically seeks new ways of creating added value through new products, processes, and markets (Opute et al., 2021). Opute et al. appraised that entrepreneurship with a drive to contribute to a sustained economic growth must embrace a strategic marketing approach that enables them to identify and explores new markets and even internationalize its focus.

Wang and Keane (2020) investigated some of the dilemmas experienced when women strive to develop entrepreneurial identities by making a distinction between the entrepreneur in a general sense, the creative entrepreneur, and women creative entrepreneurs. Wang and Keane (2020) revealed that besides the difficulty to sustain a creative-based entrepreneurial identity, the hyper-competitive and masculinist fields of digital entrepreneurship and technical fields, combined with traditional gender roles and family responsibility, results in a devaluation of women entrepreneurship. Wang and Keane (2020) concluded that further research would be required into women entrepreneurship, particularly the evolving relationship between individual and collective women entrepreneurial identity, as well as the impact that greater participation by women

will have on the kinds of creative narratives that are produced about the future, and women's contribution to that future. This study will further explore this gap in Ghana.

Daniel and Adeel (2021) appraised the strategy of entrepreneurial alertness as a concept that has the potential to add substantially to our understanding of how new ideas get initiated and pursued. Alertness refers to the capacity to recognize the opportunities when they exist, such as emerged changes in technology, market, government policies, and competitions (Daniel & Adeel, 2021). Daniel and Adeel (2021) explained entrepreneurial alertness as proactive promptness to information, especially of a private nature, about the environment; figuratively having one's antenna out. Alertness requires the entrepreneurs to be plugged into information networks in this era of fast and intensive technological settings (Daniel & Adeel, 2021). Daniel and Adeel (2021) identified the core components of alertness construct, namely sensing and searching information, cognitive ability, personality factors, environment, social networks, knowledge, and experience, which influence the ability to perceive opportunities. Entrepreneurial alertness significantly influences entrepreneurial intentions, which subsequently resulted in entrepreneurial action (Daniel & Adeel, 2021). Despite the growing number of publications since 2006, which reveals the importance of entrepreneurial alertness as an emerging strategic focus, the practice of entrepreneurial alertness is still an ambiguous and fuzzy concept (Daniel & Adeel, 2021). As a consequence, researchers have approached entrepreneurial alertness in a multidimensional way, relating it to luck, street smart, market sense, intuition, and recognition of opportunities (Daniel & Adeel, 2021). Sallah and Caesar (2019) concluded that focusing on three intangible resources: social

capital, human capital and reputational capital is the strategy for sustaining women business. Social, human, and reputational capital all significantly contributed to the growth of women businesses and a positive and significant effect of social capital, reputational capital, and human capital support business growth (Sallah & Caesar, 2019). Mulral Ali and Badghishi (2019) used symmetrical analysis which reveal that access to finance, access to physical infrastructure, and cultural factors are not significantly associated with entrepreneurial intentions, whereas government policies and regulations, government programs and support, social factors and entrepreneurship education and training are significantly associated with the development of entrepreneurial intentions among women entrepreneurs.

Successful Women Entrepreneurs in Nigeria

Lawan (2020) revealed that Nigeria is one of the largest African economies mainly due to its abundant oil and other natural resources, but corruption and lack of transparency, along with tribal and cultural factors, have prevented this resource-rich country from achieving its full potential. In many developing countries, obstacles in the business environment inhibit intentions to start a business for most of the population (Lawan, 2020). The obstacles such as corrupt practices add to the usual challenges that entrepreneurs face such as the lack of skilled labor, lack of market information, and the time it takes to obtain permits, further put a constraint in entrepreneurial development in Nigeria (Lawan, 2020). Some women entrepreneurs prevail despite the barriers and challenges.

The financial service landscape of Nigeria is one that shows a lack of access to a range of affordable, safe, and reliable financial services (Lawan, 2020). The financial system provides services to about 35% of the economically active population while the remaining 65% are excluded as reported by the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2005 (Lawan, 2020). Another barrier to women entrepreneurship in Nigeria is corruption and inefficient legal and political systems. Some researchers maintain that the significant institutional problems that have impeded sustainable development in Nigeria are corruption, which appears embedded in the culture (Lawan, 2020).

Isiwu and Onwuka (2017) appraised that even though Nigeria is massively endowed with immeasurable human and mineral resources, it is still reckoned to be a developing nation among the comity of nations. Isiwu and Onwuka (2017) revealed that 11% of women as against 36% of men participate in entrepreneurial activities in developing countries including Nigeria. Indeed, efforts by successive governments in Nigeria to encourage women participation in entrepreneurship including the various incentives by government and international development partners have not yielded the desired result (Isiwu & Onwuka, 2017). As compared to other countries women produce 80% of food in Sub-Saharan Africa, 50–60 % in Asia, 26% in Caribbean, 34% in North America and Middle East and more than 30% in Latin America (Isiwu & Onwuka, 2017).

A good practical implication of the finding by Isiwu and Onwuka is that women who develop high self-efficacy are more likely to be entrepreneurs and that strategies to build high self-efficacy among women are needed to make more women become entrepreneurs to enhance national and grass-root development (Isiwu & Onwuka, 2017).

Li et al. (2020) synthesized that gender inequality have affected women confidence in operating businesses which resulted to business failure in the past. However, studies have also revealed that some women entrepreneurs have succeeded in business. I will embark on a study in Ghana to explore such strategies that few women entrepreneurs have used over 5 years to operate a successful business.

Successful Women Entrepreneurs in Senegal

In Senegal, small and medium-sized business enterprises emerge as key players of economic growth among women entrepreneurs. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) stand as a main driving force for poverty alleviation, income generating activities and jobs creation in Senegal (Sega & Kanichiro, 2018). SMEs owners are confronted with managerial hurdles both at internal and external aspects that significantly impact on their growth (Sega & Kanichiro, 2018). From 2011 to 2014, the Senegalese government implemented the Japanese oriented rural development model known as, One Village One Product (OVOP), with the aim at increasing local small-scale entrepreneurs to generate income through the promotion of local resources under the OVOP Program (Sega & Kanichiro, 2018).

The OVOP Project in Senegal was implemented from March 2011 to April 2014 in two target areas out of the 14 areas in Senegal. The implementing body was the Directorate of Craft Industry supported by Japanese International Corporation Agency (JICA). The objective of the Project was to increase local producers' income through the promotion and the value addition of local resources under the OVOP Program (Sega & Kanichiro, 2018). The key point of this success is that the OVOP policy emphasizes on

self-reliance and endogenous development of the communities. To be sustainable, community development must be carried out by community members themselves rather than depending on supports from outsiders (Sega & Kanichiro, 2018).

Orr et al. (2017) inferred that despite the constraints in Senegal, women social entrepreneurs have emerged over the years. Social entrepreneurial firms exist within environments that are often severely resource constrained (Orr et al., 2017). Social entrepreneurship often emerges and thrives within resource-constrained environments, leading social entrepreneurs to create innovative solutions to society's most challenging problems (Orr et al., 2017). Social entrepreneurs, in contrast to entrepreneurs who pursue for-profit ventures, are motivated by a social impact mission, and are focused on providing societal value rather than creating private value or personal economic gain (Bublitz et al., 2020). The value social entrepreneurs aim to create is designed to positively affect the well-being of people and communities and to offer transformative benefits to society (Bublitz et al., 2020).

By introducing innovative processes and practices, financially sustainable organizations are able to weather and adapt to difficult times and can successfully continue to operate under these conditions (Orr et al., 2017). Orr et al. (2017) revealed that a country's governance and women migration are related to the level of social entrepreneurial activity. In addition, positive women migration serves as an important mediating role between governance and increased levels of social entrepreneurial activity (Orr et al., 2017).

Successful Women Entrepreneurs in Gambia

Mummidi (2021) highlighted the differences between rural and urban women entrepreneurs in Gambia. The rural and urban women are characterized by strong differences in terms of education, entrepreneurial experience, social norms, exposure, dependence on men and opportunities, and size of local markets (Mummidi, 2021). In urban areas, one evaluates women entrepreneurs through microcredit and other services, they manage to upgrade their activities from petty trading to market stall holders (Mummidi, 2021). By contrast, rural women seek merely to supplement the family budget to mitigate risk and diversify rather than upgrade preexisting activities (Mummidi, 2021). The justification for diversification often stems from the seasonality of available livelihood opportunities. Mummidi (2021) identified large disparities in the success and sustainability of women enterprises financed by microcredit. Rather than class background, success also exists for women from very poor background. The difference seems to come from women's ability to mobilize and activate social networks (Mummidi, 2021).

Manneh et al. (2020) identified some of the entrepreneurial ventures for women entrepreneurs in Gambia to include investment in start-ups, informal small business trading, and joint ventures or partnership business. The formation of women entrepreneurs or new graduates into corporate ventures is largely rare among new venture segments (Menneh et al., 2020). Manneh et al. (2020) suggested that individual self-efficacy influence their behavioural intention to engage in entrepreneurship. Individual self-efficacy, is described as a person's belief in his or her capability to perform a task,

influences the development of both entrepreneurial Intentions and actions or behaviours (Mannel et al., 2020; Miniesy et al., 2021).

Empowerment of Women Entrepreneurs in Ghana

Deladem et al. (2020) aimed at examining how public-private partnership (PPP) in sustainable tourism development helps eradicate poverty in tourism host communities in Ghana. The study findings revealed that the potential of PPP development for long-term economic infrastructural needs of tourism destination have not been sufficiently realized and with women participation in tourism, the chances are high to be fully realized (Deladem et al., 2020). Globally, entrepreneurship education has become an effective catalyst of stimulating entrepreneurship growth for socio-economic development through job and wealth creation (Nunfam et al., 2020).

Anlesinya et al. (2019) examined cultural orientations and intention of Ghanaian women to engage in entrepreneurship while assessing the role of perceived support system. The results indicate that uncertainty avoidance and power distance cultural orientations have significant positive and negative effects, respectively, on women's participation in formal entrepreneurship (Anlesinya et al., 2019). Collectivism and masculine cultural orientations do not have any effect on their intention to engage in formal entrepreneurial activity (Anlesinya et al., 2019). Women are regularly undecided between their professional role as well as that of a wife, which means that when male spouses provide the necessary physical, economic, psychological, and social support to their wives, most of them will be willing participate actively in entrepreneurial activities (Anlesinya et al., 2019). Kawai and Kazumi (2021) inferred that decision to commence a

successful business is not based on gender orientation, rather based on feasibility and viability carried out on the business.

In Ghana, it is common for a husband to help the wife to establish her own business or expand an existing business mainly through the provision of financial and psychological assistance. In few cases, their spouses make them co-founders and owners by partnering with them (Anlesinya et al., 2019). Anlesinya et al. (2019) inferred that when women enjoy more supports from their spouses, it can significantly boost their entrepreneurial intention and success in the formal entrepreneurial arena despite the socio-cultural barriers they may face in an area that is apparently dominated by their male counterparts.

Ghana is ranked among the 10 fastest growing economies in the world with high prospects for export-driven growth, especially in the service sector where many family businesses are found (Boateng, 2021). Generally, business owners in Ghana face challenges that relate to finances, market, inputs, economic and regulatory frameworks, and the socio-cultural setup of the country (Boateng, 2021). Boateng (2021) indicated that family businesses are predominant among small and medium enterprises, which account for over 92% of companies registered in Ghana. Women are known to play key roles in the founding and development of many family businesses, both behind the scenes and in the front line running these businesses (Boateng, 2021).

Due to Ghanaian women's primary responsibilities of childcare and keeping the home, many are hindered from progressing in their careers (Boateng, 2021) as they constantly must attend to the needs at home before focusing on the needs of a career.

Also, the predominant socio-cultural restrictions relating to women's ownership of assets and resources prevent many women from accessing loans that would help to expand their businesses. Boateng (2021) appraised empowerment is measured in terms of 5 interrelated concepts, namely welfare, access, conscientization, participation and equality of control. Welfare relates to the level of material welfare of women relative to men in matters such as food supply and income, while access is about women's access to the factors of production, land, labor credit and training.

Conscientization is the understanding of the difference between sex roles and gender roles and the belief that gender (Boateng, 2021). Boateng (2021) evaluated that the relations and the gender division of labor should be fair and agreeable to both sides, and not based on the domination of one over the other. Finally, equality of control is about the factors of production and the distribution of benefits so that neither men nor women are in a position of dominance (Boateng, 2021). Nunfam et al. (2020) suggested three dimensions in her empowerment framework, which includes resources, agency, and achievements. Resources are the preconditions, material, social or human which serve to enhance the ability to make choices; agency refers to the ability to define one's goals and act upon these, while achievements are the outcomes of the empowerment process.

Women Entrepreneurship Theory

Ilie et al. (2021) evaluated institutional theory to justify the impact of the social, economic, and political systems within which entrepreneurs operate. According to this theory, institutions are embedded within societies and produce normative expectations that determine right or wrong behavior (Ilie et al., 2021). Using the absorptive capacity

theory of knowledge spillover entrepreneurship, this study contributes to previous research which has focused on the scope and boundaries of this phenomenon at a firm or institutional level, but not at the level of the transnational entrepreneur in Ghana (Mark et al., 2020).

The absorptive capacity theory of knowledge spillover entrepreneurship focusses on individuals who possess new knowledge, often developed by a third party, and initially geographically bounded, that may or may not be economically valuable (Mark et al., 2020). Mark et al. (2020) revealed that the possession of requisite human capital along with concern for the home country facilitates the acquisition of new knowledge. This new knowledge, when integrated with prior knowledge and cultural compatibility between home and host countries, influences the immigrant's intention to form new ventures and return to the home country (Mark et al., 2020). The theorist provides insights into the relationships between new knowledge, human capital, and entrepreneurship (Kawai & Kazumi, 2021). The knowledge spillover theory proposes that through creating new firms, entrepreneurs commercialize new knowledge developed by large firms or research institutions that are not interested in commercializing the research themselves. The knowledge spillover theory has so far focused on the inventor as entrepreneur, an individual working within a firm or research department (Mark et al., 2020).

Gap in Literature

Due to vulnerable position of women in many societies especially developing, being an entrepreneur is not easy. Despite the adverse social stigmas attached to

entrepreneurship in many societies, many women come forward to establish business ventures (Alam et al., 2021). Lee and Lee (2020) examined how women ethnic minorities in Silicon Valley developed their entrepreneurial motives and performances in relation to the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem, family and transnational networks, and gender and ethnic identities. The gap that this study will fill is based on research done by Ilie et al. (2021) whose study reveal that the perception of lack of equality increases the gender gap even if there are specific and effective policies in a society that attempt to eliminate the gender gap in terms of the role of women in the home or positions of power. There is gap in literature that explore business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to overcome challenges and to ensure sustainability beyond 5 years.

Summary and Conclusions

In Chapter 2, I presented the literature search strategy, the conceptual framework using the institutional theory. I also discussed entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurship, and strategies for growing and sustaining women entrepreneurial ventures. I synthesized successful women entrepreneurship in Nigeria, Senegal, and Gambia, I evaluated empowerment of women entrepreneurs in Ghana and presented women entrepreneurial theories. In Chapter 3, I presented the research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, and participant selection logic. And also discussed instrumentation, procedures for recruitment, participation and data collection, data analysis plan, issues of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to explore business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to overcome challenges and to ensure sustainability beyond 5 years. In Chapter 3, I present the research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, and participant selection logic. Instrumentation, procedure for recruitment, participation and data collection, data analysis, issue of trustworthiness, and ethical procedures are also discussed in this chapter. Chapter 3 concludes with a summary.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question was the following: What business strategic information do women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years? I used the qualitative method to explore strategic business information women entrepreneurs in Ghana require to ensure business sustainability beyond 5 years.

Research Design

There are 5 qualitative research designs: (a) case study, (b) phenomenology, (c) narrative, (d) ethnography, and (e) grounded theory (Yin, 2018). I used the multiple case study to conduct interviews with knowledgeable entrepreneurs who provided details within a specified time and space in 5 industries that included (a) education, (b) agriculture, (c) textile, (d) manufacturing, and (e) health sector. I used the multiple case study design because of the 5 sectors involved in the study. The semistructured interview process was conducted using Zoom. I used a multiple case study design because the participants were recruited from 5 industries as registered by the Registrar General's

Department in Ghana. I also relied on snowball sampling to recruit participants who met the inclusion criteria.

Research Rationale

There are three research methodologies: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. Qualitative studies involve data collection in a natural setting through interviews to satisfy the purpose of the study. Quantitative methodology involves examining causes and reasons by investigating hypotheses addressing variables' characteristics or relationships (Gammelgaard, 2017). Quantitative methodology was not suitable for the current study because researchers use the quantitative method to investigate relationships, cause-effect phenomena, and conditions. Mixed-method studies involve the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods (McManamny et al., 2015). Mixed methods were not suitable for the current study because there was no quantitative component in the study. When a researcher is interested in an in-depth understanding of a case, the qualitative method is preferable to the quantitative research method (Gammelgaard, 2017). I used the qualitative method to explore strategic business information women entrepreneurs in Ghana require to ensure business sustainability beyond 5 years.

Stake (2006) recommended that seven to 12 participants may be sufficient in a case study because two to three cases may not show in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. The phenomenological design was not suitable for the current study because I did not study the lived experience and participants' personal meanings. Researchers use ethnography to understand participants' cultures (Yin, 2018). The

ethnographic design was not suitable for the current study. Researchers use narrative designs to engage in participants' storytelling as a means of data collection (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The narrative design was not suitable for the current study. Researchers use grounded theory to develop a theory for explaining observed phenomena from the data to be collected (Strauss & Corbin, 1998); therefore, grounded theory was not suitable for the current study. The multiple case study design was suitable for the study.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher is to identify a methodology and design that will provide valid and reliable data to answer the research questions. In the current study, the purpose was to explore business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to overcome challenges and to ensure sustainability beyond 5 years. In carrying out the study, I obtained firsthand information from 10 successful women entrepreneurs from 5 industries who had the training, experience, and information on the causes of business failure and had applied that information to ensure business sustainability beyond 5 years. I interviewed women entrepreneurs who had (a) operated a business for more than 5 years, (b) 15–50 employees, (c) profit after tax of \$50,000 U.S. dollars (equivalent of ₵280,000 Ghana cedis), and (d) businesses registered in the name of the woman entrepreneur. I selected 5 industries in carrying out the research: (a) education, (b) agriculture, (c) textile, (d) manufacturing, and (e) health sector. I introduced the study to the prospective participants and answered questions they may have had regarding the study.

The researcher serves as the principal investigator in the collection of data from the participant (Harris, 2018). The role of the researcher in a qualitative study is to attempt to access the thoughts and experiences of the participants selected for the study (Sutton & Austin, 2015). I was responsible for identifying the participants, organizing the interview process, reviewing documents, and taking notes during the interview process. As the researcher, I conducted the interviews in person or through Zoom. Participants were allowed to select the time and date they were available. The interview time frame was 3 weeks. Each interview lasted between 30 and 45 minutes.

The relationships and conversation between the researcher and the participants can raise ethical concerns such as respect for privacy, honesty, open interactions, and avoiding misrepresentation (Sanjari et al., 2014). To avoid ethical concerns, I used the interview protocol (see Appendix A) and obtained informed consent from all participants. It is crucial in qualitative research that there is total anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent (Sanjari et al., 2014). Informed consent is a significant part of ethics because it ensures participants' rights are respected (Sanjari et al., 2014). The researcher has the duty to minimize the possibility of intrusion of the autonomy of the study (Sanjari et al., 2014). The role of the researcher is to inform the participants of the different aspects of the study and provide clarity to everyone (Sanjari et al., 2014). I explained the purpose of the study to all participants prior to data collection and ensured confidentiality was respected throughout the data collection process. For instance, I did not interrupt or contribute to the interview during the data collection process. Other ethical issues include doing a study within one's own work environment, conflict of interest or power

differentials, and justification for use for incentives. To avoid these issues, I respected Walden's ethical framework for data collection and analysis.

Methodology

In this section, I discuss the participant selection logic, participant recruitment, data collection instrument, and data analysis process. Nonprobability sampling approaches used by qualitative researchers include convenience sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball or chain sampling (Ames et al., 2019). Participants in the convenience sampling technique are those who are available and willing to participate in the study (Naderifar et al., 2017). The convenience sampling technique is simple to apply, but it does not guarantee a representative sample (Ishak et al., 2014). Snowball sampling is a form of convenience sampling used by qualitative researchers to access individuals with the desired traits (Naderifar et al., 2017). Researchers use snowball sampling to allow current research participants to recommend future volunteers based on their relationships with them (Naderifar et al., 2017).

Because leaders can share their information, snowball sampling was considered for the current study. According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), when researchers use snowball sampling, unforeseen problems such as undue pressure in recruiting volunteers can alter the study's conclusions. Purposive sampling is the deliberate selection of a participant based on their characteristics (Etikan & Bala, 2017). In this case, researchers determine what needs to be learned and establish a mechanism for locating people who are willing to provide information based on their knowledge and experience. Researchers

choose participants based on the level of knowledge they are most likely to deliver in response to the questions (Gentles et al., 2015).

Purposeful sampling, according to Barratt et al. (2015) and Ames et al. (2019), is the process through which researchers target participants to acquire the most dependable and competent volunteers to answer the research question. Researchers will be able to complete the study on time with the help of data acquired from participants if they use purposive sampling (Dorney, 2016). Because I sought to interview individuals who may have belonged to an association of similar practices, convenience sampling was the most appropriate sampling strategy for this study. As the researcher, my job was to define the selection criteria that would allow for successful data collection and saturation.

Participant Selection Logic

The sample size for qualitative research is determined by the researcher's intent, the study's objective, and the amount of time and resources available (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). To identify the optimal sample size for a study, Boddy (2016) advised researchers to look at the context of the research. If researchers adopt a qualitative approach that is in-depth or constructivist, they may be able to cite one case to explain the study (Boddy, 2016). Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research necessitates the use of small samples to meet the goal of the study, which is to collect information needed for understanding the context of a phenomenon (Gentles et al., 2015).

According to Stake (2006), a multiple case study with fewer than four cases will offer limited advantages, whereas a study with more than 10 cases will yield superior results. In the current study, I interviewed 10 women entrepreneurs because it allowed me

to attain data saturation. Guest et al. (2006) recommended 12 participants for researchers to satisfy the purpose of the study. According to Yin (2018), three volunteers may be sufficient to generate relevant, reliable, and credible data. Data saturation is one element that researchers examine when deciding on sample size (Dworkin, 2012). When no new information emerges throughout the data collection process, researchers have reached data saturation (Rubach et al., 2015). At the point when the data are saturated, new information will not add to the study's findings (Tran et al., 2017).

At the point when I acquired rich and sufficient data to answer the research question, I knew that data saturation had been reached. By interviewing 10 women entrepreneurs who had successfully run their businesses for more than 5 years, I was able to ensure that enough data were collected for saturation. Researchers are advised to continue conducting interviews with participants until data saturation is achieved (Saunders et al., 2017). After my initial interview of seven participants, I recruited more participants and conducted new interviews to achieve data saturation. Throughout the study, I concentrated on demonstrating that data saturation had been achieved. Data saturation was achieved at the 10th participant.

The participants were 10 successful women entrepreneurs from 5 industries in Ghana who had the training, experience, and information on the causes of business failure and had applied that information to attain business sustainability for more than 5 years. To satisfy the study's purpose, the participants were purposively selected from 5 industries and met the following criteria: (a) operated business for more than 5 years, (b) had 15–50 employees, (c) had a profit after tax of \$50,000 U.S. dollars (equivalent of

€280,000 Ghana cedis), and (d) had businesses that were registered in the name of the woman entrepreneur. The industries included (a) education, (b) agriculture, (c) textile, (d) manufacturing, and (e) health sector.

Snowball sampling was used to achieve a sample size of 10. Snowball sampling is a participant recruitment technique in which a participant recommends another participant who may have similar characteristics. Data saturation is the point in data collection when no new data are forthcoming (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Guest et al. (2006) suggested that six to 12 interviewees are sufficient if purposive sampling is used to guide the study. Alharbi et al. (2019) used eight participants in their study, Clur et al. (2019) recommended eight participants, and Coates (2017) used 5 participants in qualitative research.

To contact the participants, I searched their details from the Registrar General's Department of Ghana and sent emails to request basic details to ensure the prospective participants met the inclusion criteria. Subsequently, I interviewed 10 participants from the 5 industries. After identifying those who had met the inclusion criteria, I sent an email with detailed information on the study to schedule a semistructured interview through their preferred channels of Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or telephone. As soon as I received responses from interested participants, I sent the informed consent form, confirmed the time and date for the interview, and reminded the participants that their confidentiality would be ensured throughout the research process.

Instrumentation

Yin (2018) identified the researcher as the primary data collection instrument in qualitative research. As the data instrument, I verified that each participant's file contained the date and time of the interview, the company documents, transcripts from the interviews, and informed consent because I was the instrument in this study and recognized that I was responsible for all data gathering and organization. The researcher is able to protect privacy by using a pseudonym for each research participant (Petrova et al., 2016). To represent the 10 participants in the current study, I used pseudonyms (P1–P10). To categorize and identify the recorded material, I used Microsoft Word and Excel documents for each interview. I identified themes by analyzing and interpreting data using number codes for effective data organizing.

The three data collection tool in this study are semi-structured, Zoom interview, document review and note taking. I used these three data collection tools to collect data and analyze them to have answers to the research questions. I used an open-ended question in the interview protocol in data collection process from the participants. The participants provided answers based on their training, education, and knowledge of their respective industries. The data collection was conducted primarily using one-on-one through Zoom, document review and through note taking. After the COVID-19 experience, technology has widened the processes of conducting interviews to include a telephone interview, email interview, and other internet interviews like Skype.

Individual interviews involve one-on-one moments between the interviewer and the participant where the interviewer asks either structured, unstructured, or

semistructured questions for the participant to respond. In this study, I carried out a semistructured interview because even though I developed interview protocol prior to the interview process, some follow up questions were asked where clarification was required. The main factors of selecting participants were the purpose of the study, and the research question of the study as the interviews was conducted independent of each participant, and the information was confidentially processed.

Individual Interview. The individual semistructured interviews are open-ended questions where participants respond to open ended questions and providing responses capable of providing answers to the research question. Using face-to-face interviews may provide an opportunity to obtain robust insight into the persons acting as a participant; their body language, their taught pattern, and how they respond to certain events (Hazzan & Nutov, 2014). The interviews consisted of a guide of specific questions or a protocol to delineate the process. The interview protocol was drawn up using the conceptual framework as lens. The interview question (see Appendix A) would be centered on well-chosen questions aligned with the central research question of what business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to overcome challenges to ensure sustainability beyond 5 years. The structure of the interview protocol may allow the researcher to exercise control over the direction of the data collection processes.

The participants were asked of their availability for an interview through a letter of expression of interest (see Appendix B) that may inform participants of the basic nature and purpose of the research. The responses to interview questions that was obtain prompted vital information needed to address the purpose of the study. The interview

questions were asked to the participants was directly related to the research question of the study and responses obtained became part of the database built to manage the enormous amounts of data to be generated. The interviews were audio-recorded after seeking consent from each participant. The participants had the opportunity to review the transcripts to confirm that the produced transcripts represented what was said during the interview process and reflects the interpretation and meanings of participants' interview responses before data analysis began.

In a situation the information shared by the participants become uncomfortable to listen, I made a deliberate effort to listen to the participant, which is in addition to the anonymity, confidentiality, and safety of the participants. I developed a strategy to reduce bias which may create a position in the study to reveal all possible biases (Stahl, Doherty, Shaw, & Janicke, 2014). A second strategy to circumvent the risk of bias was to ensure all 10 participants responded to the interview question even if saturation was achieved earlier in the data collection process. By avoiding the temptation to select only 5 to nine participants should there be saturation, I ensured that I had incorporated all the participants' ideas into the themes and patterns that is reported in my conclusion.

To obtain the thematic expression from the transcripts, I used manual code such as P1-P10, on the transcripts to be able to extrapolate patterns or description of labels; these labels are generated from each line of the interview as transcribed from the interview. The codes were used to draw up clear understanding from the participants, their perspective in a way that may be distinct from each of other. Categorizing codes served as a gathering point for codes or family of codes (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The

process of categorizing the codes created the themes; the themes are used to explain the actions. I used interview protocol (see Appendix A) which involved the processes as: (a) Opening and introductory note, (b) the main interview questions and follow up, and (c) a closing remark with a summary to the participants. The interview protocol was used to ensure the direction of questions and uniformity in the interview process (Fakis et al., 2014). I ensured that the consent of the participant was obtained before proceeding with the interviews process. All the interview data and documents reviews were screened to remove personal information to prevent the identification of the participants.

Note-Taking. The notes are generated during the data collection process as researcher observe and reflect into the data collection activities. By listening to the participant carefully, the interviewer could take important notes. An observation and note taken process in a qualitative study is a data-collecting tool that may be used by the researcher to acquire data from participants during the data collection process when major points are made by the participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Groenewald (2004) evaluated note taken in qualitative research as a system with characteristics such as: (a) Notes that capture occurrences and events as they happen in the course of the interview, (b) notes taken that reflect the preliminary understandings and connotation during the interview, (c) procedural notes and protocols written to serve as a reminder to the researcher on certain steps to be taken at the designated time, and (d) memos taken to close out each interview session, that served as a brief abstract of summaries. While conducting the interviews, I took notes that may be used to consider

any pertinent occurrences or thoughts during the interview process. I also used audio recording to record the responses from the different participants.

Document Review. The third instrument that was used for data collection was the document review. Yin (2018) explained that documentation is a relevant aspect significant information for case studies, which includes letters, e-mails, financial statements, journals, and companies' formal reports available in websites. Document review is specific, and broad; it covered series of documents as kept in the organization for an extended period. I searched across a broad range of databases, such as papers, articles, government websites and public libraries to validate some of the information shared during the data collection process via interview. Dworkin (2012) appraised document review process as an adequate method for collecting data needed to provide answers to the research question and to demonstrate methodological triangulation. The documents that was review may provide practical proof needed to advance the purpose of the study. The document review process was used to support and provide further clarification of the research question and its significance both in practical and theoretical terms that detailed the methods used to answer the research question. The document review served as a point of alignment of the researcher's goal, values, and ideas about the research and the strategy needed to propel and move the research process forward (Parker, 2014). I searched across a broad range of databases, such as papers, articles, and reports that may help to explore women participant's business strategic information entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to overcome challenges and to ensure sustainability beyond 5 years.

Expert Validation

In conducting an expert validation, I sent emails to qualitative experts using the Walden University faculty expert directory (FED) and the list of faculties as shared by University Research Center. The expert validation were feedbacks obtained from experts in qualitative research design to validate the interview question capability of providing answers to the research question. Using the FED, and through the list of faculties as provided by University Research center, I sent invitational email to 10 to 12 qualitative research subject matter experts on qualitative and entrepreneurship. I included in the email the doctoral document that included the title page, the problem statement, the purpose statement, the research question, and the initial interview questions (see Appendix A). The 12 qualitative research experts acknowledge receipts of the email; however, only four experts responded to my inquiry. The comments from the four experts were used to revise the interview questions as shared in Appendix A. The experts were kind enough to highlight some of the elements that were omitted and provided further insights into ways of improving the quality of my proposal. The revised interview question and the inputs from the SMEs had enabled me to make the necessary revision and improve the quality of my work to facilitate the collection of relevant data from the proposed research participants that would be use in answering the research question and addressed the gap in the literature.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

I recruited the participants for this study only after obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Upon receiving approval of the Chapter 1 to Chapter

3, I completed both Form A and Form C with accomplished documents such as consent form, letter of expression of interest, interview protocol and the research certificate from CITI. I proceeded with the data collection after obtaining approval from University's IRB (Walden University) to conduct this study and produce a detailed schedule for the interview and data collection processes. The IRB approved number is #05-02-22-0567214. I also obtain the participant consent to carry out the interviews through audio recordings of the interviews, using an audio recorder. I transcribed the audio-recorded interviews and performed member checking by allowing participants to confirm that the produced transcripts represent what the interview entails during the interview process. Finally, I imported the transcribed text into Microsoft Word to start the data analysis stage.

Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest (see Appendix C) is the notification email that was sent to the potential research 10 participants in the 5 industries in Ghana. The email was necessary to select the individuals that showed interest in participating in the study. The email contained a brief description of the study. I also included a detailed information about the research procedures and what the participants should expect as would be detailed in the consent form that was sent.

Consent Form

Communication using informed consent is one way towards protection of participants and meeting the ethical requirement (Kaiser, 2009). Kaiser suggested a two-step approach to the informed consent process that includes (a) agreeing with participants

on the use of data and confidentiality, and (b) modifying the informed consent process to have a re-envisioned informed consent. Participants' questions and concerns before, during, and after data collection is given attention to ensure that participants understand the process of the interview questions and that the responses obtained remained anonymous (Hazzan & Nutov, 2014). The consent form as document contains relevant information on the rights and privileges of the research participants. Information included in the consent form included the privacy and confidentiality of the participants, the liberty to quit from the research process at any time without any retribution or sanction, the voluntary nature of the study, the duration of the interviews, and secured data storage was aimed at protecting the interests of participants. I ensured that all participants provide their consent form with the response as "Consented" before they were included as participants for the study. All the 10 participants responded with the word "consented."

Data Collection Plan

A collection of data in a qualitative method is often susceptible to subjectivity, which means that a dominant and prevalent theme in qualitative research were the understanding derived from the linguistic meaning within the textual material of the participants (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Serious consideration was given to the inclusion criteria for research participants and data collection. Careful planning before and during the data collection that preceded data analysis is required to obtain valuable information from a study (Marshall et al., 2013). I reviewed relevant literature to serve as lens in that data collection process that is consistent with the case study design. The

timing for the semistructured ZOOM interview was between 30 to 40 minutes and data collection techniques like interviewing, note taking, and document review was adopted.

Triangulation is used to ensure quality in research with the involvement of multiple sources of data (Patton, 2015). In the current study, data triangulation enabled cross-data validation and provided checks for the various data sources to achieve accurate and valid findings. The involvement of multiple sources of data including transcribed interviews, note-taking, and document review enhanced the validity of the study. I maintained objectivity through entries in the reflexive journal (Kvale & Brinkmaenn, 2015). I used NVivo 11 to organize the transcribed data. Using NVivo 11, I organized the participants' responses into codes and thereafter, themes were established on the frequency of words and phrases.

Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis is performed on the data collected from the semistructured individual interviews, note taking through observation and careful listening, and from document reviews. Yin (2018) evaluated that one dominant practice that occur during the analysis phase of a qualitative research is the return to the original propositions; the qualitative data analysis processes involve recording of the interview, transcribing the interview into text, coding of the data, categorizing the coded data, and subsequently generating themes in line with the research questions being addressed by the study (Godden, 2014).

To obtain the thematic expression from the transcripts, I engaged in the coding process; by transcribing the interviews into text to extrapolate patterns or description of

labels or colors; these labels and colors were identified from each word, sentence, or phrase of the participant (see Rubin & Rubin, 2012). A thematic clustering coding process was used, and it involved an inductive approach starting with a chunk of data to code, categorize and watch the themes to emerge. The themes emerged from patterns that are observed and used for analysis (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Ravitch, & Carl, 2016). The codes give a clear understanding from the participants' perspective in a way that is distinct from each of the participants. The categorization of the codes served as a unifying point for codes or clusters of codes. The descriptive categorization as an iterative process allowed the theme to stay close to the research question through its unique attributes (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The categorization will lead to the theme; themes provide answers to the research question that was asked in Chapter One in this study. Themes are meaning or how the participants felt about the subject matter that may help draw conclusions and reflected the intents from the participants (Braunack-Mayer et al., 2015).

I transcribed all the interview of the 10 participants after recording using audio recording device during the semistructured interviews. I conducted member checking by allowing participants to confirm that the produced transcripts represent what transpired during the interview process and reflected my interpretation and meanings of participants' interview responses. The textual transcribed data were uploaded into NVivo 11 software from the word document to obtain an organized data that will be sorted into categories and themes. Miles and Huberman (2014) asserted that the determination of the means of data collection, data organization, and data storage were important

considerations before the commencement of data collection as it saved the time taken in the data management process. The development of a data framework was used for the data collected, as it served as a guide in furtherance of knowledge for future researchers. The use of case study was adequate for this study since case study is used to enhance the analysis of data as it had a set of routine procedure suitable for the identification of themes that provided meanings to the research question (Fakis et al., 2014). The data sources are individual interviews, note taking, and document review.

The data from the interview transcripts were organized into rows and columns; the interview questions on how the women participants obtained knowledge for entrepreneurship were sorted in the columns, and the responses sorted in the rows. NVivo Version 11 was the software that I used to organize the data. The NVivo 11 version is a prominent software used by qualitative investigators to analyze, manage, and shape qualitative data (Richardson, Earnhardt, & Marion, 2015). During data analysis, I read through the interview field notes and transcripts to have an in-depth understanding of the issues under study. Flicker et al., (2013) and Maxwell (2013) agreed that the analysis of the data should start during note-taking; with themes captured when they are mentioned by the participants.

The goal of coding was to break the data into stages to help in comparisons and to lead to the emergence of themes. Miles et al. (2014) noted that codes are labeled to assign meaning to information and specified that coding allowed for interpretation of data meaning. Structured coding or precoding provides a guide for the researcher to focus on

the data collection efforts. Precoding is deductive; however, the researcher determines how the follow-up is conducted for themes emerging from the data.

I developed a precoding structure using the experience gained as a researcher to relate the conceptual framework, the document review, and semistructured interview to derive themes. Precoding was used to ensure congruence with the conceptual framework and research question. The pre-coded structure will be used to analyze the data iteratively to ensure the efficacy of the data collection and organization processes. I interview 10 participants to monitor for data saturation. The justification for the 10 participants was based on running an analysis for 10 participants and the themes to be generated. When data saturation was not achieved with the first seven participants, I continued the data collection process until I achieved data saturation at the 10th participant. I categorized the codes and themes into the dimension that aligned with the framework used in the study. I reviewed the dimensions to ensure pattern correctness and precision. I used the 5 steps of Yin (2018) for the data analysis process, which included (a) data collection, (b) coding of the data into categories, (c) creating themes, (d) synthesizing, and (e) reporting.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Issues of trustworthiness involves pieces of evidence to demonstrate of rigor in qualitative research to establish the depth and meaning; trustworthiness is critical in ensuring that research findings have integrity in the process to make an impact in the real world. Trustworthiness of the qualitative research process is the point of giving integrity to the effort put in the study by ensuring conformity, transferability, dependability, and credibility is achieved (Houghton et al., 2013). The four aspects of trustworthiness in

qualitative research includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014; Cope, 2014). The extent of the reliability of the research process is the level of compliance with the rigors, demand, and ability to demonstrate evidence of the results reported in these four areas. I ensured trustworthiness through triangulation, which used the three related data collection methods to reduce bias associated with the use of a single source (Simundic, 2013). The use of triangulation guarantees credibility, dependability, and conformability of a study and served as audit trail and reflexivity, while transferability is always the responsibility of the reader to decide (Carter et al., 2014). I ensured that I followed the interview protocol to keep track of the questions for uniformity in the data collection processes.

Credibility

In carrying out a qualitative study, the researcher needs to engage the study participants long enough to gain and earn trust through the establishment of rapport. The interview duration for each participant was 30 to 40 minutes. With the establishment of the rapport comes the ability of the researcher to gain an extensive and thorough understanding and information from the participant. Harper and Cole (2012) described credibility as the process a researcher will engage in to ensure that findings are accurate. The prolong engagement of the study participants may bring out relevant characteristics peculiar to the issues being explored, thereby bringing out details that will help provide new perspective and insight into the topic under study. I will take measures to ensure that I disseminate the findings to a larger population as the case study was focused on a small number of women entrepreneurs in Ghana. Sufficient time (30 – 40 minutes) was spent

during the interview process to gain a robust understanding of the case under study. I transcribed the 10 individually recorded interviews verbatim and ensured that the participants received the transcribed interview for comment and correction through emails for member checking.

Transferability

Transferability is required for thoroughness in the processes leading to the identification of the research participants and the overall data collection and analysis processes (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). Providing a detailed protocol, explicit in the description of the steps to take might guarantee external validity; it could serve as the ability of the outcome and findings of the research to be transferable. Collins and Cooper (2014) described transferability as the ability to reapply research finding in another study. I ensured the provision of a detailed account of the natural settings where data are collected and provide an in-depth explanation of the data to be collected and analyzed. Future researchers and readers may then be presented with the opportunity of the findings and to evaluate the extent to which these findings will be transferable to similar settings and larger population (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). Transferability is always determined by readers.

Dependability

Dependability refers to how well-established the data used in the study are going to be consistent ((Su, 2014; Tobin & Begley, 2004). The issue of dependability is used to focus more on the technical aspect of the research. Member checking may ensure dependability of the qualitative research since member checking is undertaken and the

synergy that is derived from membership verification gives validity (Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris, & Pearson, 2014). The collection of the note, memos, and comments that revealed reflexivity in the research process, the design layout of the research could give a vivid picture of the research strategy, and the operationalization of this strategy give the research process its dependability attributes. I addressed the issue of dependability of the findings, in ensuring that if the study were to repeat, given the same context, method and same participant that similar result is obtained bearing in mind that each situation of study is unique in its entirety. In my effort to enhance dependability; I explored all the processes are adhered to in arriving at the findings and described the processes to be followed in the study. These processes include the data collection and data analysis as described in this study.

Confirmability

Confirmability could be described as the objectivity and correctness of data (Abend, 2013; Houghton et al., 2013). Confirmability is the need for the justification of the rationale behind the preference of the data collection methods chosen and how it aligned with the research question and problem statement were made known. I provided a detailed explanation of the data analysis process to demonstrate and exhibit transparency of the process. I ensured conformability by relating the recommendations of the result to indicate what the experiences and thoughts of the individual interview respondents are, as well as making sure all recommendation is grounded in the emergent themes, rather than the researcher's biases (Anney, 2014). I documented the various reflections obtained in

both the personal experiences, cultural biases, and provided explanations on what informed my decision and possibly influence the research process.

Ethical Procedures

To ensure ethical standards, I communicated the purpose of the study, the possible positive social change implications, the benefits to be derived and the expectations of the research with the research participants before interviews is conducted. The reason for the detailed explanation was to protect the participants from harm and ensure the data collection process is in line with the established professional and ethical behavior (Cope, 2014; Komic, Marusic, & Ana, 2015). I informed the participants about the ethical standards, and the informed consent process before conducting the interviews (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, & Cheraghi, 2014). As a researcher, I uphold my ethical duty to protect the study participants from harm (Flicker et al., 2013). As noted by Yin (2014), special considerations must and will be given to all human ‘elements’ of the research, from the participants to personal records. The protection of the participants’ right is significant as I maintained ethical standards associated with the use of human samples, the data collection and analysis were developed in a manner understandable to the research participants. The interview was conducted in the language that the participants understand.

The inclusion criteria for the participants suggest a thorough selection process with indications that minimized the adverse effect of using only one data collection source using triangulation. I informed the participants of the right to accept or reject the offer to participate in the study. The participant has the right to participate or withdraw at

any time from the interview process without any form of penalty stated in the expression of interest form and the informed consent form, respectively. The participants were assured of the safeguard of data collected by the encryption of the files and locking up paperwork related to the research in a safe location with proper locking mechanics. This file will be kept for 5 years before they are destroyed. This was done with the intention of reducing the risk of data theft as the site was not disclosed.

The first step in minimizing harm to participants in the research process was to ensure consent from the participants. I obtained the informed consent from the participants before the data collection process. Informed consent entails having consent to use the data so that the data are not interpreted as stolen data, and this goes for participants' data from recordings and notes taking (Desai & Von, 2008; Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2013). The consent received from participants was for individuals who participated in voice recording and using transcription to code the research. Information to be made known to the participants include the time required for the interview (30-40 minutes), member checking and the questions that was used in Chapter one. I respected these necessary steps during data collection and analysis to ensure that I had a verbal recording or email of the participants stating that they are consenting to the data collection and analysis process and procedures and are suitable with the interview being recorded and transcribed. This ethical practice helps the researcher minimize harm to others and ensures that the participants are given the opportunity to pull out of the process at any time during the interview session.

Confidentiality

The participants that were engaged in the interview process were informed to trust that their contributions given in the interview processes are indeed to be confidential and would not end up in the wrong hands, hence I informed the participants that the information provided would be safe and secured. Protecting the privacy of participants includes both confidentiality and anonymity (Cope, 2014; Ritchie et al., 2013). Confidentiality referred to a participant's privacy, and what information about the participant are distributed (Anney, 2014; Ratvich & Carl, 2016). I ensured confidentiality by including pseudonyms and changing identifying information (Bojanc & Jerman-Blazic, 2013). I used PP1 to PP10, which means participants one to ten. I show respect to each participant that were interviewed and prevented issues that could compromise the confidentiality of the research participants; I asked the participants to confidentially provide any additional comments or revisions to the transcript through e-mail. I protected the data and records of the research participants by using a hard drive on a secure computer that has password protected preventing access to unauthorized users. The data will be in safe study for a period of 5 years before which they could be discarded.

Protecting Participants from Harm

To ensure I protect participants from harm, I am responsible for the information of the participants on the study. I am also responsible to gain the understanding of the participants and the risks associated with the research process. The benefit derivable from the study and the right to pull out from the study if they do not feel convinced or secured in participating in the study were explained to each participant (Bojanc & Jerman-Blazic,

2013). During and beyond the period of study, the communication channels remained open and cordial between the participants and the researcher. During the data collection period, I will disclose all activities that might become potentially harmful and risky to the participants. Question and follow-up questions asked were coordinated using the conceptual framework and to ensure the research question is used to drive further questions.

Protecting Researcher from Risk

To ensure the protection of the researcher from risk, and in the likelihood that an anticipated risk occurs during the research processes, I briefed the participants of the mitigating strategies to adopt during the data collection process. I revealed the cultural biases that may exist among the research participants (Shenton, 2004). If the study takes place in a cross-cultural research environment where social gaps exist, I paid attention to the salient and hidden biases that could have affect the study. The participants were commensurately motivated to partake in the interview section through the building of trust that may encourage openness in the interview sections (Shenton, 2004).

Summary

Chapter 3 contains an overview of the research design and describes the qualitative method that served to underpin the study. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to explore business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to overcome challenges and to ensure sustainability beyond 5 years. The rationalization of the research design employed in the study serves as a guide for the interview questions to extract information to answer the research

question. I interviewed 10 women entrepreneurs in Ghana, who are successful women entrepreneurs from 5 industries who have had the training, experience, and information on the causes of business failure and have applied that information to gain business sustainability which has made them operate a business for more than 5 years. I purposely interviewed the 10 research participants using semistructured individual interviews with open-ended questions, note taking, and document review. The various sections of Chapter 3 include details of the role of the researcher, the sampling population, the data collection and analysis strategies and techniques to ensure reliability. The other sections that attracted important contents and attention are issues of trustworthiness that could be achieved through research credibility, transferability, dependability, and Confirmability. Chapter 4 contains the field notes, research settings, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, study results and summary.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to explore business strategic information that women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. The unit of analysis was 10 successful women entrepreneurs from 5 industries in Ghana who had the training, experience, and information on the causes of business failure and had applied that information to ensure business sustainability beyond 5 years. The research question was the following: What business strategic information do women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years? Chapter 4 contains a description of the field note, research setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and study results. The chapter concludes with a summary.

Field Note

In conducting an expert validation, I sent emails to qualitative experts using the Walden University faculty expert directory (FED) and the list of faculty shared by the University Research Center. Experts in qualitative research validated the interview questions' ability to elicit data to answer the research question. Using the FED and the list of faculty provided by University Research Center, I sent invitational emails to 12 subject matter experts on qualitative methodology and entrepreneurship. I included the doctoral document that included the title page, problem statement, purpose statement, research question, and initial interview questions (see Appendix A). The 12 experts acknowledged receipts of the email; however, only four experts responded to my inquiry. The comments from the four experts were used to revise the interview questions (see

Appendix A). The experts were kind enough to highlight some of the elements that were omitted and provided further insights into ways of improving the quality of my proposal. The input from the subject matter experts enabled me to make the necessary revisions and improve the quality of my proposal to facilitate the collection of relevant data from the proposed research participants that would be used in answering the research question and addressing the gap in the literature.

Research Setting

Data were collected from 10 semistructured interviews, document review, and note-taking. All participants met the inclusion criteria: (a) operated a business for more than 5 years, (b) had 15–50 employees, (c) had a profit after tax of \$50,000 U.S. dollars (equivalent of ₵280,000 Ghana cedis), and (d) had businesses registered in the name of the woman entrepreneur. The participants were selected from the 5 industries mentioned in Chapter 1. The data collection commenced after obtaining the IRB approval.

Demographics

All participants were women business owners from Ghana. There was a deliberate attempt to ensure that all participants were women. All 10 participants had experience above 8 years and had postgraduate education. The selection of postgraduate education was not deliberate, but it appeared to be a criterion in Ghana to be enlightened as a businesswoman. The interviews took place using Zoom. The details of the demographics are contained in Table 1.

Table 1*Demographics of Participants*

Participant code	Industry	Experience	Level of education
P1	Agriculture	10 years	Postgraduate
P2	Textile	15 years	Postgraduate
P3	Health	8 years	Postgraduate
P4	Agriculture	15 years	Postgraduate
P5	Education	10 years	Postgraduate
P6	Manufacturing	20 years	Postgraduate
P7	Health	22 years	Postgraduate
P8	Textile	11 years	Postgraduate
P9	Education	15 years	Postgraduate
P10	Manufacturing	14 years	Postgraduate

Data Collection

After obtaining the IRB approval, I commenced the data collection process. Data collection in a qualitative study is often subjective despite the prevalent theme in qualitative research in which the findings are derived from the linguistic meaning within the textual material of the participants (McCusker & Gunaydin, 2015). Serious consideration was given to the inclusion criteria for research participants and data collection. Careful planning before and during the data collection that preceded data analysis is required to obtain valuable information in a study (Marshall et al., 2013). I reviewed relevant literature to serve as models in the data collection process consistent with the case study design. The duration for each semistructured Zoom interview was between 30 and 40 minutes, and data collection techniques such as interviewing, note-taking, and document review were adopted.

Triangulation is used to ensure quality in research with the involvement of multiple sources of data (Patton, 2015). In the current study, data triangulation enabled cross-data validation and provided checks for the data sources to achieve accurate and

valid findings. The involvement of multiple sources of data including transcribed interviews, note-taking, and document review enhanced the validity of the study. I maintained objectivity through entries in the reflexive journal. I used NVivo 11 to organize the transcribed data. Using NVivo 11, I organized the participants' responses into codes, and thereafter themes were established related to the frequency of words and phrases. In Table 2, I present a summary of the data collection elements from this multiple case study.

Table 2

Data Collection Elements

RQ	Interview question	Data collection tool	Analysis
What business strategic information do women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years?	What are the strategies you have used in the last 5 years to achieve business survival?	Semistructured interview, document review, and notes	Transcription, coding, and analysis of participants' responses using Yin's 5 steps.
	What are some of the external challenges that confronted your business survival and how did you manage them?		
	What are some internal challenges that confronted your business in the last 5 years that could result to business failure that		

you survived, and
how did you
manage them?

What other
information or
details could you
share that will assist
a woman
entrepreneur to
remain in business?
in Ghana based on
your experience?

Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed on the data collected from the semistructured individual interviews, note-taking through observation and careful listening, and document review. Yin (2018) noted that one dominant practice that occurs during the analysis phase of a qualitative study is the return to the original propositions; the qualitative data analysis processes involve recording of the interview, transcribing the interview into text, coding the data, categorizing the coded data, and generating themes in line with the research questions being addressed by the study (Godden et al., 2014).

To obtain the thematic expression from the transcripts, I engaged in the coding process by transcribing the interviews into text to extrapolate patterns or description of labels or colors; these labels and colors were identified from each word, sentence, or phrase of the participant (Godden et al., 2014). A thematic clustering coding process was used, and it involved an inductive approach starting with a chunk of data to code and categorize and watch the themes emerge. The themes emerged from patterns that were observed and used for analysis (Miles et al., 2014; Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The codes

provided a clear understanding from the participant's perspective in a way that was distinct from the other participants. The categorization of the codes served as a unifying point for codes or clusters of codes. The descriptive categorization was an iterative process that allowed the theme to stay close to the research question through its unique attributes (see Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The categorization led to the themes, which were used to answer the research question. Themes refer to how the participants felt about the subject matter and reflect the intent of the participants (Braunack-Mayer et al., 2015).

I transcribed the interviews of the 10 participants after recording them using an audio-recording device. I conducted member checking by allowing participants to confirm that the transcripts represented what transpired during the interview and reflected my accurate interpretation of participants' interview responses. The transcribed data were uploaded into NVivo 11 from the Word documents to obtain organized data that were sorted into categories and themes. Miles and Huberman (2014) asserted that the determination of the means of data collection, data organization, and data storage is important before the commencement of data collection because it saves time taken in the data management process. The development of a data framework was used for the data collected because it served as a guide in furtherance of knowledge for future researchers. The use of a multiple case study design was appropriate for this study because the case study had a routine procedure suitable for the identification of themes that provided answers to the research question (see Fakis et al., 2014). The data sources were individual interviews, note-taking, and document review.

The data from the interview transcripts were organized into rows and columns; the interview questions on how the women participants obtained knowledge for entrepreneurship were sorted in the columns, and the responses were sorted in the rows. NVivo 11 was the software that I used to organize the data. NVivo 11 is popular software used by qualitative investigators to analyze, manage, and shape qualitative data (Richardson et al., 2015). During data analysis, I read through the interview field notes and transcripts to have an in-depth understanding of the issues under study. Maxwell (2013) agreed that the analysis of the data should start during note-taking with themes captured when they are mentioned by the participants.

The goal of coding was to break the data into stages to help in comparisons and to lead to the emergence of themes. Miles et al. (2014) noted that codes are labeled to assign meaning to information and specified that coding allowed for interpretation of data meaning. Structured coding or precoding provides a guide for the researcher to focus on the data collection efforts. Precoding is deductive; however, the researcher determines how the follow-up is conducted for themes emerging from the data.

I developed a precoding structure using the experience gained as a researcher to relate the conceptual framework, the document review, and semistructured interview to derive themes. Precoding was used to ensure congruence with the conceptual framework and research question. The precoded structure was used to analyze the data iteratively to ensure the efficacy of the data collection and organization processes. I interview 10 participants to monitor for data saturation. The justification for the 10 participants was based on running an analysis for 10 participants and the themes generated. When data

saturation was not achieved with the first seven participants, I continued the data collection process until I achieved data saturation at the 10th participant. I categorized the codes and themes into the dimension that aligned with the framework used in the study. I reviewed the dimensions to ensure pattern correctness and precision. I used the 5 steps of Yin (2018) for the data analysis process, which included (a) data collection, (b) coding of the data into categories, (c) creating themes, (d) synthesizing, and (e) reporting (see Table 3).

Table 3

Data Analysis Codes and Emerging Themes From the Interview Process

Theme	Number of occurrences	Percentage of occurrences
Change management and adaptation	10	100%
Agility and flexibility in processes	9	90%
Comprehensive stakeholders' analysis	8	80%
Defining effective policies and objective	10	100%
Designing and executing digital implementation plans	10	100%
Developing and supporting cooperate culture	9	90%
Developing a measurable performance standard	8	80%
Enhancing internal control and processes	9	90%

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

In carrying out a qualitative study, the researcher needs to engage the study participants long enough to gain and earn their trust through the establishment of rapport. The interview duration for each participant was 30 to 40 minutes. With the establishment of the rapport comes the ability of the researcher to gain an extensive and thorough understanding of information from the participant. Harper and Cole (2012) described credibility as the process a researcher will engage in to ensure that findings are accurate. The prolong engagement of the study participants may bring out relevant characteristics peculiar to the issues being explored, thereby bringing out details that will help provide new perspective and insight into the topic under study. I will take measures to ensure that I disseminate the findings to a larger population because the case study was focused on a small number of women entrepreneurs in Ghana. Sufficient time (30–40 minutes) was spent during the interview process to gain a robust understanding of the case under study. I transcribed the 10 individually recorded interviews verbatim and ensured that the participants received the transcribed interview for comment and correction through emails for member checking.

Transferability

Transferability is required for thoroughness in the processes leading to the identification of the research participants and the overall data collection and analysis processes (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). Providing a detailed protocol, explicit in the description of the steps to take might guarantee external validity; it could serve as the

ability of the outcome and findings of the research to be transferable. Collins and Cooper (2014) described transferability as the ability to reapply research finding in another study. I ensured the provision of a detailed account of the natural settings where data are collected and provide an in-depth explanation of the data to be collected and analyzed. Future researchers and readers may then be presented with the opportunity of the findings and to evaluate the extent to which these findings will be transferable to similar settings and larger population (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). Transferability is always determined by readers.

Dependability

Dependability refers to how well-established the data used in the study are going to be consistent ((Su, 2014; Tobin & Begley, 2004). The issue of dependability is used to focus more on the technical aspect of the research. Member checking may ensure dependability of the qualitative research since member checking is undertaken and the synergy that is derived from membership verification gives validity (Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris, & Pearson, 2014). The collection of the note, memos, and comments that revealed reflexivity in the research process, the design layout of the research could give a vivid picture of the research strategy, and the operationalization of this strategy give the research process its dependability attributes. I addressed the issue of dependability of the findings, in ensuring that if the study were to repeat, given the same context, method and same participant that similar result is obtained bearing in mind that each situation of study is unique in its entirety. In my effort to enhance dependability; I explored all the processes are adhered to in arriving at the findings and described the

processes to be followed in the study. These processes include the data collection and data analysis as described in this study.

Confirmability

Confirmability could be described as the objectivity and correctness of data (Abend, 2013; Houghton et al., 2013). Confirmability is the need for the justification of the rationale behind the preference of the data collection methods chosen and how it aligned with the research question and problem statement were made known. I provided a detailed explanation of the data analysis process to demonstrate and exhibit transparency of the process. I ensured conformability by relating the recommendations of the result to indicate what the experiences and thoughts of the individual interview respondents are, as well as making sure all recommendation is grounded in the emergent themes, rather than the researcher's biases (Anney, 2014). I documented the various reflections obtained in both the personal experiences, cultural biases, and provided explanations on what informed my decision and possibly influence the research process.

Theme 1: Change Management and Adaptation

The first theme that emerged from the analyzed data from the semistructured interview, document review, and notes taken was change management and adaptation. Ten participants, representing 100% responded that change management and adaptation was what business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to lean to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. P1 stated “the application of change management model and training staff to adapt to the new change was the strategic information adopted.” P2 mentioned that change been a constant thing that allowed them

to keep changing to suit the business dynamism. P3 and P4 both mentioned change management as tool to business creativity and sustainability. P5 stated:

Although our business was created to serve in the educational space in Ghana, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we have to change to the sales of palliatives, such as hand sanitizer, sanitizer machines, and we also changed from full time work to working from home. We responded to change and remain in business to see the end of the pandemic.

P6 mentioned, “we keep changing our customer service methodologies and adapting to new technologies so as to remain relevant in the marketplace.” P7 and P8 both mentioned how changing from only physical meetings to virtual meetings help to sustain their business during the pandemic. P9 equally aligned on change management and adaptation as a vital strategic information required for sustainability. P10 stated “initially we hired 4 staff in the textile industry, but with the current reality of high inflation, we have to reduce our human recourse to protect the business.”

Theme 2: Agility and Flexibility in Operations

The second theme that emerged from the analyzed data from the semistructured interview, document review, and notes taken was agility and flexibility in operations. Nine participants, representing 90% responded that agility and flexibility in operations was the business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to lean to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. P1 stated “We built our business on agile operations. The decisions are based on the circumstances. Our response time is usually prompt and responsive so as to beat competitor’s bureaucratic operations.” P2 mentioned:

“Our drivers and other operations defined their core values as responsiveness, agility and flexibility, and excellent turnaround time.” P3 and P4 both mentioned that remaining agile and flexible has been one strategy that enable them to be relevant to current and existing customers. P5 stated that “to remain sustainable, we ensure we create a relationship with the sole reason to have a long-term relationship with the client and also to transfer our agile approached to our clients.” P6 stated “the first word we communicate at training school is agile and flexible approach when discussing with a new client at new locations or through online service creation.” P7 stated “even at the MD/CEO level, we have an open-door policy, an agile approach to business.” P8 and P9 both agreed that flexibility does not mean weakness in the first place. Flexibility is a term that describe how organization can respond to uncertainties.

Theme 3: Comprehensive Analysis of Stakeholders

The third theme that emerged from the analyzed data from the semistructured interview, document review, and notes taken was comprehensive analysis of stakeholder. Eight participants, representing 80% responded that comprehensive analysis of stakeholders was what business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to lean to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. P1 stated “we have stakeholders such as Ghana Standard Authority (GSA) whose function is to maintain quality in the products and services offered by organization. Not meeting their set standards could have negative impact on business continuity.” P2 mentioned that in the food industry, ability to satisfy the criteria set by the food and drug authority (FDA) was critical to success. P3, P4, and P5 all revealed how Ghana investment promotion centre

has helped their business to receive grants which has assisted in business sustainability.

P6 stated:

When we started, soon we realized that several government bodies, community, and staff are the stakeholders to manage effectively. For the government bodies, we have managed to have co-associates who agree on negotiated annual bills. For the community, we ensure that we pay the dues as they advise such dues. And for staff, we ensure that training, welfare, and work-life balance is maintained.

P7 mentioned that having an insider in the government agencies could help you manage the frequent bills that are served by government especially to new business. P8 stated “we identified all the stakeholders in our business, at least those that existed before us. We ensure that the administration department have a desk that manages all the affairs and issues from stakeholders.”

Theme 4: Creation of Business Policies and Objectives

The fourth theme that emerged from the analyzed data from the semistructured interview, document review, and notes taken was creation of business policies and objectives. Ten participants, representing 100% responded that creation of business policies and objectives was the business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to lean to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. P1 stated

if there is one document that has helped in our sustainability, succession planning and business continuity, that document is the policies and objectives of the company; these documents are updated on quarterly and annual basis. The goal of

the objective is to give a clear direction of where the business wants to be based on the current human resources, material resources, and financial resources.

P2 stated “we developed policies and objectives every year that serve as lens that underpin operational activities.” P3, P4, and P5 mentioned that having a clear business objective around your mission and vision statement and pegging those objectives with key performance indicators has helped in shaping the business. P6 and P7 added their voice to reaffirm the importance of policies and objectives in ensuring unity of command and unity of control across the organization. P8 stated “the business objectives we have set for the past 5 years gives a clear direction of what we want to achieve.” P9 stated “we developed policies around all operational activities and that document help in training, transfer, promotion, new staff, and meetings.” P10 responded that “each year we review the last years’ objectives and analyze what has changed and what area needs improvement and customer focus. This strategy has made us tick over the years.”

Theme 5: Designing and Executing a Digital Implementation Plan

The fifth theme that emerged from the analyzed data from the semistructured interview, document review, and notes taken was designing and executing a digital implementation plan. Ten participants, representing 100% responded that designing and executing digital implementation plan was the business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to lean to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. P1 stated “implementation of the digital plan was why the business survived COVID-19 pandemic. No one could travel or attend physical meetings, save digital platforms.” P2, P3, and P4 all affirmed how the implementation of digital plan helped in customer

recruitment across the 16 regions in Ghana including the capital city, Accra. P5 stated “we have added e-commerce as a department in the organization since we deployed digital front. The digital plan executed has made our company relevant to the generation *P* and *Q*, the youth in schools, and in our society.” P6 mentioned how the deployment of digital plan such as partnering with technology companies had become a viable merger which has allow 24 customers reach and services. P7 stated “the digital implementation plan created more products and services in our company which has allowed sustainability for the business.” P8, P9, and P10 agreed to the digital implementation plan as viable business strategy to business sustainability especially during the COVID-19 period.

Theme 6: Developing and Supporting Corporate Culture

The six theme that emerged from the analyzed data from the semistructured interview, document review, and notes taken was developing and supporting corporate culture. Nine participants, representing 90% responded that developing and supporting corporate culture was the business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to lean to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. P1 stated “the business culture we operated, though invisible was what grounded the performance and non-performance; developing a positive organizational culture helps the business to be sustained.” P2 and P3 aligned that developing and supporting a healthy corporate culture was the invisible hands that carried the organization for success or failure. P4 stated “the corporate culture is more than the Ghanaian cultures. Ability to reconcile the several cultures to suit the corporate culture and ethics is one strategy we adopt in all businesses.” P5 and P6 mentioned that every organization has a culture which may be

written in the vision and mission statement. It may also be found in the core values of the organization. At times, those that created the culture may have left the organization, but the culture will still remain. Ability to review organizational culture in customer's favor is one way we have used in sustaining the business. P7 stated "our culture is deeply rooted to favor the customers first and the staff second. We maintain this culture in the last 10 years and it has help in increasing customer's retention and staff retention as well." P8 mentioned that "the culture of organization determines the philosophy, success, or failure of an organization." P8 and P9 mentioned that protecting a positive corporate culture and discouraging a negative corporate culture is to the interest of the organization.

Theme 7: Developing and Measuring Performance Standards

The seventh theme that emerged from the analyzed data from the semistructured interview, document review, and notes taken was developing and measuring performance standard. Eight participants, representing 80% responded that developing and measuring performance standard was the business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to lean to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. P1 stated

we ensure all task and duties are measurable and that they are linked with performance development review (PDR) which takes place every year. The measurement is to appraise who has done well, who need improvement, and who have done worse. By assigning scale to every objective, we have been able to appraise objectively annually.

P2 mentioned: "Performance review is done weekly so as to have the best staff that believe in the organization. We carry out a 360-degree appraisal system where a

subordinate appraises the superior in return.” P3 stated “developing criteria for measuring performance has helped in business sustainability, customer services sustainability, and quality feedback sustainability.” P4 and P5 mentioned: “The appraisal system is carried out objectively to tell at each time the strong and weak link of the organization. Trainings are recommended for those who require training, and promotions are recommended for those who have performed optimally.” P6 stated “developing appraisal system make staff to operate at optimal level of productivity.” P7 indicated: “We have an automated appraisal system that evaluate staff performance on monthly basis. We have used this system to replace the quarterly appraisal system and the organization had recorded progress based on the monthly appraisal system.” P8 mentioned: “The appraisal system in our organization is used to put checks on staff on annual basis.”

Theme 8: Enhance Internal Control and Processes

The eight theme that emerged from the analyzed data from the semistructured interview, document review, and notes taken was enhance internal control and processes. Nine participants, representing 90% responded that enhancing internal control and processes was the business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to lean to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. P1 stated “the internal control is not a department per se, rather a process of responsibility and accountability where no individual employee can commence a process and end it. Rather, there is a dual check and balances in the system.” P2 stated “we developed an internal control system where all transactions are cross checked by another dedicated staff and errors, irregularities and fraud are reported to management weekly. This system has helped in process

improvement.” P3 and P4 mentioned that the internal control department report directly to the MD/CEO to ensure their findings are not compromised in the process. P5 said “the internal control system is to ensure there is an officer who serve as a watch dog for every transaction. This put a check on the system.” P6 stated “for us, the internal control also serves as the quality assurance personnel. We do not just appraise our staff, rather we also evaluate how our customers are satisfied with our products and services.” P7 indicated “the internal control unit has help detect irregularities that would have affected the organization a great deal. We ensure that personnel in the internal control are qualified individual in accountancy or quality assurance.” P8 and P9 both affirmed that internal control system and process improvement has played a part in the sustainable status of their organization.

Summary

Eight themes emerged as responses to the research question. The themes are change management and adaptation, agility and flexibility in operations, comprehensive analysis of stakeholders, creation of business policies and objectives, designing and executing digital implementation plan, developing and supporting corporate culture, developing and measuring performance standard, and enhancing internal control and processes. Chapter 5 contains the discussion, conclusion, and recommendations.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to explore business strategic information that women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. The key findings were change management and adaptation, agility and flexibility in operations, comprehensive analysis of stakeholders, creation of business policies and objectives, designing and executing a digital implementation plan, developing and supporting corporate culture, developing and measuring performance standards, and enhancing internal control and processes.

Interpretation of Findings

Change Management and Adaptation

The first theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data from the semistructured interviews, document review, and notes taken. I found that change management and adaptation is the business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. The first theme that emerged aligned with previous literature on change management and adaptation (see Akpınar & Ozer-Caylan, 2021). Change permeates all aspects of organizational life, and the ability to manage change effectively can give organizations a new way to identify organizational competency in the face of environmental complexity (Akpınar & Ozer-Caylan, 2021). The diversity of the environment could be used to describe environmental complexity. Organizations become complex as a result of various parts with interdependent interactions (Akpınar & Ozer-Caylan, 2021). The complexity that leads to uncertainty can be separated into two categories: external complexity that results from the

business environment, such as adapting to a new regulation for conducting business in a new location (Akpinar & Ozer-Caylan, 2021). Terrorist attacks, climate change, political unpredictability, strikes, diseases, natural disasters such as hurricanes or tsunamis, changing demographics, and social needs as a result of the aging populations of many established industrial nations have the potential to influence business practices (Akpinar & Ozer-Caylan, 2021). Internal difficulties that develop from within the environment, such as implementing new documentary systems or adapting new technology for conducting business with new clients, have also altered how business is conducted (Akpinar & Ozer-Caylan, 2021). Environmental complexity influences managers' decision making regarding strategies, as well as the survival and profitability of maritime firms (Akpinar & Ozer-Caylan, 2021; Ouyang et al., 2020).

Agility and Flexibility in Operations

The second theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data from the semistructured interviews, document review, and notes taken. I found that agility and flexibility in operations is the business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. The second theme that emerged aligned with previous literature on agility and flexibility (Fernandez-Giordano et al., 2021). Flexibility is a major component of change response, which is based on how a firm responds to external market changes (Fernandez-Giordano et al., 2021). Flexibility enables a company to modify operational responses and alter business processes in response to environmental demands (Fernandez-Giordano et al., 2021). The supply network's flexibility is a crucial component of flexibility management

(Fernandez-Giordano et al., 2021). Businesses today face a wide range of difficulties such as rapid change, shorter product life cycles, a variety of client requirements, and higher demand uncertainty (Gligor et al., 2019). Although each of these problems poses a challenge, dealing with them all at once makes it more challenging for businesses to meet client needs in a timely manner (Gligor et al., 2019). The idea of agility has been proposed as a way to manage change, improve customer responsiveness, and control market volatility (Gligor et al., 2019).

Comprehensive Analysis of Stakeholders

The third theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data from the semistructured interviews, document review, and notes taken. I found that comprehensive analysis of stakeholders is the business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. The third theme that emerged aligned with previous literature on stakeholders' management (Wojewnik-Filipkowska et al., 2019). Wojewnik-Filipkowska et al. (2019) divided stakeholders into four categories (supportive, marginal, non-supportive, and mixed blessing) based on their propensity to work with or endanger an organization. Wojewnik-Filipkowska et al. categorized stakeholders based on their authority, importance, and power. These characteristics define the typology of stakeholders, and by gaining or losing one or more of them, they might shift into different classes (Chen et al., 2022). Stakeholder identification is often a collaborative process that involves a range of techniques and the inclusion of more stakeholders as the study goes on (Chen et al., 2022). The method of categorizing stakeholders might be top-down or bottom-up (Chen et al., 2022). Matrix-

based top-down classification according to chosen attributes is possible. The stakeholder-led strategy, in which stakeholders organize themselves into self-made groups, can serve as the foundation for the bottom-up approach. The stakeholders are prioritized as a result of classification based on how much they can influence and be affected by a certain activity (Chen et al., 2022).

Creation of Business Policies and Objectives

The fourth theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data from the semistructured interviews, document review, and notes taken. I found that creation of business policies and objectives is the business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. The fourth theme that emerged aligned with previous literature on business policies and objectives contained in the business strategic document (see Hoglund et al., 2020). A public sector organization's strategy must pass three major criteria: It must be morally right and politically viable, it must be intended to provide real value, and it must be administratively and operationally practical (Hoglund et al., 2020) These three strategic foci have to be documented in the vision, mission, and objectives and backed by a business policy (Hoglund et al., 2020). The degree of alignment between the three tests must be maximized because each of the three is strategically significant (Hoglund et al., 2020). To demonstrate this congruence, the strategic triangle is developed, with the nodes representing the authorizing environment, public value production, and operational capabilities (Hoglund et al., 2020). Most strategies, policies, and public services are created through collaborative settings and coproduction procedures (Hoglund et al.,

2020). Involving numerous sectors that have an impact on entrepreneurship, including regulatory affairs, commerce, the labor market, regional development, and social policies to assist entrepreneurship, have evolved at all levels of government (Hoglund et al., 2020). As a result, policymakers interested in boosting postsecondary students' participation in entrepreneurial activity may take into account the various specializations and goals that entrepreneurship programs can establish, building on students' justifications and goals expressed in the three strategic areas (Hoglund et al., 2020).

Designing and Executing a Digital Implementation Plan

The fifth theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data from the semistructured interviews, document review, and notes taken. I found that designing and executing a digital implementation plan is the business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. The fifth theme that emerged aligned with previous literature on digital technology as a means of business expansion strategy (Deepu & Ravi, 2020). Digital technologies promote knowledge management methods and real-time information transmission (Deepu & Ravi, 2020). According to Deepu and Ravi (2020), the urge to adopt new technologies will have a transformative impact on supply chain and logistic business. Utilizing cutting-edge technology gives businesses a competitive advantage through increased sales and value creation (Deepu & Ravi, 2020). Various functional areas including quality, maintenance, inventory management, and production planning are impacted by an organization's embrace of digitalization (Deepu & Ravi, 2020). The availability of cutting-edge digital technologies, varied requirements, their impact, and the readiness of

supply chain partners to adopt such technologies should be taken into consideration when making the decision for the organization (Deepu & Ravi, 2020).

The value that digitalization delivers has been recognized in many corporate areas (Gupta et al., 2022). Successful businesses around the world, such as Alphabet, Apple, and Microsoft, are proof of this (Gupta et al., 2022). Due to the growth of the digital economy over the last 2 decades, information processing has attracted the attention of many companies (Gupta et al., 2022). Businesses have countless chances thanks to digitalization. To thrive in the market today, businesses must constantly navigate, which is feasible only if they have access to knowledge and competent information processing capabilities (Gupta et al., 2022).

Developing and Supporting Corporate Culture

The sixth theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data from the semistructured interviews, document review, and notes taken. I found that developing and supporting corporate culture is the business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. The sixth theme that emerged aligned with previous literature on corporate culture such as brand and customer perception management (Ozdemir et al., 2020). By fostering positive perceptions of the business and communicating with stakeholders about the corporate brand and the values it holds, successful corporate brand management may lower the high costs of building and maintaining customer relationships (Ozdemir et al., 2020). To create and retain favorable perceptions and acquire a competitive edge, an organization's personnel must communicate with a variety of stakeholders including shareholders, the

media, rivals, and governments (Ozdemir et al., 2020). The ability to achieve a cogent focus for all goods and communicate consistent messages to all stakeholders is one benefit of corporate branding (Ozdemir et al., 2020). Study findings from Thakur and Alsaleh (2020) revealed that a manager's attitude affects their intention to use the corporate website. However, developing countries see a greater impact of attitude on intention than do developed countries (Thakur & Alsaleh, 2020).

Developing and Measuring Performance Standards

The seventh theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data from the semistructured interviews, document review, and notes taken. I found that developing and measuring performance standards is the business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. The seventh theme that emerged aligned with previous literature on developing key performance indicators for organization (Awad El Araby & Salem Ayaad, 2019). Awad El Araby and Salem Ayaad (2019) noted that the components and variables of institutional performance are driven by a broad list of organizational determinants that have an impact on the effectiveness, direction, and rates of institutional performance at all levels. Because each organization can create its own model in accordance with the nature of its functions, regular activities, and types of governmental services, which are professionally carried out by each unit, the process of developing performance indicators is relative in a significant way (Awad El Araby & Salem Ayaad. 2019). To assess whether to enhance earnings or salaries or to develop more training, education, or coaching, managers or supervisors evaluate the performance of their subordinates (Na-

Nan et al., 2021). Companies work hard to create effective, fair, and transparent appraisal systems and processes. When all employees accept the findings of evaluations and decisions, a positive work environment and increased effectiveness at the individual, group, and corporate levels ensue (Na-Nan et al., 2021). On the other side, unjust and biased appraisal procedures may have a negative impact on employees' attitudes, habits, and productivity at work as well as long-term business success (Na-Nan et al., 2021).

Enhance Internal Control and Processes

The eighth theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data from the semistructured interviews, document review, and notes taken. I found that enhancing internal control and processes is the business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. The eighth theme that emerged aligned with previous literature on internal control processes for organization (Jung & Cho, 2021). Jung and Cho (2021) separated joint reviews into three distinct internal control areas (administrative, risk assessment, and operations) and distinguished between functional and administrative reporting lines. This strategy enables organization to make use of the unique characteristics of survey data, demonstrating how accepted norms impact how internal audit information is handled (Jung & Cho, 2021). The goals of modern internal auditing include finding significant flaws, preventing inconsistencies in financial reporting, keeping an eye on corporate governance transparency, and giving suggestions to continuously fix faults (Jung & Cho, 2021). Reporting on internal audits includes several facets and parts of internal company processes. Corporate governance processes must be modified to incorporate

recommendations, and suggested corrective measures from internal audit reports and their long-term efficacy must be monitored (Jung & Cho, 2021). The effectiveness of internal controls is strongly and favorably correlated with internal audit function proficiency, internal audit quality control assurance level, follow-up procedure, and audit committee participation in analyzing the internal audit program and outcomes (Oussii & Taktak, 2018).

Limitations of the Study

The first limitation was that qualitative methodology is a subjective approach, and the findings may not be generalized. This study was limited to the interviews and details that were shared by women in Ghana (Accra), and therefore may not be applicable throughout Ghana. Generalization of findings is one crucial difference between qualitative and quantitative research. Furthermore, I carried out this study in Accra, Ghana; a similar study in a different location in Ghana may produce different results. To reduce unintended bias in the study, I remained objective and neutral throughout the study and removed personal opinions and ideas from the research data collection and analysis process. Other limitations included access to participants; due to the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing had become the norm. Having access to participant in a face-to-face interview was restricted. Another limitation was the fact that participants who may have willingly allowed access to documents through physical contacts did not willingly send such documents through the internet, thereby creating a limitation to document review. To reduce this limitation, I ensured that all participants signed an informed consent prior to further request of any form of documentation. Finally, a

limitation was posed by the fact that data requirement for storing data was considerable and expensive, thereby creating a limitation to storage.

Recommendations

The recommendations for this study include recommendations for practice and future research. The recommendation for practice is grounded in the study's findings to provide strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. The recommendations for future research may allow the gaps and limitations found in the current study to be closed.

Embrace Change

The first recommendation is that SME owners should embrace change and remain flexible and agile to changes. This recommendation is grounded on both theme one and theme two. COVID-19 introduces a new normal to the world which led many organizations to embrace activities such as virtual meetings, working from home, and enhancement in the supply chain and logistic business to accommodate the new ways of performing the same customer delight in business. Organization that could not adapt to the changing times could not also remain sustainable beyond the COVID-19 period. The pandemic is not the only new normal that brought changes. Change keeps happening and the ability to adapt to a new change remain important to the survival of the organization.

Stakeholders' Management

In Ghana, there are several stakeholders such as government, community, competition, employee, and vendors. The ability to manage these stakeholders whose needs may be conflicting yet remain peculiar is significant to manage effectively and

efficiently. SME owners must have a viable structure that could respond to the demand of the stakeholders. The ability to respond to such demand in time has earned the participants that were interviewed to remain sustainable for 5 years and beyond.

Teach Business Policies and Objectives to SME Owners

SME owners and employees may not know the importance of business policies and the business objectives. It is recommended that every business create an avenue to teach every employee the objectives of the business and support those teachings with policy creation. Policies should be written that would serve as reference points to both new and old staff of the organization. Such policies may help give a step by step to new staff and ensure errors, irregularities, and fraud is minimized.

Subsidize Digitalization

The cost of digitalization may be high for a new entrepreneur, yet the benefits far outweigh the cost. It is recommended that government support entrepreneurs in Ghana on digital subsidies so that all entrepreneurs could up-scale their services. The investment in digital for a period such as 2020 is an investment worth it, for the business continuity, and for the individual working in the company as well as the customers waiting to be served adequately.

Strengthen Internal Control

It is recommended that every organization initiate and sustain an effective internal control system. Internal control is not just a department, rather a system that involve everyone doing the right operations for the business. Internal control should take a

proactive and not reactive measure in organization. Staff outside the internal control should understand the need for internal control in organization.

Implications

The predominant socio-cultural restrictions relating to women's ownership of assets and resources prevent many women from accessing loans that would help to expand women entrepreneurship businesses (Boateng, 2020). The extended family system, which is common in the Ghanaian setting, tends to put pressure on businesswomen to help take care of family members in the extended family (Boateng, 2020). Due to this, businesses, especially family-owned ones, tend to have little money for operation and expansion, as most of the income is spent on other family members' needs. The study may be significant to positive social change, women employees will increase business sustainability, employment will increase as a result of business sustainability, poverty reduction would be experienced in Ghana, community development, and improvement in the standard of living.

Theoretical Implications

The institutional theory as developed by Vossenberg in 2013 was used in this study. The concept presented by the theorist is that in low-income economies, women entrepreneurs are expected to play a more prominent role in self-employment, job generation, developing a viable private sector, and in providing women with successful careers. This concept aligns with the problem, purpose, and research questions because the topic I am exploring is business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to overcome challenges and to ensure sustainability beyond 5 years. The

conceptual framework served as lens for developing the interview protocol that was used during the data collection.

Methodological Implications

Qualitative method was used in this study. One of the implications of a qualitative method is the limitation for transferability. Women doing business in Ghana were the participants for this study, women in Nigeria may share a different opinion. Multiple case study was the design use for this study, using phenomenology or narratives may give other insight into the study. A quantitative method research may lead to transferability and generalization of the study. Using a larger sample size may also give a more feasible ground than the 10 participants selected in this study.

Social Change Implications

Implication to social change include increase in women employment, business sustainability in women businesses, poverty reduction, community development, and improvement in the standard of living. The study has potential of social change such as creating insight to how women entrepreneurs could survive in business, have quality life, support their community, their family, and ultimately support the government in form of tax payment.

Conclusions

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory multiple case study was to explore business strategic information that women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to make their business sustainable beyond 5 years. Eight themes emerged as responses to the research question. The themes are change management and adaptation, agility and

flexibility in operations, comprehensive analysis of stakeholders, creation of business policies and objectives, designing and executing digital implementation plan, developing and supporting corporate culture, developing and measuring performance standard, and enhancing internal control and processes. Chapter 5 contains the discussion, conclusion, and recommendations. The recommendations include embrace change, stakeholders' management, teach business policies and objectives to new employees, government should subsidize digital, and strengthen the internal control system.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

- What are the strategies you have used in the last 5 years to achieve business survival?
- What are some of the external challenges that confronted your business survival and how did you manage them?
- What are some internal challenges that confronted your business in the last 5 years that could result to business failure that you survived, and how did you manage them?
- What are the other information or details could you share that will assist a women entrepreneur to remain in business in Ghana based on your experience?

Appendix B: Expression of Interest Letter

My name is Gabriel Yaw Asante, a doctoral candidate at Walden University. I am pursuing a doctorate degree with a specialization in Finance. I am conducting a qualitative research titled: Exploring Business Sustainability Among Women Entrepreneurs in Ghana: Multiple Case Study. The background and purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to overcome challenges and to ensure sustainability beyond 5 years. Consequently, you have been identified as suitable participant to participate in an interview with open-ended questions with three other participants in your organization for the purpose of data collection. Interviews will be conducted in person or, virtually or via telephone. I confirm that employees' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion. In addition, I can also confirm that the participants' responses to the interview questions will be strictly confidential.

I am inviting you to participate in this research study. The consent form document will be given to you that will provide information so that you can make an informed decision concerning participation. The remainder of this email will provide information so that you can make an informed decision concerning participation.

What is the research about?

The background and purpose of this study is to explore business strategic information women entrepreneurs in Ghana need to learn to overcome challenges and to ensure sustainability beyond 5 years. I believed that sharing your experience will be a great contribution to the study. As such, I am reaching out to you if you might have an interest in participating in the study. The findings of this study may contribute to positive social change by improving the existing knowledge about women entrepreneurship strategies for business sustainability. Increase employment, reduce poverty, strengthen the improvement in standard of living and community development in Ghana.

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

What does participation in this research study involve?

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Participate in a telephone/virtual interview that will last for 45 minutes to one hour for data collection depending on your preference.
- Participate in member checking; where individuals that participated in the telephone/face-to-face interview will have the opportunity to go through the

transcript of the recorded interview to be sure what was transcribed agrees with the interview.

- The member checking exercise will last for 45 minutes to one hour.
- That the interview will be audio recorded.

Guarantee of confidentiality

All information obtained in this study is completely confidential unless disclosure is required by law. The results of the study may be used, at an aggregate level, in reports, presentations and publications. Individual participants will not be identified.

Confirmation of participation

This email is used to elicit your interest to participate in the research. I hereby invite you by responding to this email, your willingness to be included in the study.

I am happy to respond to any questions or concerns you have about the research. I can be reached at +2348054294306/+233244698979 or email at gabriel.asante2@waldenu.edu

Sincerely,

Gabriel Yaw Asante

Walden University

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Appendix C: CITI Certificate

