Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies

Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies
Collection

2015

Small Business Sustainability in the Salon Industry

Militea Johnson-Hilliard
Walden University

Walden University

College of Management and Technology

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Militea Johnson

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.

Review Committee
Dr. Patricia Fusch, Committee Chairperson, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Janet Booker, Committee Member, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Dr. Carol-Anne Faint, University Reviewer, Doctor of Business Administration Faculty

Chief Academic Officer
Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University
2015

Abstract

Small Business Sustainability in the Salon Industry

by

Militea Johnson

MBA, Strayer University, 2012

BS, Strayer University, 2010

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

November 2015

Abstract

Small businesses fail at high rates; 51% fail to succeed in business beyond the first 5 years. The purpose of this exploratory case study was to explore the strategies that salon business owners used to succeed in business. The sample comprised of 2 salon business owners in Savannah, Georgia who have been in business more than 5 years. The conceptual framework was based on the general systems theory. Data were collected from conducting semistructured interviews with each business owner, a review of company business plans, direct observation of participants during client interaction in the salon, as well as member-checking interview responses. The data were methodologically triangulated to strengthen the credibility and trustworthiness of the study results. Four main themes were identified: (a) education and training, (b) customer service strategies, (c) determination and dedication, and (d) professionalism. The findings from this study may contribute to social change by giving business owners the necessary skills and strategies needed to sustain and develop a successful business and increase profit. The data from this study may contribute to the prosperity of small business owners, their employees, communities, and the local economy.

Small Business Sustainability in the Salon Industry

by

Militea Johnson

MBA, Strayer University, 2012

BS, Strayer University, 2010

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

November 2015

Dedication

I would like to thank my husband Michael Hilliard for supporting me during my doctoral journey. Thank you for making sure that I was able to attend my residencies and intensives as needed. You have truly been a blessing to the kids and me during this doctoral journey. I would not be able to do this comfortably without your support and commitment to our marriage and family. I know that we are still considered newlyweds, I promise once this is all over we will go on a nice vacation without any computers, laptops, iPads, kids, and any other electronic devices.

Last, I dedicate the study to all of the entrepreneurs, scholars, and doctors that paved the way for people like myself to stand on their shoulders and feel proud that we have finally made it to the family of great scholars.

Acknowledgments

I would first like to thank my savior Jesus Christ for seeing me through this entire process. Without the support of the All Mighty, none of this would be possible. I would like to acknowledge my committee chair Dr. Patricia Fusch for all of the great words of encouragements and relentless hours you dedicate towards being such a valuable asset to myself and many other students. Dr. Fusch, words can't express how much I appreciate you. Thank you for encouraging me to continue this process when I didn't feel that I had the motivation to continue. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Janet Booker and Dr. Carol Anne Faint; without you all, I definitely could not complete this journey.

 I would like to send a special thanks to my children Warren, Malon, Malaysia, and Laterrion for being patient with me. I owe you guys some personal time. Special thanks to my peers Dr. Shannon Thomas, Dr. Michael Alimo, and Dr. Kendall Johnson for all your assistance, support, and encouraging words. Thanks to all my family, friends, and cohorts who contributed to my success and shared great words of encouragement along the way.

Table of Contents

i

List of Tables

Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Small businesses are vital to the development and growth of the economy (United States Census Bureau, 2014). According to the Muntean (2011), small businesses have a critical role in establishing new jobs, innovation, and in the creation of new market ventures. Nearly 50% of small businesses fail within the first 5 years of operations (Small Business Administration [SBA], 2011). Yallapragada and Bhuiyan (2011) stated how smaller entities fill in the underrepresented rates of the unemployment. Small businesses (a) employ nearly 66% of Hispanics, (b) employ a higher portion of individuals with lower level of education, (c) represent nearly 98% of all employer firms, (d) have generated approximately 64% of net new jobs during the years 1997 through 2011, and are (e) responsible for the hiring of 40% high-tech positions, such as computer ensure

I used a qualitative case study approach to explore the strategies needed to assist small businesses in sustaining their firms beyond 5 years. The results of the study may assist salon business owners on how to improve the business in the developing stages while improving the business for future success and growth.

Background of the Problem

Business owners constantly face implementing new changes to remain competitive in a world that revolves around technology (Deevi, 2012). The longevity of a business was constructed upon the year-to-year profits and growths (Deevi, 2012). More than 90% of today's companies exemplify the need for increased profits to remain in business (SBA, 2011). There are nearly 27 million small businesses currently established in the United States (Yallapragada & Bhuiyan, 2011). Successful small business can

signify the strength of the economy. The businesses account for nearly 39% of the United

States gross national product, create at least two new jobs for each job seeker, and

produce more than twice as many innovations per employee than larger organizations

(Yallpragada & Bhuiyan, 2011). Small business entrepreneurs are responsible for the

sustainable success and growth of the organization (Tideman, Arts, & Zandee, 2013).

According to a survey conducted by McKinsey Insights (2010), entrepreneurs lack a clear

understanding of sustainability.

The qualitative case study was about the failure rate of small businesses within

the first 5 years of operation. Although some entrepreneurs have treated business failures

as an opportunity to recover, the small business failure rate remains high in the United

States (Ucbasaran, Shepherd, Lockett, & Lyon, 2013). Small business failure has

negatively affected the U.S. economy (Sheth, Sethia, & Srinivas, 2011). I discussed the

challenges that small businesses face while providing real world issues and resolutions to

reduce the number of small business failures.

Problem Statement

Small salon businesses fail at high rates (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Fifty-one

percent of small business owners fail to succeed in business beyond 5 years in the

cosmetology industry (U.S. Department of Labor [DOL], 2014). The general business

problem was that salon owners lack the adequate knowledge to sustain the business. The

specific business problem was that salon business owners often lack the necessary

strategies to succeed in business beyond 5 years.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the strategies that salon business owners needed to succeed in business beyond 5 years. The targeted population consisted of two salon business owners who have started and sustained a small business for a minimum of 5 years in the Savannah, Georgia area. Data collection techniques included interviews, marketing, and other business documents. The study findings may impact business practices by providing strategies and technology salon business owners can use to increase the practice success rate.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative case study research method and design was the most suitable design for the study. A qualitative research method was the choice versus quantitative method because the researcher gains knowledge from the experiences of the participants. According to Thomas and Magilvy (2011), researchers view qualitative research as an experience that surpasses a scholars own experience. Qualitative research allows the researcher to hear the participant's voices while having an in-depth involvement in the research (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Qualitative research also assists the researcher with direct observations and interpretations versus a quantitative research allowing researchers to use scales and measurement (Stake, 2011). Quantitative method has a place in research that entails a relationship between variables (Yin, 2014). A quantitative methods approach allows the researcher to answer and examine variables between relationships while answering the hypothesis through experiments and surveys (Yin, 2014). A quantitative methodology would not be appropriate for the proposal as a quantitative

researcher tests a theory and examines relationships through analysis of statistical data (Yin, 2014). As a researcher of the study, I was not interested in measuring and sampling data that is required in a mix method approach (Hossain, 2012). Furthermore, I did not consider using a mix method approach because of the integration of both qualitative and quantitative data in a single research (Hossain, 2012).

I gained knowledge of business attributes of hair salon owners working in the same industry. A case study approach was most appropriate for the proposal because it involves face-to-face interviews and is more relevant when questions require extensive feedback (Yin, 2014). A case study design would answer the how and why questions that accommodated the reasons behind small business failures and sustainability issues (Amerson, 2011). A case study is useful when researchers are expanding on theories that were previous discussed (Stake, 2011). A case study can also give a researcher significant insight about the situation while suggesting solutions to a given situation (Yin, 2014). According to Stake (2011), a case study would allow more interpretation within qualitative research than quantitative research.

The goal of a phenomenological approach is to reflect on the experiences humans lived in the world (Poulsen & Thogerson, 2011). Grounded theory allows a researcher to wait for conceptual sense making to develop from the data (Khan, 2014). Due to time restraints and other limitations grounded theory and phenomenological approach were not the best approaches for the study. The data in the proposal included the personal experiences of the participants. The data collected was in the form of open-ended

interview questions. I conducted and completed interviews in the necessary time allocated by Walden University.

Research Question

The focus of the research was to expand the knowledge of existing small business owners and to identify the strategies that could be used to promote sustainable practice. In the study, the focal question for the study was: what strategies do salon business owners need to succeed in business beyond 5 years? This question also guided the following interview questions:

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to enhance the growth of your business?

2. How important is having a strategy to you as a small business owner?

3. How do you compete with larger salons?

4. What are the causes of negative challenges in salons?

5. What are some of the gains or losses of being a successful business owner?

6. What additional information can you provide to assist me in understanding successful salon operations?

Conceptual Framework

System theory grounded the research study. Soojin, Miso, and Joonhwan (2011) described system theory relationship as a whole instead of parts. Buchanan (1992) believed that the theory focuses on the human who experiences the system. Soojin et al. (2011) stated that system theory has a vital role in social science, fields of management, and organizational design. According to von Bertalanffy (1972), systems theory

generated from the pre-Socratic philosophers and systems theory developed during the years until the theory was finally formed in the early 1900s.

There are three main aspects of the system theory: (a) systems science, (b) systems technology, and (c) systems philosophy (Soojin et al., 2011). Von Bertalanffy (1972) looked at organizations in various stages of manifestations of the natural system. His approach was to capture the human experience while modeling the complex interpersonal and intrapersonal interactions amongst individuals (von Bertalanffy, 1972).

The main purpose of using system theory for the study was to reflect how system theory aspects work together in small businesses. The study may indicate the importance of technology in a salon business while reflecting on problems that businesses may incur from not having the appropriate technology and skills necessary to remain competitive. The findings could influence the reorientation of salon businesses.

Definition of Terms

The following phrases and terms were defined in the study. The primary goal was to assure that the readers have clarity of the meaning of the words and phrases used in the study.

Business sustainability: Business sustainability is a firm's ability to respond to the short-term profitable needs of the organization (Bansal & DesJardine, 2014).

Entrepreneur: An entrepreneur is defined as opportunistic decision makers. An entrepreneur is viewed as a person that does not mind taking risks (Murmann & Sardana, 2013).

Innovation: Innovation is an organization's ability to embark on expansion projects and to invest in new technology. The key to maintaining a competitive advantage while extending your resources, knowledge, and skills by networking (Hardwick & Cruickshank, 2012).

Small business: A small business is an independently owned and operated firm that is dominant in its field and organized for profit (SBA, 2011).

Small business entrepreneur: A small business entrepreneur is an individual who launches and manages a business for making a profit (Yallapragada & Bhuiyan, 2011).

Small business failure: Small business failure is the discontinuity of ownership of the business. Failure happens when an owner chooses to close or sell his business (Ucbasaran et al., 2013).

Small business success: Small business success is the survival and self-employment of a business. The success of a business entails the accomplishments and the aimed purpose of the business (Toledo-Lopez, Diaz-Pichardo, Jimenez-Castaneda, & Sanchez-Medina, 2012).

Sustainability: Sustainability is the condition or state of being sustainable. A business or thing is considered sustainable if it is maintained in the future (Maude, 2014). According to the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), sustainability is the development that meets the needs of the current without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Bansal & DesJardine, 2014).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

In this section, I addressed the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study. I also addressed the various factors that might determine a role in the small business success beyond 5 years. As the researcher, I assumed that each participant involved in the study gave truthful and honest information.

Assumptions

Assumptions are ideas, notions, and concepts of the things that we do every day (Gallop, 2011). According to Gallop (2011), assumptions are a statement or fact taken for granted. First, I assumed that salon business owners lack the necessary knowledge to sustain beyond 5 years (DOL, 2014). Secondly, the assumptions were that the study provided business owners with significant information and insight on how small businesses can develop a competitive advantage. Third, I assumed that the participants would agree to aid in the study by answering the questions thoroughly and truthfully.

Limitations

Limitations focus on both the internal and external validity of a study (Connelly, 2013). Limitations reflect the various weaknesses that are out of a researchers control. The first limitation of the study was that the collected data might not represent the entire salon business industry. Secondly, focusing on companies in the Savannah, Georgia area might limit the generalizability of the study's conclusion to other areas that are rural. According to Shideler and Badasyan (2012), small businesses are just as important to rural areas as they are to larger cities. The third limitation was that the sample size of two

salon business leaders will voluntarily participate and that the sample may not be a full representation of the entire salon business industry.

Conducting the research in such a brief and specified time also presents some limitations. Data usually yields better results and a thorough analysis if the researcher collects and review it for an extensive period (Connelly, 2013). A fourth limitation was that the participants lack the willingness of sharing the full extent of the business decisions and experiences during the interview due to time constraints.

Delimitations

Delimitations are ideas and notions that are in a researcher's control (Connelly, 2013). The setting for this qualitative case study was a city in southeast Georgia. The delimitations related to the geographical area, participants, and the research questions. The geographical area of Savannah, Georgia is a large enough city to gain extensive knowledge of salon businesses. The business owners that may benefit from the study are entrepreneurs seeking to start a new business in the Savannah Georgia area. Gender was not a qualifier or disqualifier for the entrepreneurs that participated in the study. The study provided awareness to businesses that have not been successful in sustaining beyond 5 years.

<div align="center">

Significance of the Study

</div>

In this section, I discussed the contributions to business practice and the implications to social change. I also elaborated on the importance of small businesses to our economy and local communities. In the text below, I addressed how the study aided in the success of small business sustainability beyond 5 years.

Contribution to Business Practice

As of April 2013, the unemployment rate was 7.5 percent nationally (U.S. Department of Labor, 2014). Over the past few years, small businesses are consistent with the debates and attempts to solve the unemployment issue (Howard & Shipps, 2013). According to the Small Business Administration (2011), small business entrepreneurs are responsible for nearly 8 million job creations between the years of 2011 and 2012. Statistical data exhibits how important small businesses are to the U.S. economy (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014; U.S. Department of Labor, 2014). Overall, small business entrepreneurs are responsible for hiring more employees than larger organizations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014).

The focus was on small businesses and entrepreneurs' inability to sustain beyond 5 years. During the research process, I concentrated on existing and start-up business entrepreneurs. The U.S. Census Bureau (2014) noted that 51% of small businesses fail to succeed beyond 5 years. The significance of the study was to educate and empower entrepreneurs in improving the quality of business through relevant knowledge and promoting a successful, sustainable business beyond 5 years.

Implications for Social Change

In the study, I constructed relative information that exists for small business sustainability, entrepreneurship, and innovation in an evolving economy. The findings of the study might contribute to positive social change by improving the way small business entrepreneurs operate and successfully grow their practices. Small businesses can add to social change by remaining sustainable and adding to the economy (SBA, 2011). While

addressing the issues and equipping owners with the necessary resources and skills, entrepreneurs can use strategies to improve his understanding while adding social change to the business and community.

<div align="center">**A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature**</div>

The purpose of the qualitative case study was to explore how salon business owners remain successful beyond 5 years. There are more than 20 million small businesses in operation in the United States (Yallapragada & Bhuiyan, 2011). According to the Small Business Administration (2011), 23 million small businesses in America account for at least 54% of all U.S. sales. Fifty-one percent of small business owners (SBOs) fail to succeed beyond 5 years (U.S. Department of Labor [DOL], 2014). Even though corporate America is downsizing, small business creation is rapidly growing while small business failures are declining (Yallapragada & Bhuiyan, 2011).

The following literature review consisted of contemporary and seminal peer-reviewed research for studies regarding systems theory. Moreover, the literature review contains peer-reviewed studies that address limitations, weaknesses, and the potential for future research in each category. I searched Business Source Complete, EBSCOhost, ProQuest, Emerald Management Journals, Ulrich's Periodical Directory, and ABI/INFORM Complete to retrieve peer reviewed and seminal literature for the study. Walden Library database, Strayer University Library, Savannah State University Library, Google Scholar, and other online websites were some of the primary resources to obtain articles and other literature. The literature review centers on the following keywords: *business sustainability, entrepreneur, innovation, small business, small business*

entrepreneur, small business failure, small business success, sustainability, and *systems theory.* The total number of references in each category are (a) 4 government reports, (b) 2 dissertations, (c) 5 websites, (d) 7 books, (e) 3 other, and (f) 141 peer-reviewed journal articles. Of the 162, 139 (86%) were published between 2011 and 2015 and 141 (87%) were published within the last 5 years.

Systems Theory

Systems theory motivated the conceptual framework for the study. In von Bertalanffy's (1972) general system theory introduced organizational designs and managerial systems as a foundation for effective management practices for organization leaders (von Bertalanffy's, 1972). The general systems theory was created with the intent of using multiple perceptions to study the various elements and dynamics that occur in an organization. The general systems theory was first introduced by von Bertalanffy's in 1937 and further enhanced in both 1949 and 1972 (Drake & Schwarz, 2010). The researchers evaluated and focused on an organization's complete organizational system (Drake & Schwarz, 2010). The organizational system consisted of an organization business practices, customers, employees, innovation, and social perspective to ensure that the goals of an organization are met (Ackoff, 1994).

Ackoff (1994) expounded on von Bertalanffy's research by explaining that researchers that appear interested in systems theory are concerned with resolving real business problems. Once the researcher discovers the real business issue, business owners can later explore ways to eliminate, decrease, or improve the phenomenon (Ackoff, 1994). According to Kim and Senge's 1994 research, systems theory led the authors to

conduct research on systems thinking. Kim and Senge (1994) believed that an

organization is a whole and it is composed of many systems that compartmentalize

various subsystems within the organization. For an organization to operate properly,

alignment between human elements and human principles must exist (Kim & Senge,

1994). Such alignment depicts how humans reacted to changes made within an

organization when it comes to survival (Ackoff, 1994; Kim & Senge, 1994).

Stacey (2007) stated that researchers are responsible for the input and output of a

system and the effects of the environment in which it resides. This perspective allows

researchers to analyze a system as being open or closed (Stacey, 2007). In a closed

system, the interaction between the systems overall environment (Stacey, 2007) does not

affect its components. Conversely, an open system interaction between systems does

affect the environment (Stacey, 2007). An open system may receive input from its

environment and in return gives the output back to the environment (Stacey, 2007).

Drack and Schwarz (2010) implied that an open system transfers energy and information

across its boundaries and returns the results back to the systems and its environment. The

feedback allows the system the ability to cooperate with a corporation, an individual, or

social system (Drack & Schwarz, 2010).

Drack and Schwarz (2010), von Bertalanffy (1972) and Stacey (2007) recognized

that systems theory could apply to both organizations small or large. Systems theory

made it easier for organization leaders to recognize and understand feedback, variables of

interdependence, and self-regulations, all of which engaged researchers to understand the

phenomenon of the system as a whole (Stacey, 2007).When general systems theory is

applied, the system benefits from every part that works together as a whole (Kast &

Rosenzweig, 1972)

Shaw (2009) indicated general systems theory as a way of thinking. General

systems theory offers a worldview on how people, machines, organizations, and societies

operate in reality (Shaw, 2009). Shaw defined a system as a set of elements that is created

as a whole to accomplish an objective. The four elements that are essential to a systems

performance are (1) the process as the input-output model, (2) the structure system as the

wheels within or the hierarchic, (3) the function of a system or goal seeking, and (4) the

control feature of a system as the feedback mechanism (Shaw, 2009).

Overview

Entrepreneurs and small businesses are responsible for a greater creation of new

jobs than firms that are larger (Muntean, 2011; Yallapragada & Bhuiyan, 2011).

Yallapragada and Bhuiyan (2011) stated that small businesses account for a larger share

of the business that takes place in the United States economy. Many factors have a role in

the success of a small business (Yallaprada & Bhuiyan, 2011). Some of the factors

consisted of adequate financing, efficient operations and production, marketing and sales,

customer service, qualified staff, proper business planning, and innovation (Yallaprada &

Bhuiyan, 2011). According to Muntean (2011), old economic strategies do not determine

whether a small business developed or sustained. To be successful, Muntean

recommended small business entrepreneurs to devise effective strategies to maintain a

competitive future. Entrepreneurs should focus plans to maximize the business for future

growth (Muntean, 2011). According to Mills and McCarthy (2014), larger firms have

been resulting in higher number of job losses over the past decade while smaller

businesses have been steady in creating new jobs during the same period. Entrepreneurs

tend to hear more about larger firms creating jobs from the media while smaller firms

lack the recognition in the role of job creation (Muntean, 2011). Although there are many

articles, books, and other seminal works that support small businesses developing more

jobs than larger firms in the U.S., there are still other researchers out there that believe

that the size of the firm or how many jobs it creates does not determine whether or not a

firm sustains (De Wit & De Kok, 2014).

The Cosmetology Industry

Over the past two decades, the cosmetology industry has undergone a dramatic

change (Madnani & Khan, 2013). Hair has evolved from cleaning to increasing the

follicle growth of hair, stimulating the scalp, and decreasing oxidative damage to the hair

(Madnani & Khan, 2013). Entrepreneurs in the hair industry have created innovative hair

care products such as shampoos that are tailored to various hair types or scalp conditions,

for example, oily, dry, damaged hair, and itchy scalp conditions (Madnani & Khan,

2013).

The hair care industry has provided consumers with many products to use for

salon and personal use (Madnani & Khan, 2013). Some of the product features still

remain the same even in today's present days such as curling the hair with rollers, hair

sprays, gels, pomades, mousses, curling irons, waxes, and sprays (Madnani & Khan,

2013). Consumers can use water only or add both a shampoo and water mixture to

cleanse the hair scalp of all products applied to the hair (Madnani & Khan, 2013).

The cosmetology industry has a significant role in an individual's self-esteem and physical appearance (Trueb, 2005). As consumers desire to look younger, the hair care industry is becoming active developers of meeting needs by creating products that maintained healthy hair (Trueb, 2005). The cosmetology industry also provided treatment that reversed graying, recover hair loss, increase hair production, and resolve alopecia issues (Trueb, 2005). According to Trueb (2005), the hair industry is a multibillion-dollar business that small business owners often base opportunities and success upon.

Hoff (2012) demonstrated how the beauty industry was one of the world's most profitable fields a minority woman could enter during the early 1900s. Hoff (2012) identified how the beauty industry provided women with a means of education and economic opportunity during both the cold war and the world war years of 1947 to 1991. Hair salons represent a place of business as well as an opportunity to interact with customers (Wambui & Bwisa, 2013).

Education. Cosmetology students are required to complete the necessary education in human relations, written communications, and information technology fields to graduate from a technical college and earn a diploma (Gilroy, 2009). Working in salons with chemicals and various hair care products, professionals face a greater risk of harmful exposure when using the chemicals (Madnani & Khan, 2013). The state board regulates the cosmetology and barber industry by ensuring that every full service salon that employs individuals in the profession must have a license to conduct business (DeWinter, 2012). Full service salon owners must employ licensed individuals who have completed the necessary hours required by the state of which he is licensed (DeWinter,

2012). The license may include instructions in hair cutting, coloring, sanitizing, nail manicuring, and identifying infectious disease (DeWinter, 2012). Cosmetologists also learn the theories related to perming, relaxing, and coloring the hair. They also work with the various hair products and amenities used on patrons while performing the various services (DeWinter, 2012).

Education and training matters to most entrepreneurs because it allows employees the opportunity to strengthen weak skills and professional knowledge (Van Rijn, Yang, & Sanders, 2013). Van Rijn et al. (2013) reviewed informal workplace learning as a form of training employees can do on the job as a way to cut costs by reading books and other literature and asking other employees for feedback or help regarding the materials that were read during the informal training. Van Rijn et al. (2013) indicated that informal workplace training assists leaders and staff with being able to address the challenges that develop in and outside of the workplace.

The need for small businesses to develop new skills is becoming more of demand to compete in the marketplace (Alasadi & Alsabbagh, 2015). This means entrepreneurs are looking to sustain their business by improving his or her skills and obtaining the necessary training that assisted in maintaining the firms business (Alasadi & Alsabbagh, 2015). Linking education and training as a positive aspect of firms' day-to-day activities assisted management and staff with the necessary skills and job knowledge they need to perform the job (Alasadi & Alsabbagh, 2015). When entrepreneurs are equipped with the necessary education and training in a particular field of business, they often maximize the

potential and spread his qualifications in other areas in the business (Alasadi &

Alsabbagh, 2015).

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is the vehicle in which many ideas and inventions are

commercialized (Muntean, 2011). According to Malchow-Møller, Schjerning, and

Sørensen (2011) entrepreneurs are responsible for developing newer jobs as they grow.

Entrepreneurs are the drivers for his or her company's sustainability efforts (Schaltegger

& Wagner, 2011). Schaltegger and Wagner (2011) stated that entrepreneurs are shaping

the economy with innovative ideas. When environmental progress is made to an

organization, a business leader is viewed as a sustainable entrepreneur (Schaltegger &

Wagner, 2011). Entrepreneurs that want to have a sustainable business have generated

new services, products, and techniques that decreased environmental impacts and

enhanced the quality of life (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011).

Gagnon (2012) noted after doing qualitative research on 29 entrepreneurs and a

review of management sources that there are core values that drive sustainable-minded

entrepreneurs. Sustainable entrepreneurs may possess values of constant improvement,

holistic cognition, frugality, and morality (Gagnon, 2012). Gagnon (2012) described

entrepreneurs that put his focus on improvement, problem-solving, and growing the

business as sustainable leaders. Entrepreneurs believe in continuous improvements for

the betterment of the company and society (Gagnon, 2012). The creativity and wealth

that entrepreneurs have given to society and the economy has improved the plight of the

environment, society, and humanity (Gagnon, 2012). Sustainable minded entrepreneurs

provide work for others and support local communities while contributing to the betterment of the society (Gagnon, 2012; Parrish, 2010).

Sustainable minded entrepreneurship takes into consideration both environmental and social aspects of the business (Rajasekaran, 2013). The focus is not only on economic growth and increased profits but also on sustainability practices (Rajsekaran, 2013). A sustainable-minded entrepreneur focused on goals that create a sustainable development and growth for the company, society, and the environment (Kuckertz & Wagner, 2010).

According to Audretsch (2012), scholarly research on entrepreneurship is much easier to find versus generations ago. Entrepreneurship has emerged into a common field of interest (Audretsch, 2012). Wiklund, Davidson, Audretsch, and Karlsson (2011) stated that the entrepreneurship field has grown to become one of the largest divisions of the Academy of Management. Researchers have noted that entrepreneurship has gained significant importance as a leading disciplinary field in management journals since 2001 (Audretsch, 2012). There are many themes, issues, and debates regarding the topic (Audretch, 2012). Entrepreneurship is defined by criteria such as the size of the organization, its age, whether it is individually or family-owned, and whether it is performance based (Audretsch, 2012). According to the age criterion, a firm that has been in business longer may not be considered a small business (Wiklund, et al., 2011).

Mason and Harvey (2013) noted that many different researchers have defined the term *entrepreneurship*, but it has become an emerged discipline since the 1970s. The definition has changed during the 20th century years of 1901 through 2001 (Mason & Harvey, 2013). Researchers define entrepreneurship as someone who controls the factors

of production rather than someone who is not afraid to take risks (Mason & Harvey, 2013). Entrepreneurs are individuals who promote change through technology and creative innovations (Estay, Durrieu, & Akhter, 2013; Mason & Harvey, 2013). Some psychologists believe that entrepreneurs exhibit unique traits that stimulate a high need for achievement (Mason & Harvey, 2013). The high need for achievement prompts entrepreneurs to become risk takers (Mason & Harvey, 2013). As Estay et al. (2013) stated, the important aspects of the business process could motivate entrepreneurs. The idea of becoming a business owner and making viable decisions are also motivating factors for a new business owner (Estay et al., 2013).

Entrepreneurs are individuals who select the path of business owners (Aldrich & Yang, 2012). They are risk-taking individuals that pay close attention to the supply and demand of the market while taking advantage of an opportunity (Aldrich & Yang, 2013). As Chrysostome (2010) stated, entrepreneurs possess the internal desire to engage in entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs take advantage of resources, labor, markets, and communities to become sustainable businesspersons (Chrysostome, 2010).

Entrepreneurship involves more than just gaining a profit for business (Sahut & Peris-Ortiz, 2014).Entrepreneurship involves creativity and exploitation of ideas and resources that produced opportunities for a business (Sahut & Peris-Ortiz, 2014). Some people become entrepreneurs because they are able to seek opportunities by recombining resources or becoming risk takers in the development of new products, techniques, strategies, services, technologies, and organizational design (Sahut & Peris-Ortiz, 2014).

Entrepreneurs are individuals who rely solely on own intuition (Iacob & Mironescu, 2013). Entrepreneurs are individuals who seek to identify new opportunities for both market and product development (Ndubisi, 2014). Entrepreneurship and innovation are concepts associated with improving an organization's performance and competitive advantage (Ndubisi, 2014).

Innovation

Innovation is defined as when a business owner provides the market with organizational and technical improvements that successfully sells to others (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011). Small and medium size businesses (SME's) are key generators of new ideas and new ventures (Konsti-Laakso, Pihkala, & Kraus, 2012). Small business owners view innovation as a way to remain competitive while increasing the company's value (Konsti-Laakso et al., 2012). According to Saunila and Ukko (2013) and Konsti-Laakso et al. (2012), an organization's success is dependent on the ability to produce innovations through various assets and knowledge. Saunila and Ukko (2013) described a company as innovative when leaders are not afraid to adopt changes to a device, system process, policy, or services. Innovation is the key influence on an organization's growth and sustainability (Gobble, 2012; Saunila & Ukko, 2013).

In innovation research, SME's are vital contributors in introducing, creating, and applying innovations within local markets (Gobble, 2012). Researchers have shown that smaller firms have fewer opportunities for innovation development (Pitta, 2008; Saunila & Ukko, 2013). Conversely, during the 20th century years of 1901 through 2001, smaller

firms were the main drivers of innovation (Judd & McNeil, 2012; Konsti-Laakso et al., 2012).

Sahut and Peris-Ortiz (2014) argued that innovation and entrepreneurship correspond with various facets of a company's environment and enables innovation development. Innovation has a strong association with both small businesses and entrepreneurship since the startup of new businesses (Pitta, 2008; Sahut & Peris-Ortiz, 2014). Innovation is vital to small entrepreneurs due to the lack of resources they may have as compared to larger organizations (Sahut & Peris-Ortiz, 2014). Innovation does not solely determine a company's sustainability (Sahut & Peris-Ortiz, 2014).

Innovation is centered upon a firm employing individuals who can generate rewarding products and services (Barros & Lazzarini, 2012). Organizational leaders must be able to generate incentives to motivate key individuals into developing more innovative projects (Barros & Lazzarini, 2012). Barros and Lazzarini (2012) observed the benefit of rewarding individuals with talent while tapping into creativity and development. This type of incentives motivated employees and enhanced the firm's incentive system (Barros & Lazzarini, 2012).

Sustainability

According to Gagnon (2012), *sustainability* is an entrepreneur's ability to account for contemporary and future generations needs while upholding the world's ecosystem. Sustainability focuses on an entrepreneur's growth, nature preservation, life support, and a business owner's pursuit to bring into existence future products and services for gain (Gagnon, 2012; Shepard & Patzelt, 2011). Rajasekaran (2013) noted that sustainability

emphasizes the necessity to balance three main objectives for the future growth of humankind: economy, ecology, and society and ethics. The objectives are also known as people, profit, and planet because they meet the needs of the contemporary generation without compromising the needs of the future generation (Rajasekaran, 2013).

Gobble (2012), described sustainability as the source of innovation and growth. Gobble considered sustainability as being concerned about the social good and ecological impact of the community, business, and market. Sustainability is a way of doing business (Gobble, 2012). Activities of the business must be sustainable for not only the business but also the world (Gobble, 2012). Sustainability is more than the climate and ecological impact; it involves a company's investors and its triple bottom line (Rajasekaran, 2013). True sustainability consisted of a broad range of innovation that addressed the business and social impact that reshaped the business system (Rajasekaran, 2013).

Manna, Marco, Khalil, and Esola (2011) defined sustainability as the strategies and policies that meet the needs of the present society without compromising the needs of future generations. Sustainability is a concern in both private and public sectors of business all across the world (Manna et al. 2011). Sustainability is not only viewed as a challenge, but it is also a necessity for every industry large or small (Manna et al., 2011). Manna et al. (2011) discussed the Heinz Company growth and sustainability issues. Manna et al. conducted a case study to prove how the Heinz food industry began the company production process. During the years of 2005 through 2010, drastic sustainability changes were made in the food industry to improve sustainability issues in the area of packaging, emissions, waste, and energy consumption (Manna et al., 2011).

The Heinz Company was able to fulfill the company's three sustainable goals by (a)

reducing packing by 15%, (b) reducing energy consumption by 20%, and (c) decreasing

the companies GHG emissions by twenty percent over the next ten years. Although,

Heinz is recognized for manufacturing ketchup, the company also manufactures

thousands of other foods that service more than 200 countries (Manna et al., 2011).

Overall, Heinz has proven themselves successful in their sustainability efforts (Manna et

al., 2011).

Lubin and Esty (2014) discussed the growing disconnect that businesses have

with sustainability in corporate America. Some business owners are convinced that

financial gains and competitive strength are the most important part of sustainability

(Lubin & Esty, 2014). Mainstream investors believe that sustainable leadership deciphers

the company's profits and market success (Lubin & Esty, 2014). Despite what many

business owners may think, sustainability does have an effect on a firm's competitive

advantage, productivity, marketplace success, value drivers, and financial materiality

(Lubin & Esty, 2014). Investors are looking for sustainability reporting that promotes

values (Lubin & Esty, 2014). Investors appeal to sustainable data that they can identify,

measure, and relate within mainstream financial terms (Lubin & Esty, 2014).

Lawler and Worley (2012) addressed some concerns for businesses to

successfully impact customers, the environment, and the community in which it operates

to promote growth. A sustainable business produces successful financial performance

practices (Lawler & Worley, 2012). Lawler and Worley focused on Wal-Mart's

initiatives and sustainability efforts. Wal-Mart focuses on sustainability initiatives by

improving packaging initiatives, energy saving programs, and a sustainable seafood policy (Lawler & Worley, 2012). Although several of the sustainability initiatives have not paid off, they are pursuing sustainable effectiveness by implementing a green and social responsibility change program (Lawler & Worley, 2012). Most businesses environments hold entities accountable for a triple bottom line performance (Lawler & Worley, 2012).

Sardana (2014) researched globalization as a vital part of organizational sustainability efforts. Globalization has provided the competitive edge that most businesses need to possess to initiate creativity and a competitive advantage (Sardana, 2014). When an organization operates globally, leaders take into account the consumers' needs and essential competencies to maintain a successful business (Sardana, 2014). Globalization allows business leaders the opportunity to create new markets and increase wealth resulting in growth (Sardana, 2014).

Small Business

Small businesses are driving forces of governments around the world (Ho & Yang, 2012). Ho and Yang (2012) defined a *small business* as an entity that employs less than 250 people. Small business owners are usually referred to as small business entrepreneurs (Dahmen & Rodríguez, 2014). Since 2013, 30% of the entrepreneurs are women while 13% of small businesses are minority owned (Dahmen & Rodríguez, 2014). The median age of entrepreneurs averages around 37 (Dahmen & Rodríguez, 2014). During the years of 2007-2009, President Obama has entrusted in small businesses to support the economy (Dahmen & Rodríuez, 2014). Small businesses contribute to at

least 46% of the gross domestic products (GDP), providing almost 50% of employment to our private sectors (Dahmen & Rodríguez, 2014). As illustrated by Dahmen and Rodríguez (2014), small businesses are a critical part of the U.S. financial success and recovery.

The definition of a small business is a firm that has no more than three owners or a workforce that has fewer than 500 employees (Alexander, Lancaster, Gibson, & Pryor, 2011). Hurst and Pugsley (2011) described a small business as an organization that employs 1 and 19 employees. According to Hurst and Pugsley (2011), nearly 50 percent of entrepreneurs start up businesses because they desire to have the flexibility of being self-employed and setting time schedules (Hurst & Pugsley, 2011). Smaller organizations create more jobs than larger firms do (Hurst & Pugsley, 2011). De Wit and De Kok (2014) found that smaller companies indicate a higher rate of job creation. The results could change depending on a company size at the of the year and amount of jobs that is developed each year (De Wit & De Kok, 2014).

Niche marketing. Toften and Hammervoll (2013) stated that niche marketing is when a business owner targets a particular market at a lower price. Niche marketing is an entrepreneur's way of dividing his products and services into segments to meet the needs of consumers (Toften & Hammervoll, 2013). When a firm uses niche marketing, they face the possibility of company growth, increased sales, and increased competition (Toften & Hammervoll, 2013). Niche Marketing allows businesses the ability to gain dominance within a particular market (Murray & O'Neill, 2012). Niche marketing can

give an organization a competitive advantage due to the creativity and originality of the company's product (Murray & O'Neill, 2012).

Niche marketing is an essential role in the success of a business (Mlecnik, 2013). When an entrepreneur identifies a need in a market, they have often developed a vision for a product in that market (Mlecnick, 2013).Small businesses have the freedom to be creative in the areas of technology, merchandisable goods, and services (Cronin-Gilmore, 2012). Small business entrepreneurs can find another niche in the market by providing services to larger entities by acting as distributors, suppliers, and agents, allowing larger corporations the right to sell products in small businesses for a percentage (Cronin-Gilmore, 2012).

A company develops a marketing niche to differentiate themselves from any other competitor in the market (Kvam, Magnus, & Straete, 2014). Kvam et al. (2014) investigated two successful meat-processing companies that have faced challenges with maintaining quality meats due to lack of machinery and equipment upgrade (Kvam et al., 2014). The meat processing companies reduced the cost of sales by collaborating with several firms in the distribution industry order to produce better quality meat to consumers (Kvam et al., 2014).

Relationship marketing. An entrepreneur may want to establish a long-term relationship and enhance the success of the business with each client while providing a valuable service (Mwangi & Bwisa, 2013). Relationship marketing establishes personal communication between entrepreneur and customer (Mwangi & Bwisa, 2013). Relationship marketing assists businesses in generating word of mouth customers that

have potentially resulted in future growth for the company. Relationship marketing is a popular concept in schools and businesses (Khan, 2014). The relationship is between the customer and the organization with the key focus on the standards of quality and services (Khan, 2014). The relationship a consumer has with an organization can occur with the products, supplier, or employees (Khan, 2014). Long-term developed relationships help to maintain connections that are reliant on trust and communications (Khan, 2014).

One might compare a narrow versus a broad view of relationship marketing (Kumar, 2014). The first perspective is a database linked to customers for promotional efforts. The second perspective is a marketing view that allows the organization to stay in touch with a customer after a sale to maintain a bond with the customer (Kumar, 2014). Relationship marketing is for both the organization and the customer to build a mutual relationship with one another (Kumar, 2014). This mutual bond is called a collaborative relationship between the client and the organization (Kumar, 2014).

There is a concern regarding ethical issues when it came to consumers building a long relationship with his or her counterparts while maintaining satisfied customers (Perrett & Holmlund, 2013). Business owners can incorporate ethical practices into relationship marketing (Perrett & Holmlund, 2013). High moral behavior and ethical dilemma are areas some managers are eager to succeed in when it comes to quality marketing practices (Perret & Homlund, 2013). A business that has a focus on building long-term relationship marketing that is built on ethics may have an understanding that the customer comes first (Perret & Homlund, 2013).

Technology. Digital computers have existed since the 1940s and more than a third of the world's population has used computers since 2010 (Cortada, 2013). In the past seven decades, computers have developed from being complicated to user-friendly, smart, and richer in function (Cortada, 2013). According to Karanja et al. (2013) technology impacts SMEs marketing system by (a) destroying existing businesses such as the movie industry, (b) creating new industries such lasers, printers, robots, and (c) stimulating new markets such as new home appliances and allowing homeowners the capability to freeze food for additional time.

Technology is a valuable asset to any business operating in today's world (Alexander et al., 2011). Technology is necessary for smaller firms to have because it allows a firm to gain a competitive advantage in a growing market (Alexander et al., 2011). Smaller firms generate over 90% of the economic growth and development; the numbers will only increase as technology is enhanced (Alexander et al., 2011). The use of the internet has allowed organizations to market businesses when making practical business decisions while using the internet (Alexander et al., 2011; Graham-Hyde, 2014).

Innovation is when an individual adopts an idea such as a product, new technology, or service, and introduces it to the organization that involves a new administrative process within the current firm(Ndubisi, 2014). Innovation can have a significant impact on a firm's growth when it successfully planned and implemented (Ndubisi, 2014). Some entrepreneurs have found ways to commercialize their business with technology (Ndubisi, 2014; Maritz and Donovan, 2015).

Small and medium enterprises (SME) are just as innovative as larger entities. During the years of 1999 to 2009, the Taiwanese government has noticed how important SME's are to the economy (Ho & Yang, 2012). For example, by the end of 2009 Taiwan had approximately 1.23 million SMEs (Ho & Yang, 2012). Taiwan's goal was to promote and enhance the country's innovation and the change record has proven that SMEs are key successors in innovation (Ho & Yang, 2012; Lin, Shen, & Chou, 2010). Furthermore, due to advanced technology and economic growth, Taiwan's government has cited major success in innovations (Lin et al., 2010).

Small Business Success

Small businesses are driving forces for innovation. Smaller organizations are just as innovative as larger organizations (Ho & Yang, 2012). Problem-solving skills are vital to the everyday operations of a business (Briggs, 2013). A key to having a successful business is being able to effectively solve problems and make business decisions (Briggs, 2013). Three out of five businesses that employ staff failed within the first two years. Fifty percent of small businesses fail within the first 5 years (Brigg, 2013). Briggs (2013) created a success plan to assist business owners in a few sustainability efforts. If entrepreneurs learn Briggs five steps to success, a business can sustain for decades (Briggs, 2013). When a business leader faces sustainability issues, he should (a) define the problem, (b) brainstorm solutions, (c) choose a solution, (d) implement the solution, (e) review the plan, and (f) review effectiveness.

Brookes, Altinay, and Righam (2014) explored the hospitality and tourism industry for successful factors that lead management to a sustainable practice. The

strategy for a sustainable entity is to focus on its consumers, employees, community, and suppliers (Brooke et al., 2014). Stakeholders' insight regarding the involvement of a company's development strategies is critical to the growth of an organization (Brookes et al., 2014). The success of an organization is dependent on developing a strong working relationship with private and non-governmental agencies (Brookes et al., 2014). To have a successful organization, management should constantly challenge themselves to develop products, services, and markets that will give the business a competitive edge in business (Brookes et al., 2014; Halabi & Lussier, 2014). However, most businesses fail in the first few years. Therefore, entrepreneurs must understand the need to increase the business profits to remain successful in the economy (Halabi & Lussier, 2014).

SMEs can be successful and competitive in 2014 business environment if they are willing to adapt to economic changes (Brien & Hamburg, 2014; Halabi & Lussier, 2014). Smaller organizations have an advantage over larger firms because they tend to have less bureaucracy, and they can adapt to changes easily (Brien & Hamburg, 2014). When a company is transitioning towards developing a sustainable business, it is vital to measure the progress as the company evolves (Brien & Hamburg, 2014).

SMEs can remain competitive by changing markets and increasing the level of competition (Drury, 2015). Competitive strategies are associated with developing a strategy that will create a new product. Drury (2015) explained the link between product development and performance is good customer relationships, communication with staff, innovative products and services to market and develop to consumers (Drury, 2015).

It is important to realize that for any business to succeed an entrepreneur must establish a loyal relationship with the customers (Wambui & Bwisa, 2013). An ongoing relationship with customers maintains an advantage in a competitive market that other competitors may not have established with the clients (Wambui & Bwisa, 2013). This is the type of relationship will allow entrepreneurs to motivate and satisfy the needs of the consumers (Wambui & Bwisa, 2013).

Sustainable leadership. Sustainable leaders create business strategies that promote growth for the business, environment, and the society (McCann & Sweet, 2014). Leaders may be willing to create sustainable strategies that are innovative and revenue driven (McCann & Sweet, 2014). Sustainable leaders are valuable pillars to an organization (McCann & Sweet, 2014). Strong leadership is important to an organization overall work environment as well as its success (McCann & Sweet, 2014). Sustainable leaders are individuals who think beyond a company's short-term profits to maintain the organization's long-term survival practices (McCann & Sweet, 2014).

A good leader will invest in themselves. Leaders will attend classes that will help to improve, educate, and invest in the organization future (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2013). Ulrich and Smallwood (2013) stated that leadership sustainability should be evident within organization resources, leadership patterns, and consistent with organizations requirements. Leadership sustainability is leaders that do what they say they are going to do (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2013). Leadership sustainability is a continuous commitment that manager have to reflect through action (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2013). Leaders are individuals who shape the future (Ulrich & Smallwood, 2013).

Business leaders would need to create a sustainable economic system just to have a sustainable entity (Tideman et al., 2013). Business leaders need to operate with the mindset of creating profits that are long-term rather than the short-term profits that they are accustom to (Tideman et al., 2013). If business leaders adopt a long-term profitable mindset, the strategies can lead to growth and sustainable business (Tideman et al., 2013). Sustainable leaders are individuals who think in terms of development, creativity and change for the benefit of the company's stakeholders and environment (Tideman et al., 2013).

Leadership. Westcott (2014) defined a leader as an individual who has followers and leads with an effort. In the article, Westcott also differentiated leaders and managers; managers are responsible for resources, an organization's processes, systems projects, and people. The same individual can perform a leader's position (Westcott, 2014). A good leader will have the necessary skills to motivate and empower his organization through critical challenges (Westcott, 2014).

Stone-Johnson (2014) expressed the importance of leaders developing a relationship with the stakeholders. A business leader that is motivated and committed to accomplishing sustainable changes may want to develop relationships with stakeholders in hopes of performing beyond expectations (PBE) (Stone-Johnson, 2014). Leaders can gain the trust of employees, clients, business, partners, and shareholders if he collectively works together in forming a relationship to sustain and achieve (Stone-Johnson, 2014).

Leadership has a critical impact on the way an organization performs through a new form of leadership known as *purposeful resistance theory* (Prindle, 2012).

Purposeful resistance theorists focus on what leaders can do instead of who they are as individuals (Prindle, 2012). Purposeful resistance theory allows leaders the ability to recognize that organizational dynamics may influence the behavior of a leader to understand the effectiveness of a shift (Prindle, 2012). The shift may take place in leaderships thinking causing a significant change in a leader's psychological makeup (Prindle, 2012). Leaders are constantly thinking of new ways to lead an organization (Brazer, Kruse, & Conley 2014).

Kumar and Israel (2012) examined leaders' ability to motivate staff by modeling authentic behaviors. Employees are more likely to engage and identify with leadership that possess the same characteristics (Kumar & Israel, 2012). Authentic leaders are individuals who encourage others to accept his strengths, weaknesses, and encourage others to do the same (Kumar & Israel, 2012). Authentic leaders model such positive behaviors and are known as genuine leaders by his or her followers (Kumar & Israel, 2012). A leader that exhibits the characteristics of an authentic leader is aware of his core end values and will resist compromising them (Kumar & Israel, 2012).

The year 2015 is rapidly changing and organizational leaders face many challenging business issues (Dan-Shang & Chia-Chun, 2013). It is becoming evident that organizations are in need of strong leaders who can motivate the staff, build an organization, and provide the customers with great service (Dan-Shang & Chia-Chun, 2013). Dan-Shang and Chia-Chun, 2013 noted that leaders are individuals who are lead with a purpose while treating employees genuinely. Brazer et al. (2014) depicted how

important leaders are to an organization. Leaders view their roles different depending on the type of industry they lead (Brazer et al., 2014).

When an organization undergoes improvements, every individual that has some form of affiliation with that organization experiences a restructure of the changes (Merrell, 2012; Rao, 2015). Change is nearly impossible to avoid (Rao, 2015). As time changes, so will the increasing need to prepare oneself for the change (Rao, 2015). Change leaders must be persuasive individuals that are ready to change the minds of employees who are confused and fearful of moving forward (Rao, 2015). Change leaders must possess the following characteristics: (a) be willing to fulfil a purpose, (b) must cater to the people, (c) clearly state the company's vision and encourage hope, and (d) build trusting relationships with the staff (Rao, 2015).

Small Business Failures

Ropega (2011) stated that the two main causes of small business failures in the United States are inadequate management skills and a lack of business knowledge. According to a 2008 survey that Ropega (2011) reviewed of Polish entrepreneurs, a lack of management contributed to at least 11.4% of small business failures. Small business owners fail the first 5 years of business due to inadequate capital, excessive debt, and poor money management skills (Dahmen & Rodríguez, 2014; Ropega, 2011). The success and failures of small businesses rest in the hands of the entrepreneur, with the proper planning and financial literacy skills, a business can sustain beyond 5 years (Dahmen & Rodríguez, 2014).

An entrepreneur should first possess a love of and belief in what they desire to produce and provide a product to a market (Khaleefah, Rashid, Al Ajoe, & Al Husien, 2014). Entrepreneurs that do not possess the ambition, patience, and the confidence to become sustainable business owners usually fail within the first 5 years in business (Khaleefah et al., 2014). A new entrepreneur should retain the following characteristic to survive beyond 5 years, (a) creativity, (b) tenacious, (c) confident, (d) hard-working, and a (e) risk-takers. In 2010, three out of eight new businesses failed because of poor planning (Ellis, 2012).

The failure and success of an organization may be related to an entrepreneur's behavior, internal, and external elements of the business environment (Minello, Scherer, & da Costa Alves, 2014). An entrepreneur's professional attitude adds quality to the future orientation of the business (Minello et al., 2014). The right attitude allows proprietors the ability to creative leadership while occupying a place in the market (Minello et al., 2014).

Although a significant amount of businesses fails within the first 5 years of operation, entrepreneurship is well respected in a developing economy (Ucbasaran, et al., 2013). Ucbasaran et al. (2013) indicated that business failure could sometimes be good for the society and economy because it opens doors to new business ventures and funded resources. Failure can also lead to a wealth of knowledge if the entrepreneur chooses to capitalize on the knowledge (Ucbasaran et al., 2013). How a leader perceives, learn from, or respond to failure speaks volume on whether or not he or she could be business owners (Ucbasaran et al., 2013).

Some of the most creative individuals have encountered failure at one point in his or her lives (Whipple, 2012). Michael Jordan, Ted, Turner, Walt Disney, and Thomas Edison have all experienced failure and great success (Whipple, 2012). Michael Jordan missed 9,000 shots in his career and Edison failed over 1,000 times at successfully building the light bulb (Whipple, 2012). Each one of theses creative individuals were risk takers. Every failure may teach a lesson (Whipple, 2012). Failing can also lead to resilience, persistence, and tenacity (Ellis, 2012; Whipple 2012).

Failure factors. Fear provokes a lack of motivation, which transcends into a failure to generate creativity (Grant, 2012). When entrepreneurs are experiencing fear, it is better if he control his thoughts and focus on strategies that can motivate him into a different shift in thinking (Grant, 2012). Positive emotions promote broader thoughts (Grant, 2012). Positive thinking can develop new ideas and resources for a sustainable business (Grant, 2012).

Karanja et al. (2013) researched competition as one of the major business challenges in the world between businesses. There is a high demand for small businesses such hair salons, retail shops, hotels, welding, photo shops, hardware, and electronic shops (Karanja et al., 2013). Competition is 64% of small business day-to-day operations, followed by a lack of capital at 21%, and 15% of employee turnover (Karanja et al., 2013).

Many entrepreneurs do not follow and maintain systematic accounting practices (Rajavel, 2013). Even if entrepreneurs understand the accounting practices, some entrepreneurs may not analyze, understand, and interpret the data the same (Rajavel,

2013). This may eventually cause the productivity to decrease, the quality of the product will deteriorate, and the cost of capital may increase.

A company's success and failures are based on the organization's economic condition, industry, lack of business knowledge, and its entry and exit into the market (Cader & Leatherman, 2011). A firm's size and the type of industry an entrepreneur is operating within could determine whether a business will have a survival rate that will be long term (Cader & Leatherman, 2011). Another contributing factor for a firm's sustainability is an organizations age, as an organization's ability to survive increases as it ages (Cader & Leatherman, 2011).

Capital. Pursuing a loan from a bank for the first time can be discouraging for an entrepreneur (Atherton, 2012). Smaller organizations may face difficulties as first time borrowers due to the financial constraints the firms face (Atherton, 2012). Some new organizations may lack trading history and sometime human capital (Atherton, 2012; Shabaya, 2014). Parsa, van der Rest, Jean-Pierre, Smith, Parsa and Bujisic (2015) investigated a lack of capital as one of the contributing factors to small businesses closures. Parsa et al. (2015) found that firms with less than $50,000 in starting capital were more likely to fail in business than the companies that have an adequate amount of capital to sustain growth.

It is vital that an entrepreneur have access to funding to assist with the startup of the business and company growth (Paglia & Harjoto, 2014). SMEs that have access to some form of private equity or venture capital have a higher survival rate than entrepreneurs who do not seek funding (Paglia & Harjoto, 2014). Private equity funding

and venture capital increased business sales and employment growth over three consecutive years after a business was funded (Paglia & Harjoto, 2014).

One of the primary goals of an entrepreneur is to remain in business and have adequate access to financing when necessary (Rahaman, 2011). A firm has a better advantage when leadership has access to capital funding (Rahaman, 2011). Entrepreneurs face challenges accessing capital from banks, credit cards, or other finance companies for the startup of the small business (Casey, 2012). Most start-up entities face challenges when looking for outside resources because they are a new business that has no previous banking history (Casey, 2012).

Entrepreneurs can use bootstrapping as another alternative for funding to assist the business in accessing capital (Geho & Frakes, 2013). Financing for bootstrapping methods are more expensive than loans at a financial institute (Geho & Frakes, 2013). According to Geho and Frakes (2013), there are five methods of bootstrap financing used by SMEs: (1) non-bank loans, (2) cash advances, (3) asset-based lending, (4) lease back, and (5) peer-to-peer loan. Each method of bootstrapping is determined by entrepreneur creditworthiness and timeliness regarding how they will access capital. Entrepreneurs with access to capital have the possibility to increase business sales, products, services, production, and additional investments (Geho & Frakes, 2013).

Business Sustainability

A business is sustainable when there are no negative impacts on the community, society, economy, or local environments triple bottom line. Strohhecker and Größler expounded on ways businesses can grow and fail. Most business owners strive to have a

sustainable business (Strohhecker & Größler, 2012). Growth is one of the most vital

objectives in having a sustainable practice (Strohhecker & Größler, 2012). A business

reflects sustainability when it can demonstrate an accumulation of relevant resources

such as customers, product usefulness, raw material, and customer satisfactions

(Strohhecker & Größler, 2012. A sustainable business leads to a stable state of operation.

Strohhecker and Größler investigated strategies management may use in the

implementation of sustainable strategies while exploring the difficulties they may face

during operations (Strohhecker & Größler, 2012).

    While promoting to achieve a sustainable business, an entrepreneur must

understand the evolving culture, employees, and a healthy life base (Blachfellner, 2012).

When management considers failure as a dilemma, then the interdependence to secure

environmental and social success factors becomes an evident issue (Blachfellner, 2012).

Not only should entrepreneurs consider innovation as the answer to the company's

sustainability efforts, but they should also support a working culture that aims to value

ethical principles (Blachfellner, 2012). Entrepreneurs should retain characteristics of

strength, intuition, wisdom, and responsibility as a whole to create a sustainable industry

(Blachfellner, 2012).

    In light of small business sustainability, Blaga (2013) identified a sustainable

business as an organization that has a sustainable strategy and a competitive advantage in

a market that has challenges, stakeholder's expectations, and opportunities. An industry

can become sustainable by adopting an improved system of governance that it will

promote economic performance. A sustainable business is created by being transparent

and sharing risk and power with stakeholders (Blaga, 2013). Management is called to lead businesses on a journey of sustainability (Blaga, 2013). An entrepreneur that is committed to sustainability demonstrates the following business actions (a) ensure the health and safety of the business and its employees, (b) promote innovation as a form of competitive advantage, (c) meet the expectations of lenders and stakeholders, (d) improve employee morale in the workplace, (e) provide user-friendly products and services to its consumer, (f) attract and retain talented staff, and (g) provide products and services that are eco-friendly (Blaga, 2013).

Over the years, more companies are becoming aware of the importance of sustainability (Blaga, 2013). Business leaders are also fulfilling investors' confidence by providing investors with the necessary information and enhanced tools (Blaga, 2013). The holistic business practice will lead to a sustainable business.

The retail and hospitality industries ensure sustainable consumer services (Chen, 2015). A manager's role in the retail and hospitality industry is to provide employee training on any changes that can affect or improve a customer's experience (Chen, 2015). A business can retain and gain new customers if an entity provide guests with innovative technology, good quality service, and listens to consumer's needs (Chen, 2015). A business can learn to develop new opportunities when an entity integrates the ideas and thoughts of customers into the company sustainability efforts (Chen, 2015).

Nadim and Lussier (2010) examined sustainability as a competitive advantage and a significant part of the long-term success of a business. Business leaders need the community to aid business owners by both contributing and developing the business

(Nadim & Lussier, 2010). Part of business sustainability efforts is building a competitive advantage by creating lasting relationships with the community (Nadim & Lussier, 2010).

Transition and Summary

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the strategies that salon business owners needed to succeed in business beyond 5 years. Small business sustainability is an evolving topic that would continuously be on the minds of entrepreneurs for centuries to come (Coleman, 2013). The background of the topic gives insight to present and future SBOs that are seeking the knowledge and understanding of how to have a sustainable business in a competitive market and a slow or growing economy. The general problem addressed the issue that 51% of SBO's have failing businesses near the 5-year mark (DOL, 2014; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). The issue has a sizable impact on economic growth in the United States because small business counts for a large portion of job creation (SBA, 2011). The section provided entrepreneurs with the necessary knowledge that they might need to maintain a sustainable business.

In this section, I have addressed the issue of the high rate of small business failures. The section also explained the nature of the study, the research question, and operational definitions. I have also elaborated on how the contents of the study fit into the research. As illustrated, I have utilized current academic literature review to expound on the issues of sustainability.

In Section 2, I included my role as a researcher in gathering the data from various journal articles, dissertations, books, and peer-reviewed sources. I also formed interviews with salon business owners to gather some input on business creation, operations, and

marketing. The use of qualitative method and case study design gave me the lead that I needed to seek lived experiences. There is also a discussion of ethical research, data analysis, reliability and validity in Section 2. Section 3 provides the results of the study, implications for social change, and recommendations for future research.

Section 2: The Project

Section 2 describes the methodology and research process in its entirety. The study did not consist of statistical data that may be used during a quantitative study. Therefore, a qualitative case study approach was the best method used for the study. The purpose of this section was to get detailed information on restating the purpose statement, ensure the role of the researcher in the data collection process, participants, research method, and design, data collection, and reliability and validity.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the strategies that salon business owners needed to succeed in business beyond 5 years. The targeted population consisted of two salon business owners who have started and sustained a small business for a minimum of 5 years in the Savannah, Georgia area. Data collection techniques included interviews, marketing, and other business documents. The study findings may impact business practices by providing strategies and technology salon business owners can use to increase the practice success rate.

Role of the Researcher

According to Wisdom, Cavaleri, and Onwuegbuzie (2012), the role of the researcher is to grasp the phenomena from the perception of the participants. I acknowledge that I have a worldview, which I view through my personal lens. The researcher's role is to be an active listener while the data unravels and tells the story (Wisdom et al., 2012) and to view through the lens of the participant. In a qualitative study, I was the data collection instrument (Hurt & McLaughlin, 2012). I minimized any

bias by collecting the necessary data in an honest way and by asking questions that are

relevant to the study as instructed by Chenail (2011) and Miyazaki and Taylor (2008). As

a researcher, I collected data for the study by directly engaging with other salon business

owners. I have a personal association with the topic because I am a small hair salon

owner that has been in operation for approximately 5 years. I hold a license as a Master

Cosmetologist for more than 12 years, and I have possessed a small business license for

more than 5 years. To remain cognizant of possible bias, I did not interview salon owners

that I personally know or have done business with and I have not reported non-existing

data as part of the study as noted by Hurt and McLaughlin (2012) and Simundic (2013).

As the researcher, I followed the three ethical principles of the Belmont Report by (a)

minimizing any potential risk to participants, (b) treating each participant fair and equal,

and (c) giving each participant the right to withdraw from interviews at any time (Sims,

2010). I also arranged face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions with salon

business owners to explore business strategies on sustainability. The interviews allowed

me to ask open-ended questions that are relevant to investigating and determining ways

small business owners can resolve sustainability problems. During the interview process,

I gave each interviewee respect, treated participants with kindness, and interviewed each

participant in a safe, clean, and friendly environment as discussed by Adams and Miles

(2013). My role in the study, as a small business salon owner, was a key part and added

to the validity of the study by collaborating with other salon owners while finding ideas

that they might have used to assist in solving business challenges as noted by Kyvik

(2013). I reported the findings of the interviews without fabricating the results and not drawing my own personal opinion as noted by Simundic (2013).

Participants

To identify participant's eligibility criteria for the study, I used the Georgia Secretary of State Board database system to review a list of all active salon owners in the Savannah, Georgia area. The database system listed 11,574 hair salons in the state of Georgia, and approximately 500 of the hair salons are located in the Savannah, Georgia area (Georgia Secretary of State [SOS], 2014). The database supplied the names, locations, and numbers of each salon (Georgia Secretary of State [SOS], 2014). I chose the Savannah region since it is a larger city and it is minutes away from my home.

To gain access to participants, I used prior professional and personal contacts of the entrepreneurs that I have gained a relationship with while attending hair shows and continuing education classes with over the past 8 years. I selected at least 10 small business salon owners from the database contact list to ensure that I have enough participants that aligned with my research question. From the contact list of 10 participants, there were two participants selected for the study through a letter of introduction (see Appendix C) and an invitation letter (see Appendix D). Each participant needed to have at least 5 or more years of sustainable operations. I contacted each participant by phone to retrieve the participant email addresses to provide him or her with information on the study. I also obtained a signed consent form from each participant (see Appendix A) before conducting interviews. I protected the identity of the participants and the organizations by not disclosing their names in my study.

The sample size of two salon businesses was chosen because it was essential to the planning of a case study research as noted by Hyatt (2013) and Yin (2014). I also took notes, recorded all interviews, and stored each of the participant's information on a thumb drive. After the research is completed, I will keep all documents and evidence in a safe until it has reached its 5-year expiration date. I will then destroy the evidence by shredding it.

Research Method and Design

This section allowed me the opportunity to elaborate on the research design and the various methods I used during the research process. I extended my research from the Nature of Study while updating its validity. I used a qualitative method approach for the study.

Research Method

I chose qualitative methodology because it allowed me the opportunity to understand the entrepreneur's beliefs, experiences, behavior, and interactions during the interview process as noted by Pathak, Jena, and Kalra (2013). The use of qualitative research allowed me the ability to add a new aspect to the study while also adding the participant's voices. I chose the method over quantitative methods because it did not require the use of numerical data and additional methods that can circulate by other researchers as posited by Nakkeeran and Zodpey (2012) and Pathak et al. (2013). I decided not to use a mix method methodology because it forces quantitative and qualitative to share the same research questions, collective data, and analyses (Yin, 2014). Given the significance of gaining a deeper understanding of the small business

sustainability phenomenon, the qualitative methodology was best suited for the study

(Humphrey, 2014).

Research Design

My initial design for the study was phenomenological. During the time of

exploring my research on the study, I later decided that case study design was more

appropriate for the research topic. Phenomenological design allows a researcher to reflect

on lived experiences while describing how humans did involve or directed ourselves in

different areas of the world (Poulsen & Thogersen, 2011). I did not find

phenomenological design relevant to the study because the case study design allowed me

to add a theoretical perspective to the problem as noted by Petty, Thomson, and Stew

(2012). Ethnography requires longer periods in the field and direct observation of

participants (Horst, Hjorth, & Tacchi, 2012; Yin, 2014). That is the reason I did not

choose ethnography for the study.

A qualitative case study approach was appropriate for the study because it allows

a researcher to put all the data together from the interviews to corroborate the findings

(Yin, 2014). Case study design allows a researcher the ability to focus on one situation or

one participant (Hays & Wood, 2011). The qualitative case study approach (Yin, 2014)

provided appropriate insight into the key mechanisms that revealed hidden roles in the

success of small businesses. My data reached saturation once there were no gaps in the

theory, no new themes, or findings, and any unexplained phenomena (Francis et al.,

2010).

Population and Sampling

The research highlighted small business success within the first 5 years of operation. The research design was a case study reflecting the success of small hair salon businesses in the Savannah Georgia area. The sample method I used in the study was purposeful because the method allowed me to select the participants according to the aim of the research as noted by Langford (2012. Purposeful sampling is a technique used by researchers to make a connection between reports that were not visible before (Coyne, 1997; Patton, 2002; Suri, 2011). According to Langford (2012), the researcher can obtain favorable information by using a selective few when using purposeful sampling in research. I selected two small business leaders in the cosmetology industry who has successfully sustained business beyond 5 years. I interviewed the owners of the hair salons because they have a great deal of in-depth information on how the business sustained during the decline and incline of the economy. Before the interview process, I informed each participant that the interviews would take place in a nice, calming environment, ensuring participants that all shared information is confidential. I collected data from the two experienced salon business owners using open-ended interview questions during the interview process.

I selected each participant based on the number of years in business, knowledge, and observation of practice (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973). Data reaches saturation once the information from participants becomes repetitive, no new themes are identified, and the study can be replicated (Walker, 2012). After analyzing all interviews from the salon owners, codes were created using NVivo software. If there are repetitive themes or no

new themes discovered, then I would know that the data has reached saturation as described by Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006).

Ethical Research

My role as a researcher involved me reading and adhering to Walden's guidelines when collecting and writing my doctoral study (Walden University, 2014). It was also my job to understand the importance of following Walden's Institutional Review Board (IRB) process. There is no debate that data collection that includes people or anything similar must have an IRB approval before the project can begin (Chappy & Gaberson, 2012). IRB's objective is to make sure that anyone that is participating in research is treated ethically and voluntarily agrees to participate in the study (Chappy & Gaberson, 2012; Klitzman, 2013). To protect the well-being and security of the participants, the National Institute of Health (NIH) has set mandates for protecting human rights. I completed the NIH's web-based training. Although the study included no harm or risks to participants, I provided each participant with a written consent form that explained the purpose of the study (see Appendix A). Each participant received the consent form prior to the interview by email for early review. I also read over the consent form before the interview to ensure that participants understood his or her role in the research. There were no coercion or incentives offered for any participation in the research. Prior to each face-to-face interview beginning, I presented each participant with another copy of the consent form to ensure that everyone fully understood his or her rights to participate in the study. Each participant had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences, as described by Chappy and Gabberson (2012). All personal information

was confidential kept in a safe on a thumb drive that is password protected, and will

remain so for 5 years before disposal. I will destroy the information by shredding all

paper evidence, and I will remove all information from the thumb drive. I conducted all

research under Walden University IRB.

Data Collection

This section allows me the opportunity to discuss the three areas of data

collection. The areas consisted of the instruments used in the research, data collection

techniques, and data organization technique. Each area is significant to the study and also

addresses how well the researcher collects and organizes the data for analysis.

Instruments

I selected a qualitative case study method because it allows the researcher an

opportunity to make a significant contribution to a study (Yin, 2014). The information for

the study came from a collection of peer-reviewed journal articles, books, dissertations,

mass media, direct observations, and other seminal works. As the researcher of the study,

I am the primary data collection instrument (Yin, 2014). The data collection instrument

chosen for the study consisted of semistructured face-to-face interviews with salon

business owners. Detailed semistructured interviews consisted of intensive listening,

thorough note taking, and sufficient preparation (Qu & Dumay, 2011). According to Yin

(2014), the interview questions allowed a researcher to ask the why and how in the small

business sustainability phenomenon. I chose the instrument because it allowed me to ask

open-ended questions more comfortably without being overwhelmed with data unrelated

to the research study as discussed by Panagiotakopoulos (2011). Semistructured

interviews are the most common of all qualitative research (Qu & Dumay, 2011). When a

researcher is conducting semistructured interviews, a lack of resources can be the reason

why only a limited amount of business owners participated (Panagiotakopoulos, 2011).

There are several limitations that a researcher may encounter when conducting

semistructured interviews. First, a researcher must be able to draw complete narratives

from an interviewee (Qu & Dumay, 2011). For example, when an interviewee discusses

an area of great interest, the interviewer must be able to get the interviewee to expound

on it further. Second, an interviewer must be able to get inside of the life world of the

business owners to explain and interpret it to others (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Unlike

structured and unstructured, it elicits elaborate responses from participants and it is a

useful way of gathering research information (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

The study consisted of six interview questions (see Appendix B). Each

interviewee was audio recorded with the consent of participants to ensure accuracy. In

addition to audio recording the interviews, I took notes. After I concluded the interviews,

I transcribed the interview and the information provided by the interviewee to ensure that

the information reflected my observation. After transcription of the interview was

complete, I validated the information by doing a follow-up interview with the participants

to close any gaps that may have emerged between the researcher and interviewees by

using member checking as described by Buchbinder (2011).

Data Collection Technique

The data collection techniques for the study derived from online and local library visits to collect data from peer reviewed journal articles, books, dissertations, and other seminal works.

When conducting a qualitative research interview, a researcher must properly plan, intensively listen to interviewees, act respectful, and take good notes (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Six open-ended questions guided the in depth interview process (see Appendix B). Prior to each interview, I gained the trust of each participant, developed a working relationship with each participant, and obtained a written consent before data collection (see Appendix A). I conducted semistructured face-to-face interviews using interview notes and audio technology to record each interview. To ensure reliability, I presented the consent form during each interview making sure that each participant was aware of the purpose, privacy, and procedures of the study. I hosted each interview in a secure and public place at a date and time that was suitable for each participant. I also assured each participant that the interview would not last longer than 60 minutes. I audio recorded each interview to ensure the accuracy of each participant's response. Member checking allows participants the ability to evaluate the adequacy of data and its results in research and to ascertain the meaning of participant's responses (Reilly, 2013). After I transcribed each interview, I performed member checking by providing participants with a summary of the transcription to ensure that I have accurately captured each participant's interpretations and meanings. If respondents disagreed with any of the transcribed responses, I made notes on the transcript specifying how the responses changed.

I used methodological triangulation to compare the transcriptions, interviews, and observations to other journal articles, books, and seminal works to verify validity of the study. In addition to interviews, I reviewed the company business plan to verify if they are on the right path to potential risks or rewards. The purpose of a business plan is to assist the entrepreneur with defining and explaining how they operated in the marketplace (Botha & Robertson, 2014). After IRB approval, I conducted a pilot study involving one interview with a salon business owner near my home. The pilot study provided me with the opportunity to scope out ideas, clues, and approaches that may give me a clearer understanding of my study as described by Morin (2013). During the pilot study, I used my actual interview questions and audio recorder in hopes of gaining helpful feedback from the interviewee.

According to Rowley (2012), many researchers in business, management, and areas of social sciences use interviews to assist in collecting the research data. Face to face interviews offer both the interviewer and interviewee verbal exchanges while the interviewer is acquiring to gain an understanding on a specific topic of discussion (Rowley, 2012). Qu and Dumay (2011) stated that semi-structured interviews are the most commonly used design when conducting research. The advantages of using semi-structured interviews allow the interviewee to respond more elaborately to the questions. Semi-structured interviews are more flexible and are capable of revealing important facts that are often hidden (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Likewise, Harvey (2011) stated that semi-structured interviews show an interviewee that the researcher has the knowledge and relevant information on the topic. The disadvantages of conducting semi-structured

interviews are (a) researchers lack the interviewing skills required to conduct interviews, (b) interviewer fail to plan the time and the research becomes expensive and (c) interviewer must be able to ask effective questions (Qu & Dumay, 2011). An unstructured interview assumes that the interviewer does not have all the relevant facts or know all the necessary questions to ask during the interview (Qu & Dumay, 2011).

Data Organization Techniques

I organized all data using NVivo software and an Excel spreadsheet. NVivo aided in organizing and coding of common themes throughout the proposal. NVivo allowed me the opportunity to find and retrieve references from my computer and import data from Word, OneNote, or Excel to make data retrieval simpler as discussed by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2011). NVivo software is also equipped with a function that assists users in transcribing recorded audio during the interview (Castleberry, 2014).

To ensure privacy, I followed the IRB's requirements by protecting human rights of all information retrieved during the research process as noted by Cook, Hoas, and Joyner (2013). I did so by password protecting all electronic data, audio, and transcription on a thumb drive. I also have all paper notes, files, and thumb drive safely secured in a safe for 5 years. After 5 years, I will delete all information on the thumb drive and shred all files and paper notes.

Data Analysis Technique

Miles and Huberman (1994) stated qualitative research is often heavy on the findings and descriptions and lighter on the how a researcher retrieves the information. When using a data analysis technique, researchers should use a technique that maintained

the accuracy of each participant's perspective (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data

analysis technique used in the study was methodological triangulation, which allows a

researcher to combine multiple methods to gather data (Yin 2014). The use of multiple

sources provides evidence, verification, and validity while allowing a researcher to

address a broader range of issues (Yin, 2014). Moreover, case study findings will be

convincing to any researcher if interviews, notes, documents, observations, or other

sources compliment a study (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The semi-structured interviews began with interviewing two salon business

owners. I asked each participant six open-ended questions that supported the research

question: what strategies do salon business owners need to succeed in business beyond 5

years (see Appendix B). During each interview, I wrote quality notes while audio

recording the interviews for accuracy. I uploaded, transcribed, and coded the data using

NVivo software. NVivo can use each participant's voice recording as uncontaminated

evidence of knowledge (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014). Using NVivo, a code such as p1 and

p2 was created for the participants to ensure confidentiality. NVivo assists in coding

common themes, key words, or phrases throughout the research. I used the business

problem, conceptual framework, and the research question in NVivo as a guide to

compare codes with new and existing literature. I used the themes later in the research to

ensure credible and valid interpretation as posited by Tsang (2013). Finally, I related the

findings back to the conceptual framework and existing body of knowledge to enhance

the validity.

Reliability and Validity

In this section, I discuss how I sustained reliability and validity in the proposal. I also identified and addressed dependability, creditability, transferability, and confirmability. Data triangulation and member checking confirmed the validity of the proposal.

Reliability

According to Yin (2014), a researcher can establish reliability of data by being consistent and repeating the data multiple times throughout a study. Consistency increases the credibility of data and it eliminates doubt from the research (Svensson & Doumas, 2013). In qualitative studies, credibility is determined once the researcher returns to participants to ensure that the researcher has accurate representations of each participant's experiences through the process of member checking (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). In the research, credibility was determined by returning to each participant with the transcription of each interview allowing the participants to review his or her responses for accuracy. I recorded changes in the transcript by noting where the participant elaborated on the original answer.

Validity

Validity in research represents quality, accuracy, and integrity (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Like Amerson (2011) and Yin (2014), sources of validity may include observation, archival records, documentation, interview, and other sources. In the study, I used methodological triangulation to validate the findings. All sources and questions triangulated on the same set of research questions. I follow up with participants through

the member checking process to ensure that I captured the meaning of the responses. I

provided an in depth description of population sample to transfer the findings from one

group to another as described by Thomas and Magilvy (2011). Transferability occurred

once the study reflects credibility and dependability (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011);

however, transferability is left up to the reader to decide (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Confirmability transpired when NVivo verified all the data and no new themes ensued.

Lastly, validity concluded once there were no new measurements or themes that reflected

the concepts being studied (Yin, 2014), which is known as reaching data saturation.

Transition and Summary

In Section 1, I outlined the purpose and problem statement of the study. In this

section, I also discussed the background of the study, the research question, the interview

questions, conceptual framework, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations, and the

significance of the study. In section 1, I provided a literature review that entailed a

synthesis of the various sources that supported the qualitative case study research.

In Section 2 of the research study, I discussed the plan and purpose of conducting

the qualitative case study. Section 2 also contained my role as the researcher, participant

selection process, conditions for the research method and design, population sampling,

ethical research guidelines, and an overview of the data collection and analysis. Section 2

contained a brief discussion of the validity and reliability of the research as well the

interview questions that supports the semi-structured open-ended interviews.

In Section 3 I presented my study findings, how they align with the research

questions and conceptual framework. The section also contains data interpretations. I also

discussed how the data interpretations apply to small business sustainability. Finally, I

comprised my reflections of the study giving advice on how it related to the implications

of social change and future research.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Section 3 contains (a) a thorough presentation of findings, (b) application to

professional practice, (c) implications for social change, (d) recommendations for actions,

(e) recommendations for further research, (f) reflections, and (g) a concluding statement.

The section also includes research results conducted in relation to the central research

question and conceptual framework, detailed descriptions of main themes, and the

outcomes guiding this study.

Overview of Study

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the

strategies that salon business owners need to succeed in business beyond 5 years. I

conducted semistructured face-to-face interviews with two salon business owners located

in the Savannah, Georgia area. Semistructured face-to-face interviews allowed me the

ability to gain the participants trust by having one on one personal contact with each

interviewee during the interview process. I used NVivo 10 qualitative analysis software

to organize participants' responses and company business plans to identify and create

common themes for coding. After transcribing the interviews, I then conducted member

checking to ensure that I captured the meaning of the participants responses (Houghton,

Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Reilly, 2013).

To answer the research question: what strategies do salon business owners need to

succeed in business beyond 5 years? I selected two salon owners who have extensive

experience in the cosmetology industry and have been in business for more than 5 years.

Using semistructured interviews, I was able to ask each participant six interview

questions (see Appendix B) that enhanced my knowledge regarding increasing small

business sustainability rate beyond 5 years. I triangulated the data to obtain the same

perspective from various data sources (Walsh, 2013). In addition to semistructured

interviews, I compared transcriptions, interview responses, direct observation, and

business plans to insure validity using methodological triangulation. After each interview

was transcribed, I imported the data into Nvivo 10 qualitative analysis software to assist

me in discovering key themes. To obtain clarification of the interview information, I

performed member checking by providing the participants with a summarized transcript

of the interview ensure that information provided was accurate (Houghton et al., 2013;

Reilly 2013). Based on the research question, analysis of the interview questions and

company documents, I identified the following main themes: (a) key strategies salon

business owners needed to succeed beyond 5 years, (b) effective strategies for a

successful business, (c) determination and dedication, and (d) professionalism.

Presentation of the Findings

I used semistructured interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of the

strategies salon business owners need to sustain in business beyond 5 years. In addition to

semistructured interviews, I also observed the participants and reviewed company

business plans concerning the strategies to enhance the triangulation of data for this

study. I conducted interviews in the location of participant's choice. Each interview did

not last more than one hour. After I conducted each interview, I transcribed the

interviews and uploaded the transcription and company business plans into NVivo 10

analysis software to identify common themes and codes on each document. I replaced the

names of each salon owner with the names of P1 and P2 protecting their identities. Once all data was coded, and there were no new themes, I then performed member checking by providing each participant with a summarized transcription to close any possible gaps or inaccurate statements. Data analysis of the interview responses indicated 10 essential themes: (a) key strategies salon business owners needed to succeed beyond 5 years, (b) effective strategies for a successful business, (c) dedication and determination, and (d) professionalism, (e) education, (f) training, (g) skills, (h) customer service, (i) niche marketing, and (j) technology. This presentation of findings deliberately excluded any redundant information. The overarching research question guided the study was as follows: what strategies do salon business owners need to succeed in business beyond 5 years?

Two salon owners in business for more than 5 years in the Savannah Georgia area participated in the study. Each participant had extensive knowledge and experience of the industry as a cosmetologist and a salon owner. The conceptual framework for this qualitative case study was general systems theory. General systems theory entails how an organization practice and effective management work together as a whole system to ensure that the goals of an organization is met (Montgomery & Oladapo, 2014; von Bertalanffy, 1972). General systems theory applies to small businesses and their owners when numerous strategies work together to achieve the salon's goal sustaining beyond 5 years (Ponomaryov, 2006; Soojin et al., 2011).

Participants Demographics

The participants in this study included salon business owners located in the Savannah, Georgia area. In this study, I searched the Georgia Secretary of State cosmetology board website for at least 10 active salon businesses located in this geographical area (see Table 1). From the list, only six participants were receptive and two purposely chosen to participate in semistructured audio recorded interviews.

The salon owners had more than 20 years of business experience in the industry, which satisfied the criteria of this study. In coordinating the interviews, I scheduled a meeting time and place that was conducive to the participants work schedules. During the interview, I asked each participant six semistructured open-ended questions ensuring that I use the interview protocol as a guide (Appendix B). Both participants responded to all six of the interview questions. After concluding each interview, I collected the participants' company business plans. Once I transcribed the interviews, I uploaded the transcription and business plans into NVivo observing common themes and codes on all the data collected. I then conducted member checking with the participants. I supplied the participants with a summary of the transcription to ensure that I captured the meaning of their responses and word choice (Reilly, 2013).

Table 1

Small Salon Businesses Contacted

Participants Responses	Number	Percentage of Total
Total business contacted	10	100.0%
Not qualified	2	20.0%
Declined	2	20.0%

Not available/no responses	2	20.0%
Agreed	4	40.0%

Emergent Theme 1: Key Strategies for Salon Owners to Succeed in Business beyond 5 Years

Key strategies for salon owners to succeed in business beyond 5 years was the first main theme. Participant responses to interview questions number one, two, and five indicated the strategies salon owners used to sustain their business. The literature was supportive with the data collected regarding the theme. Some themes emerged from the findings as being important strategies in assisting the salon owner with sustaining beyond 5 years. In some cases, the data collected was supportive with the literature regarding the emergent themes. There were several themes identified by P1 and P2 responses, confirmed by research, and company documents, that were prevalent from the first main theme. Company business plans and participants responses indicated the importance of having sustainable businesses. Chinomona (2013) noted education and training as a powerful asset to the development and growth of a small business. Chinomona also indicated that training increases a business success rate while business failures are linked to poor management skills.

Findings of this study indicated that having these simple strategies in place is essential for a company to sustain beyond 5 years. Consequently, having a cosmetology license from the state in which you are practicing is a beneficial factor in sustaining a salon business. Van Rijn et al. (2013) noted education and training is important to most

entrepreneurs because this aids them in strengthening their knowledge and skills.

Education beyond high school is essential for a cosmetologist to ensure that they have the

appropriate training, skills, and development to work with various hair products and

chemicals (Madnani & Khan, 2013). The findings of this study is consistent with the

research of Barrett (2015), who noted that the right training opportunities can assist

business owners and their employees with maintaining the necessary skills that are vital

to the sustainability of the company.

My analysis of participants' responses and company documents indicated

strategies salon owners (see Table 2) needed to succeed in business beyond 5 years.

Building on the conceptual framework for this study, which is the general systems theory,

the first main theme showed strategies that small business owners might use to sustain

their practices. This is an indication that one strategy is not sufficient for a business to use

in order to sustain, which aligns with von Bertalanffy's (1972) general system theory,

requiring multiple factors working together as a whole to facilitiate organizational

success. Therefore, education, training, and skills all work together as a system to sustain

salon businesses.

Table 2 shows the basic themes that generated from the data analysis regarding

the strategies salon owners needed to succeed in business beyond 5 years. The strategies

that generated from the data analysis were (a) education, (b) training, and (c) skills.

Table 2 reflects the frequency of occurrence of basic themes confirming that

strategies are beneficial in assisting salon businesses to sustain beyond 5 years. Through

company business plans and participant responses, the findings of the study indicated that

basic strategies are necessary in a salon to have successful business. These findings

confirmed with previous research by Ameeq-ul-Ameeq and Hanif (2013).

Table 2

Frequency of Themes for Key Strategies Salon Owners Need to Succeed in Business

Beyond 5 Years.

Theme	Reference	% of frequency of occurrence
Education	6	40.0%
Training	5	33.3%
Skills	3	26.7%

Education. Company documents and participant responses exhibited small

business owners understanding regarding the importance of education in a successful

business. P1 discussed the importance of having an education in order to obtain a

cosmetology license in the state of Georgia. P2 discussed having at least a General

Education Development (GED) Certificate or high school diploma in order to take the

test to obtain a cosmetology license in the state of Georgia. P1's response confirmed P2's

remarks on the education requirements in the state of Georgia. Apostolico et al., (2014)

noted a similar finding, indicating education is important to young inspiring

cosmetologist seeking to enter the growing field.

P1 specified that all cosmetologists are given the opportunity to attend continuing

education courses throughout their years of working. Both P1 and P2 responses aligned

with the information listed in their business plans. The company business plans reflected

how they would effectively take advantage of the conferences, training, hair events, and

continual education courses to enhance their knowledge in the field of cosmetology. The findings of this study were also consistent with the existing body of knowledge on Ulrich and Smallwood (2013), who noted a good leader would find ways to invest in themselves. SBOs would also find ways to succeed in business beyond 5 years by constantly educating themselves on the various products and styles.

Training. P1 noted that she attends monthly classes to gain knowledge on hair care products and the various trends (P1 interview, 8/19/2015; confirmed transcript review on 8/22/2015). P2 discussed how she teaches multiple classes several times a year educating cosmetologist on the latest chemicals and products for a well-known product line that has been servicing the cosmetology industry for over 40 years. P2 also discussed how she attends regular training courses to stay well informed of the products that she teach to other cosmetologists (P2 interview 8/20/2015; confirmed member checking 8/22/2015). Both participants mentioned that training increases their skills and knowledge in the industry. Kayemuddin (2012) revealed small business leaders gain nearly 20% of their knowledge from training and education and 80% develops through on the job work related experience. Entrepreneurs who prepare themselves with necessary education and training have the potential to capitalize on their skills in other areas in their business (Alasadi & Alsabbagh, 2015). Both participants and company business plans indicated that training is critical to the sustainability of their salons.

Skills. Skills showed the least frequency among all three strategies (see Table 2). P1 and P2 both related skills to being an important strategy to their business. P2 discussed skills as a part of communication and a form of art when providing a hair

service to a customer. P2 further expressed her artistic skills on coloring, cutting, and styling a customer hair. During the interview with P2, I observed pictures of her clients' hair that she styled over the years (personal communication, 8/20/2015). P1 spoke about her skills evolving since being in the industry more than 20 years. Wen-Long, We Guu, and Chiang (2014) shared their views on entrepreneurs that found ways to advance their skills were also able to recognize opportunity. Previous research (Alasadi & Alsabbagh, 2015; Ho & Yang, 2012) supported the approach.

Emergent Theme 2: Effective Strategies for a Successful Business

The responses from interview question one identifies effective strategies salon owners may implement to have a successful business. Within this theme, there were three other strategies revealed by company documents, P1 and P2 responses, and confirmed by prior research. I found that in prior research that providing quality customer service, niche marketing, and having technology in one's business to assist one are among the most effective strategies for a successful business. A review of company business plans corroborated with P1 and P2 responses by revealing quality customer service, niche marketing, and innovations in the business improves a businesses economic strengths in terms of profit, performance, and competitive advantage (P1 Interview 8/19/2015; P2 Interview 8/20/2015).

There were several findings noted for this study. First, the findings noted that customer service is vital to the success of any existing business. Second, the findings also showed that small business owners might need to find their niche in the market to have a strong competitive advantage. Third, the findings indicated how small businesses could

benefit from technology in the workplace. The high frequency of the theme customer

service (see Table 3), indicated that customer services is important to any business

sustainability efforts. Therefore, SBOs should seek customer feedback on how to

improve their business and provide better service.

Table 3

Frequency of Themes for Effective Strategies for a Successful Business

Theme	Reference	% of frequency of occurrence
Customer service	8	80.29%
Niche marketing	4	12.39%
Technology	3	7.32%

Reviewing the emergent themes from the effective strategies for a successful

business (see Table 3); there was strong evidence that general system theory aligned with

the strategies. Soojin et al. (2011) described system theory as a system that works

together as a whole instead of parts to achieve company goals. A system of strategies in

the second theme consisted of providing excellent customer service while seeking

customer feedback, niche marketing, and engaging in technology. The findings of this

study showed these strategies are the best effective ways a small business could be

successful beyond 5 years. It was evident in the business plans that XYZ salon business

owners applied these strategies as a whole system to have a successful business beyond 5

years, which aligns with general system theory.

Customer service. Interview question one related to the effective strategies for a

successful business. Participant answers aided to the effectiveness of a successful small

business. P1 contributed to the interview by stating that she employs excellent customer service in her establishment to all customers. P2 also agreed that employing excellent customer service contributes to a steady growth of business. For example, P2 noted that her salon is visually appealing; when clients are on time for their hair appointments, stylists are ready to serve them at their scheduled time of service. Choudhury (2015) study findings aligned with the data from this study. The study findings also aligned with Sinfield, Calder, McConnell and Colson (2012), a small business owner can also reflect that they are listening to the needs of their customers by implementing customer ideas into their daily business. I confirmed P2 statement by observation during the interview and reviewing the company business plans. I conducted the interview at P2 salon and my observation of the establishment was that it was clean and relaxing. P2 also has customer feedback cards located in the salon waiting area for customers to fill out regarding their experience in XYZ establishment (personal communication, August 20, 2015). The feedback cards showed that XYZ salon owners care about their customers' needs and they are willing to address them. Given the importance of effective communication and customer satisfaction, Celuch, Robinson, and Walsh (2015) also indicated customer feedback plays an important role in firm success rate when generating engaged customers.

Niche marketing. The theme emerged as being an effective strategy that businesses can use to succeed. P1 mentioned her 15 years of extensive knowledge, experience, and training working on clients with thinning hair and alopecia. P1 training provided her a niche in the hair industry that strengthen her skills and attributes in her

geographical location. P1 noted that she was one of a few cosmetologist trained in the Savannah Georgia area to fully make hair molds and pieces for clients that have completely lost their hair to cancer, alopecia, or other genetic reasons. P1 also stated that her company has been successful after developing a strong niche in the hair market. A review of company business plans validated P1 statement that small businesses can focus on a specific product or service by satisfying customers' needs (review August 20, 2015). Parnell, Lester, Zhang, and Mehmet (2012) confirmed that small businesses could find unlimited success in niche markets. The participant strategy aligned with general system theory by offering a service or product to support the community as a whole (von Bertalanffy, 1972). P1 niche marketing strategy used her the skills to enhance a functioning system.

Technology. P1 noted during the interview that she does not use technology to assist her with scheduling her clients' appointments. P1 also discussed how she enjoys the personal communication with her clients by having her receptionist call the clients the prior to their appointments to remind them of their scheduled services. P1 argued that customers want to hear a human voice and not a computer system on the phone talking to them (P1 interview 8/19/2015; member checking 8/22/2015). P2 expressed that she enjoys the convenience of having a computer system in her business that will call clients and remind them of their appointments by sending them an email, text message, or and automated call. P2 also stated that this cut the cost of hiring a full time receptionist and increased the productivity and growth of the business (P2 interview 8/20/2015; member checking 8/22/2015, review of company plans 8/20/2015)). Based on the responses of P1

and P2, I realized that these strategies mentioned and confirmed the finding of several researchers including Vassilakopoulou (2013), Kiveu and Ofafa (2013), Pruett and Winter (2011), and Sahut and Peris-Ortiz (2014). General systems theory requires factors like technology to work together to achieve its goals (Soojin et al., 2011; von Bertalanffy, 1972).

Emergent Theme 3: Determination and Dedication

The third theme is determination and dedication. Interview questions two, three, and six addressed the strategies small business owners need to succeed in business beyond 5 years. The findings indicated that salon business owners who implement these strategies might have a greater success rate. In an interview with P1, she identified her determination and dedication led her to have a successful business for more than 20 years (personal communication, 8/19/2015). P1 discussed that she has seen many salon owners leave the industry because they lack the skills or ambition for the work that he or she needed to put in to their business to sustain. P2 related the same perspective as P1. P2 specified that any existing and potential cosmetologists that are seeking to start a business must remain driven and work hard at being successful. P2 expressed the importance of staying abreast of the latest trends, always finding ways to advance one's skills through training courses, and listening to the needs of the customers. Previous research (Madnani & Khan, McCann & Sweet, 2014; 2013; Stone-Johnson, 2014) aligned with P1 and P2 statements. A review of the management summary and company goals sections of participants' business plans as of August 19 2015 and August 20, 2015 identified the

determination, dedication, and ambition as strategies that have successfully assisted XYZ

salons to sustain beyond 5 years.

Given the concept of general system theory, the business owners addressed von

Bertalanffy (1972) theory by discussing the numerous strategies that work together as a

whole and not in parts for the success of XYZ salon. Table 4 specifies the frequency of

occurrence of the themes determination and dedication. Through previous research,

participant responses, and review of company documents, the findings of the study

showed the strategies business owners needed for a successful business. These findings

align with earlier research.

Table 4

Frequency of Determination and Dedication Mentioned

Source	Reference	% of frequency of occurrence
P1 and P2, interview Q2	2	50.0%
P1, interview Q3	1	25.0%
P2, interview Q6	2	25.0%

Emergent Theme 4: Professionalism

Professionalism is the fourth theme of this study. The responses from interview

question one and six revealed this theme (P1, P2). The study finding indicated that any

business owner that concentrated on strategies that are most satisfying to the needs of

their customers might succeed beyond 5 year in a competitive market (Bengesi & Roux,

2014). The findings supported previous studies that indicate professionalism enhances the

quality of business (Minello et al., 2014). Professionalism contributes to good business

practices, uniqueness, and efficiency (Allen, Ericksen, & Collins, 2013; Lewis, 2013).

P1 emphasized that an entrepreneur's attitude would determine how well he or

she manage failures, which would determine the success of their business. P2 claimed

that she initially started working in other salons before investing in her salons because

she wanted to learn the success and failures of the business. P2 also claimed that she did

not want to replicate those failures in her salons. Both participants indicated that

providing professional environment, service, and attitude is highly recommended in

having a successful business. A review of company business plans aligned with study

findings and participants responses (Company Documents 8/19/2015; Company

Documents 8/20/2015).

As previously noted, the study findings were built on general system theory,

which requires multiple elements of a system to work together as a whole and not in parts

in order to survive (Soojin et al., 2011; von Bertalanffy, 1972). Both participants

expressed the importance and understanding of professionalism in their salons. Based on

having good leadership abilities, the existing body of knowledge supports

professionalism, which reflects how professionalism ties into great leadership skills

(Minello et al., 2014). The study findings indicate how general systems theory and

professionalism work together to ensure the success of salons.

Applications to Professional Practice

This research is relevant to small business sustainability practices in several ways.

The objective of this study was to explore participants views about the strategies some

small business owners need to succeed in business beyond 5 years. Small businesses are significant to growth of the economy (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). The findings from this study supported general systems theory, which specified SBOs need the whole system to work together to have a successful business (Drake & Schwarz, 2010).

Small business owners can implement strategic organizational changes to achieve a sustainable business (Wu, He, & Duan, 2013). However, it is beneficial for SBOs to implement effective sustainability strategies as posited by Rajasekaran (2013). The strategies identified by the participants in the first theme are education, training, and skills that will aid in improving the growth, knowledge, and development of an organizations success (Thompson & Cavaleri, 2010) and may influence potential business owners to open a new business. Having the proper education and training in place may prevent low-quality knowledge and the ineffectiveness of performing (Thompson & Cavaleri, 2010). Thompson and Cavaleri noted that education raises the quality of knowledge and improves an organizations sustainability, which supported the study findings and participants' responses.

The strategies identified in the second and third main theme can be used by SBOs who are seeking to apply effective strategies to their business to have a sustainable business. SBOs can apply these strategies if they are seeking to have a successful business beyond 5 years. A sustainable business meets the needs of the society and the next generation needs without compromising those needs (Manna et al., 2011). P1 and P2 emphasized how important it was for them to find their niche in the market. P1 noted that niche marketing made her more competitive in the hair industry, as evident from the

results by (Parnell et al., 2012). The study findings and recommendations may add to the

current body of knowledge of business assisting SBOs in developing effective strategies

to assist small businesses in sustaining beyond 5 years.

Implications for Social Change

Small business owners are responsible for creating approximately half of the jobs

in the United States economy (SBA, 2011). Miles (2014) concluded that 67% of

businesses remain open after 2 years, nearly 44% of small business owners remain in

operations after 4 years, and 50% may sustain their business after 5 years. Small business

failure may result in a loss of income and employment for both the business owners and

their employees.

The implications for positive social change included education, training, and

skills. These effective strategies might improve a small business growth, development,

and knowledge in sustaining beyond 5 years (Thompson & Cavaleri, 2010). The

implementation of recommendations may contribute to SBOs retaining staff and

increasing profits. Moreover, the strategies may have a positive effect on future business

owners desiring to start a business. This study could positively affect social change by

adding jobs to the economy and reducing the unemployment rate.

Recommendations for Action

Salon business owners can use the information in this study to assist them in their

new or existing business ventures. The information provided in this study may contribute

to salon businesses successfully sustaining beyond 5 years. Existing and newly seeking

business owners should focus on the following recommendations from the first theme (a)

key strategies for salon owners to succeed in business beyond 5 years, (b) effective strategies for a successful business, (c) determination and dedication, and (d) professionalism. If business owners decided to implement any of these strategies, he or she must approach each attribute at the various levels of skills, education and experience based on their individual strengths (Teng, Bhatia, & Anwar, 2011).

The findings from this study are vital to existing business owners, managers, and future business owners of salon businesses. The implementation of key strategies may assist business owners in successfully operating, growing and sustaining their business. I will disseminate the findings of the study through training, seminars conferences, scholarly journal, business journals. Furthermore, I may circulate the result of this study through Small Business Assistance Corporation of Savannah (SBAC) regarding key strategies small business need to succeed in business beyond 5 years.

Recommendations for Further Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the strategies that salon business owners needed to succeed in business beyond 5 years. Small businesses are critical to the U.S. economy (SBA, 2011). These businesses are also responsible for 50% of the failure rate during their first 5 years of operation (SBA, 2011). The study findings extend to the existing research that there is a need for small businesses to assist the government and its economy by creating jobs and providing services (Yallapragada & Bhuiyan, 2011). Future studies could expand on strategies salon owners may have used to operate a successful business.

Representation. The main limitation of this qualitative study was that the data collected for this study may not represent entire salon industry. Recommendations for further research involve more studies on salon businesses. Studies for the salon industry were limited. Therefore, this allowed me to focus on small businesses as a whole.

Location. I also recommend exploring a different geographical location other than Savannah Georgia. In addition to the Savannah Georgia area, other cities such as Atlanta Georgia area may have been an impact on the research. Exploring larger cities could add richer data to the study.

Time frame. I further recommend a study performed for an extensive period. This can possibly yield better results and assist with resolving participants time constraints (Connelly, 2013).

Sample size. My final recommendation for this study is increasing the sample size with anticipation of providing enriched data to support the research. The approved research design included two salon business owners. A larger sample size of participants can increase rich and thick data results.

Reflections

The DBA doctoral study process was one of self-efficacy. The process challenged me and eliminated any preconceived notions that I had before conducting this research. During my interviews with the participants, they were both intrigued and helpful throughout, sometimes providing more information than I requested. The findings of this study affect me personally as a business owner. The findings were similar to what I encountered in my years of owning a hair salon. Although I recognized many of these

challenges in my early stages in business, I was still able to gather data from this study to assist me with my current business practices. As a small salon business owner and a researcher, I have the desire to assist new entrepreneurs start up their own salon business and other small business owners expand on their existing business.

While conducting this research, I was able to minimize errors and researchers bias. Since I only had two participants to interview for the study, I did not anticipate the participants limited schedules and their inability to cooperate in a timely fashion when conducting the interviews. One participant had rescheduled her interview more than 3 times before we were finally able to meet. Another participant replaced the second participant because she did not understand the importance of the study.

During the data collection and communicating with each participant of this study, I felt comfortable with the participants and enjoyed hearing their lived experiences. This study changed my way of thinking by influencing me to educate and assist small business owners with their new and existing business ventures. After completing the study, my level of knowledge and understanding increased on my topic as my research expanded. The findings from this study exposed me to additional strategies that I can use to sustain and grow my business.

Summary and Study Conclusions

The economy depends on the success of small businesses in creating 64% of the employment opportunities in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014; Yallapragada, 2011). Small business owners need effective strategies to sustain their businesses beyond 5 years (SBA, 2011; U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). The specific business problem for this study is

that salon business owners often lack the necessary strategies to succeed in business beyond 5 years. The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study was to explore the strategies that salon business owners needed to succeed in business beyond 5 years and answer the following research question: What strategies do salon business owners need to succeed in business beyond 5 years? Two salon business owners in Savannah, Georgia participated in semistructured interviews. I triangulated the data by reviewing the business plans, interview data, and current literature to support the study findings.

After data collection, four main themes emerged from the data including: (a) key strategies for salon owners to succeed in business beyond 5 years, (b) effective strategies for a successful business, (c) determination and dedication, and (d) professionalism. The study findings showed that small business owners need strategies such as education, training, skills, customer service, niche marketing, and technology. The findings also indicated that a professional attitude in the business with customers adds to long-term profit, growth, and success of the business.

Small business owners provided an insight into the strategies owners need to succeed beyond 5 years. Understanding the effective sustainability strategies could provide a foundation for growth and economic development for existing and future business owners (Rajasekaran, 2013). Business owners who desire to be successful and educate themselves aids in improving their company sustainability efforts (Thompson & Cavaleri, 2010).

References

Ackoff, R. L. (1994). Systems thinking and thinking systems. *System Dynamics Review, 10,* 175–188. doi:10.1002/sdr.4260100206

Adams, D. P., & Miles, T. P. (2013). The application of Belmont report principles to policy development. *Journal of Gerontological Nursing, 39,* 16-21. doi:10.3928/00989134-20131028-07

Alasadi, R., & Al Sabbagh, H. (2015). The role in small business performance. *International Journal of Information, Business and Management*, *7*, 293-311. Retrieved from http://www.ijibm.elitehall.com/IJIBM_Vol7No1_Feb2015

Alexander, C., Lancaster, T., Gibson, S., & Pryor, M. G. (2011). Technology support for small businesses*. International Journal of Education Research, 6*(2), 65-76. Retrieved from http://www.iabpad.com/IJER/

Aldrich, H. E., & Yang, T. (2012). Lost in translation: Cultural codes are not blueprints. *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, 6*(1), 1-17. doi:10.1002/sej.1125

Allen, M. R., Ericksen, J., & Collins, C. J. (2013). Human resource management, employee exchange relationships, and performance in small businesses. *Human Resource Management, 52,* 153-174. doi:10.1002/hrm.21523

Ameeq-ul-Ameeq, A., & Hanif, F. (2013). Impact of training on employee's development and performance in hotel industry of Lahore, Pakistan. *Journal of Business Studies Quarterly, 4,* 68-82. Retrieved from http://jbsq.org/

Amerson, R. (2011). Making a case for the case study method. *Journal of Nursing Education, 50*, 427-428. doi:10.10.3928.01484834-20110719-01

Apostolico, A. A., Shendell, D. G., Lewis, A. G., Kelly, S. W., Murtha, A. T. & Houlroyd, J. L. (2014). The "salon safety quiz" for pre-/post-evaluation assessment when training young cosmetology workers in public secondary schools. *Journal of Chemical Health & Safety, 22*(2), 14-22. doi.10.1016/j.jchas.2014.09.013

Atherton, A. (2012). Cases of start-up financing: An analysis of new venture capitalisation structures and patterns. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior & Research, 18*(1), 28-47. doi:10.1108/13552551211201367

Audretsch, D. (2012). Entrepreneurship research. *Management Decision, 50*, 755-764. doi:10.1108/00251741211227384

Bansal, P., & DesJardine, M.R. (2014). Business sustainability: It is about time. *Strategic Organization, 12*(1), 70-78. doi:10.1177/1476127013520265

Barrett, R. (2015). Small firm training: Just meeting the day-to-day needs of the business. *Employee Relations, 37*, 547-567. doi.10.1108/ER-05-2014-0048

Barros, H. M., & Lazzarini, S. G. (2012). Do organizational incentives spur innovation? *BAR. Brazilian Administration Review*, *9*, 308-328. doi:10.1590/S1807-76922012000300005

Bengesi, K. M. K., & Roux, I. L. (2014). Strategic entrepreneurial response of small and medium enterprises in development economies. *International Journal of Business and Management, 9*, 153-165. doi:10.5539/ijbm.v9n2p153

Blachfellner, M. (2012). Sustainable business: Leading yourself and business into the
future. *Journal of Organisational Transformation & Social Change*, *9*, 127-139.
doi:10.1386/jots.9.2.127_1

Blaga, S. (2013). Rethinking business sustainability. *Review of economic studies &
research Virgil Madgearu, 6*, 5-21. Retrieved from
http://www.ceeol.com/aspx/publicationdetails.aspx?publicationid=a6a845ae-fa88-
4fed-8663-8892bf5711f7

Botha, M., & Robertson, C. L. (2014). Potential entrepreneurs' assessment of
opportunities through the rendering of a business plan. *South African Journal of
Economic and Management Sciences, 17,* 249-265. Retrieved from
http://www.sajems.org/index.php/sajems/article/view/524/366

Brazer, S. D., Kruse, S. D., & Conley, S. (2014). Organizational theory and leadership
navigation. *Journal of Research on Leadership Education, 9*, 254–272.
doi:10.1177/1942775114532640

Brien, E. O., & Hamburg, I. (2014). Supporting sustainable strategies for SMEs through
training, cooperation and mentoring. *Higher Education Studies, 4*(2).
doi:10.5539/hes.v4n2p61

Briggs, W. (2013) Problem solving for small businesses. *Annals of Psychotherapy and
Integrative Health, 16*(2), 14-16. Retrieved from
http://www.annalsofpsychotherapy.com

Brookes, M., Altinay, L., & Ringham, K. (2014). Successful implementation of responsible business practice. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes, 6*(1), 77-84. doi:10.1108/WHATT-10-2013-0044

Buchanan, R. (1992). Wicked problems in design thinking. *Design Issues, 8*(2), 5-21. doi:10.2307/1511637

Buchbinder, E. (2011). Beyond checking. *Qualitative Social Work, 10*(1), 106-122. doi:10.1177/1473325010370189

Cader, H. A., & Leatherman, J. C. (2011). Small business survival and sample selection bias. *Small Business Economics, 37*, 155-165. doi:10.1007/s11187-009-9240-4

Casey, C. (2012). Low-wealth minority enterprises and access to financial resources for start-up activities: Do connections matter? *Economic Development Quarterly, 26*, 252-266. doi:10.1177/0891242412452446

Castleberry, A. (2014). NVivo 10 [software program]. Version 10. QSR International; 2012. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, 78*(1), 1-2. doi:10.5688/ajpe78125

Chenail, R. J. (2011). Ten steps for conceptualizing and conducting qualitative research studies in a pragmatically curious manner. *Qualitative Report, 16,* 1713-1730. Retrieved from http://www.nova.edu/

Chappy, S., & Gaberson, K. B. (2012). To IRB or not to IRB: That is the question. *AORN Journal, 95*, 682-683. doi:10.1016/j.aorn/2012.03.012

Celuch, K., Robinson, N. M., & Walsh, A. M. (2015). A framework for encouraging

    retail customer feedback. *Journal of Services Marketing, 29*, 280-292.

    doi.10.1108/JSM-02-2014-0062

Chen, R. J. C. (2015). Beyond sustainability: From sustainable consumer services to

    sustainable business. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 22*, 223-224.

    doi:10.1016/j.jretconser.2014.08.002

Chinomona, R. (2013). Business owner's expertise, employee skills training and business

    performance: A small business perspective. *Journal of Applied Business*

    Research, 29, 1883-1896. Retrieved from

    http://www.cluteinstitute.com/ojs/index.php/JABR/article/view/8224

Choudhury, K. (2015). Evaluating customer-perceived service quality in business

    management education in India: A study in Topsis modeling. *Asia Pacific Journal*

    of Marketing and Logistics, 27(2), 208-225, doi.10.1108/APJML-04-2014-0065

Chrysostome, E. (2010). The success factors of necessity immigrant entrepreneurs: In

    search of a model. *Thunderbird International Business Review, 52*, 137-152.

    doi:10.1002/tie.20320

Coleman, G. (2013). Sustainability as a learning challenge. *The Journal of Management*

    Development, 32, 258-267. doi:10.1108/026217411311318292

Connelly, L. M. (2013). Limitation section. *Medsurg Nursing, 22*, 325-325, 336.

    Retrieved from http://www.medsurgnursing.net/cgi-

    bin/WebObjects/MSNJournal.woa

Cook, A. F., Hoas, H., & Joyner, J. C. (2013). The protectors and the protected: What

    regulators and researchers can learn from IRB members and subjects. *Narrative*

    Inquiry in Bioethics, 3(1), 51-65. doi:10.1353/nib.2013.0014

Cortada, J. W. (2013). How new technologies spread: Lessons from computing

    technologies. *Technology and Culture, 54*, 229-261. doi:10.1353/tech.2013.0081

Coyne, I. T. (1997). Sampling in qualitative research. Purposeful and theoretical

    sampling; Merging or clear boundaries? *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 26*, 623-

    630. doi:10.1046/j.1365-2648.1997.t01-25-00999.x

Cronin-Gilmore, J. (2012). Exploring marketing strategies in small business. *Journal of*

    Development and Competiveness, 6(1), 96-107. Retrieved from http://www.na-

    businesspress.com/jmdcopen.html

Dahmen, P., & Rodríguez, E. (2014). Financial literacy and the success of small

    businesses: An observation from a small business development center. *Numeracy,*

    7(1), 1-12. doi:10.5038/1936-4660.7.1.3

Dan-Shang, W., & Chia-Chun, H. (2013). The effect of authentic leadership on employee

    trust and employee engagement. *Social Behavior & Personality: An International*

    Journal, 41, 613-624. doi:10.2224/sbp.2013.41.4.613

Deevi, S. C. (2012). Repeatability: Build enduring businesses for a world of constant

    change. *Research Technology Management, 55*(5), 67. Retrieved from

    http://www.iriweb.org/Main/Library/RTM_Journal/Public_Site/Navigation/Public

    ations/Research-Technology_Management/index.aspx

DeWinter, J. (2012, Feb, 17). Cosmetology industry regulation protects public. *South Bend Tribune.* Retrieved from http://www.southbendtribune.com

De Wit, G., & De Kok, J. (2014). Do small businesses create more jobs? New evidence for Europe. *Small Business Economics, 42*, 283-295. doi:10.1007/s11187-013-9480-1

Drake, M., & Schwartz, G. (2010). Recent developments in general systems theory. *Systems Research & Behavioral Science, 27*, 601-610. doi:10.1002/sres.1013

Drury, P. (2015). Survival in fast-changing markets: Small-firm strategy, market development, and product innovation. *Strategic Direction*, *31*(1), 18-20. doi:10.1108/SD-12-2014-0163

Ellis, J. (2012). New businesses then and now: Success and failure. *Arkansas Business, 29*(28), 14. Retrieved from http://www.arkansasbusiness.com/article/85339/new-businesses-then-and-now-success-and-failure?page=all

Estay, C., Durrieu, F., & Akhter, M. (2013). Entrepreneurship: From motivation to start up. *Journal of International Entrepreneurship, 11*, 243-267. doi:10.1007/s10843-013-0109-x

Francis, J., Johnston, M., Robertson, C., Glidewell, L., Entwistle, V., Eccles, M., & Grimshaw, P. (2010). What is an adequate sample size? Operationalising data saturation for theory-based interview studies. *Psychology & health, 25*, 1229-1245. doi:10.1080/08870440903194015

Gagnon, M. A. (2012). Sustainable minded entrepreneurs: Developing and testing a value-based framework. Journal of Strategic *Innovation and Sustainability, 8*(1),

9-25. Retrieved from http://www.na-

businesspress.com/JSIS/gagnon1_abstract.html

Gallop, S. (2011). Viewpoint: Assumptions. *Journal of Behavioral Optometry, 22*, 158-

160. Retrieved from http://www.oepf.org/journals

Geho, P. R., & Frakes, J. (2013). Financing for small business in a sluggish economy

versus conflicting impulses of the entrepreneur. *The Entrepreneurial Executive,

18,* 89-101. Retrieved from

http://www.alliedacademies.org/public/journals/JournalDetails.aspx?jid=9

Georgia Secretary of State (2014). Georgia Secretary of State: Professional licensing

boards. Retrieved from http://sos.ga.gov/cgi-bin/activelicenses.asp

Gilroy, M. (2009). Career and technical education booming at community colleges. *The

Hispanic Outlook in Higher Education, 19*(12), 18-19. Retrieved from

http://www.hispanicoutlook.com

Gobble, M. M. (2012). Innovation and sustainability. *Research Technology Management,

55*(5), 64-66. doi:10.5437/08956308X5505005

Graham-Hyde, M. (2014). Technology is reinventing your business. *Strategic Direction,

30*(4), 1-2. doi:10.1108/SD-04-2014-0055

Grant, G. B. (2012). Transforming sustainability. *Journal of Corporate Citizenship, 2012*,

123-137. doi:10.9774/GLEAF.4700.2012.su.00008

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An

experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods, 18*, 59-82.

doi:10.1177/1525822X05279903

Halabí, C. E., & Lussier, R. N. (2014). A model for predicting small firm performance: Increasing the probability of entrepreneurial success in Chile. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development, 21*(1), 4–25. doi:10.1108/JSBED-10-2013-0141

Hardwick, J., & Cruickshank, D. (2012). Innovation in small business: comparing face-to-face with virtual networking. *Journal of Business Strategy, 33*, 51-58. doi:10.1108/02756661211282795

Harvey, W. S. (2011). Strategies for conducting elite interviews. *Qualitative Research, 11*, 431-441. doi:10.1177/1468794111404329

Hays, D. G., & Wood, C. (2011). Infusing qualitative traditions in counseling research designs. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 89*, 288-295. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6678.2011.tb00091.x

Ho, C., & Yang, Y. (2012). The key success factors of small business innovation and research of Taiwan automotive electronics industry. *International Journal of Innovation, Management and Technology, 3*, 521-524. doi:10.7763/IJIMT.2012.V3.289

Hoff, T. L. (2012). Beauty shop politics: African American women's activism in beauty industry (review), *Black Women, Gender & Families, 6,* 99-102. Retrieved from http://www.muse.jhu.edu/login?auth=0&type=summary&url=/journals/black_women_gender_and_families/v006/6.2.hoff.html

Horst, H., Hjorth, L., & Tacchi, J. (2012). Rethinking ethnography: An introduction. *Media International Australia, Incorporating Culture and Policy*, (145), 86-93. Retrieved from http://apo.org.au/research/rethinking-ethnography-introduction

Hossain, D. M. (2012). Mixed method research: An overview. *Postmodern Openings, 3*, 137-151. Retrieved from http://www.postmodernopenings.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/10-Mixed-Method

Houghton, C., Casey, D., Shaw, D., & Murphy, K. (2013). Rigour in qualitative case-study for research. *Nurse Researcher, 20*, 12-17. doi:10.7748/nr2013.03.20.4.12.e326

Howard, R. L., & Shipps, B. P. (2013). Unemployment and job creation programs: Is there a skills gap? *Review of Business, 33*(2), 103-118. Retrieved from http://www.stjohns.edu/academics/schools-and-colleges/peter-j-tobin-college-business/journals

Humphrey, C. (2014). Qualitative research: Mixed emotions. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management, 11*(1), 51-70. doi:101108/QRAM-03-2014-0024

Hurt, R. L. & McLaughlin, E. J. (2012). An applied introduction to qualitative research methods in academic advising. *NACADA Journal, 32*(1), 63-71. doi:10.12930/0271-9517-32.1.63

Hurst, E., & Pugsley, B. W. (2011). What do small business do? *Brooking papers on economic activity*, *2,* 73-142. doi:10.1353/eca.2011.0017

Hyat, M. J. (2013). Understanding sample size determination in nursing research.

    Western Journal of Nursing Research, 35, 943-956.

    doi:10.1177/0193945913482052

Iacob, V. & Mironescu, R. (2013). Meanings of small business and its management.

    Journal of Engineering Studies and Research, 19, 34-42. Retrieved from

    http://www.jml2012.indexcopernicus.com/masterlist.php?q=Journal+of+Engineer

    ing+Studies+and+Research

Judd, R., & McNeil, R. D. (2012). Large firms and small firms: Job quality, innovation,

    and economic development. *Journal of American Business Review, Cambridge, 1,*

    157-164. Retrieved from http://www.jaabc.com/journal.htm

Karanja, T., Muturi, P., Mukabi, M., Kabata, D., Wahome, S., & Kayogo, M., (2013).

    Small business management. *International Journal of Business and Social*

    Science 4, 113-142. Retrieved from

    http://www.ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_4_No_16_December_2013/11

Khaleefah, Q. Q., Rashid, F. A., Al Ajoe, A. Y., & Al-Husein, M. (2014). The

    foundations of project success work for small and medium businesses enterprises.

    International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 4,

    127-137. doi:10.6007/IJARBSS/v4-i12/1333

Kast, F. E., & Rosenzweig, J. E. (1972). General systems theory: Applications for

    organizations and management. *Academy of Management Journal, 115,* 447-465.

    doi:10.2307/255141

Kayemuddin, M. D. (2012). Leadership in small business in Bangladesh. *International*

Journal of Entrepreneurship, 16, 25-35. Retrieved from

www.alliedacademies.org/Public/Journals/JournalDetails.aspx?jid=7

Khan, M. T. (2014). Relationship marketing – some aspects (review). *International*

Journal of Information, Business and Management, 6, 108-122. Retrieved from

http://www.ijibm.elitehall.com/index4.htm

Khan, S. N. (2014). Qualitative research method: Grounded theory. *International Journal*

of Business Management, 9, 224-233. doi:10.5539/ijbm.v9n11p224

Kim, D. H., & Senge, P. M. (1994). Putting systems thinking into practice. *System*

Dynamics Review, 10, 277–290. doi:10.1002/sdr.4260100213

Kiveu, M., & Ofafa, G. (2013).Enhancing market access in Kenyan SMEs using ICT.

Global Business and Economics Research Journal, 2, 29-46. Retrieved from

http://www.journal.globejournal.org

Klitzman, R. (2013). How good does the science have to be in proposals submitted to

institutional review boards? An interview study of institutional review board

personnel. *Clinical Trials, 10,* 761-766. doi:10.1177/1740774513500080

Konsti-Laakso, S., Pihkala, T., & Kraus, S. (2012). Facilitating sme innovation capability

through business networking: Innovation capability and business networking.

Creativity and Innovation Management, 21(1), 93-105. doi:10.1111/j.1467-

8691.2011.00623.x

Kuckertz, A., & Wagner, M. (2010). The influence of sustainability orientation on

entrepreneurial intentions: Investigating the role of business influence. *Journal of*

Business Venturing, 25, 524-539. doi:10.1016/j.jbusvent.2009.09.001

Kumar, C. R. (2014). Relationship marketing: Way to customer loyalty. *International Journal of Applied Services Marketing Perspectives, 3*, 1226-1228. Retrieved from http://www. pezzottaitejournals.net/index.php/IJASMP/article/view/1830

Kumar, A., & Israel, D. (2012). Authentic leadership & work engagement. *Indian Journal of Industrial Relations, 47*, 498-510. Retrieved from http://www.publishingindia.com/ijir/22/authentic-leadership-work-engagement/144/1154

Kvam, G.-T., Magnus, T., & Straete, P. E. (2014). Product strategies for growth in niche food firms. *British Food Journal, 116*, 723-732. doi:10.1108/BFJ-06-2011-0168

Kyvik, S. (2013). The academic researcher role: Enhancing expectations and improved performance. *Higher Education, 65*(4), 525-538. doi:10.1007/s10734-012-9561-0

Langford, R. (2012). Qualitative methods, by Monique Hennink, Inge Hutter, and Ajay Hutter. *Critical Public Health, 22*(1), 111-112. doi:10.1080/09581596.2011.565689

Lawler, E. E., & Worley, C. G. (2012). Designing organizations for sustainable effectiveness. *Organizational Dynamics, 41*, 265-270. doi:10.1016/j.orgdyn.2012.08.001

Leech, N. L., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2011). Beyond constant comparison qualitative data analysis: Using NVivo. *School Psychology, 26*(1), 70-84. doi:10.1037/a0022711

Lewis, P. (2013). The search for an authentic entrepreneurial identity: Difference and professionalism among women business owners. *Gender, Work & Organization, 20,* 252-266. doi:10.1111/j.1468-0432.2011.00568.x

Lin, G. T. R., Shen, Y.-C., & Chou, J. (2010). National innovation policy and

    performance: Comparing the small island countries of Taiwan and Ireland.

    Technology in Society, *32*, 161–172. doi:10.1016/j.techsoc.2010.03.005

Lubin, D. A., & Esty, D. C. (2014). Bridging the sustainability gap. *MIT Sloan*

    Managment, 55(4), 18-21. Retrieved from

    http://www.sloanreview.mit.edu/article/bridging-the-sustainability-gap/

Madnani, N., & Khan, K. (2013). Hair cosmetics. *Indian Journal of Dermatology*

    Venereology and Leprology, 79, 654-667. Retrieved from

    http://www.ijdvl.com/text.asp?2013/79/5/654/116734

Malchow-Møller, N., Schjerning, B., & Sørensen, A. (2011). Entrepreneurship, job

    creation and wage growth. *Small Business Economics, 36*(1), 15-32.

    doi:10.1007/s11187-009-9173-y

Manna, D. R., Marco, G., Khalil, B. L., & Esola, C. (2011). Sustainable markets: Case

    study of Heinz. *Journal of Business Case Studies, 7*(5), 35-42. Retrieved from

    http://www.cluteinstitute.com/ojs/index.php/JBCS/article/view/5603/5684

Maritz, A., & Donovan, J. (2015). Entrepreneurship and innovation: Setting an agenda

    for greater discipline contextualisation. *Education & Training, 57*(1), 74–87.

    doi:10.1108/ET-02-2013-0018

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (2011). *Designing qualitative research* (5th ed.). Thousand

    Oaks, CA: Sage.

Mason, C., & Harvey, C. (2013). Entrepreneurship: Contexts, opportunities and

    processes. *Business History, 55*(1), 1-8. doi:10.1080/00076791.2012.687542

Maude, A. (2014). A sustainable view of sustainability? *Geography, 99*, 47-50. Retrieved

from http://www.geography.org.uk/journals/Journals.asp?articleID=1158

Merrell, P. (2012). Effective change management: The simple truth. *Management

Services, 56*(2), 20-23. Retrieved from http://www.emeraldinsight.com

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded

sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miles, D. A. (2014). Examining forces that impact firms: A factor analysis of endogenous

and exogenous risk factors and their effect on small business enterprises.

Academy of Business Research Journal, 2, 20-35. Retrieved from

http://www.aobronline.com/#!abrj/cdlu

Mills, K.G., & McCarthy, B. (2014). State of small business lending: Credit access

during the recovery and how technology may change the game. *Harvard Business

Review*, 1-65. doi:10.2139/ssrn.2470523

Miyazaki, A. D., & Taylor, K. A. (2008). Researcher interaction biases and business

ethics research: Respondent reactions to researcher characteristics. *Journal of

Business Ethics, 81*, 779-795. doi:10.1007/s10551-007-9547-5

McCann, J., & Sweet, M. (2014). The perceptions of ethical and sustainable leadership.

Journal of Business Ethics, 121, 373-383. doi:10.1007/s10551-013-1704-4

McKinsey Insights. (2010, March). How companies manage sustainability? *McKinsey

Global Surveys results.* Retrieved from http://www.mckinsey.com

Minello, I. F., Scherer, L. A., & da, C. A. (2014). Entrepreneurial competencies and

business failure. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship, 18*, 1-15. Retrieved

from http://www.alliedacademies.org/public/journals/JournalDetails.aspx?jid=7

Mlecnik, E. (2014). Which factors determine the success of strategic niche

developments? *Construction Innovation, 14*(1), 36-51. doi:10.1108/CI-01-2012-

0007

Montgomery, E. G., & Oladapo, V. (2014). Talent management vulnerability in global

healthcare value chain: A general system theory perspective. *Journal of Business

Studies Quarterly, 5*, 173-189. Retrieved from http://www.jbsq.org

Morin, K. H. (2013). Value of a pilot study. *Journal of Nursing Education, 52*, 547-548.

doi:10.3928/01484834-20130920-10

Muntean, S. C. (2011). Embracing entrepreneurship. *Indiana Business Review, 86*(1), 1-

3. Retrieved from http://www.ibrc.indiana.edu/ibr/2011/spring/article1.html

Murmann, J. P., & Sardan, D. (2013). Successful entrepreneurs minimize risk. *Australian

Journal of Management, 38*, 191-215. doi:10.1177/0312896212444114

Murray, D. W., & O'Neill, M. A. (2012). Craft beer: Penetrating a niche market. *British

Food Journal, 114*, 899-909. doi:10.1108/00070701211241518

Mwangi, H. W., & Bwisa, H. (2013). The effects of entrepreneurial marketing practices

on the growth of hair salons: A case study of hair salons in Kiambu Township.

International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 3,

467-480. Retrieved from http://www.hrmars.com/admin/pics/1890

Nadim, A., & Lussier, R. N. (2010). Sustainability as a small business competitive strategy. *Journal of Small Business Strategy, 21*(2), 79-95. Retrieved from http://www.smallbusinessinstitute.biz/page-1259165

Nakkeeran, N., & Zodpey, S. P. (2012). Qualitative research in applied situations: Strategies to ensure rigor and validity. *Indian Journal of Public Health, 56*(1), 4-11. doi:10.10.4103/0019-557X.96949

Ndubisi, N. O. (2014). Entrepreneurship and service innovation. *Journal of Business & Industrial Marketing, 29*, 449-453. doi:10.1108/JBIM-07-2013-0148

Panagiotakopoulos, A. (2011). Working learning and its organizational benefits for small enterprises. *The Learning Organization, 18*, 364-374. doi:10.1108/09696471111151701

Paglia, J. K., & Harjoto, M. A. (2014). The effects of private equity and venture capital on sales and employment growth in small and medium-sized businesses. *Journal of Banking & Finance, 47*, 177-197. doi:10.1016/j.jbankfin.2014.06.023

Parnell, J. A., Lester, D. L., Zhang, L., & Mehmet, A. K. (2012). How environmental uncertainty affects the link between business strategy and performance in SMEs. *Management Decision, 50,* 546-568. doi:10.1108/00251741211220129

Parsa, H. G., van der Rest, J.-P. I., Smith, S. R., Parsa, R. A., & Bujisic, M. (2015). Why restaurants fail? Part IV: The relationship between restaurant failures and demographic factors. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly, 56*(1), 80-90. doi.:10.1177/1938965514551959

Parrish, B. D. (2010). Sustainability-driven entrepreneurship: Principles of organization

    design. *Journal of Business Venturing, 25*, 510-523.

    doi:10.1016/j.jbusvent.2009.05.005

Pathak, V., Jena, B., & Kalra, S. (2013). Qualitative research. *Perspectives in Clinical*

    Research, 4(3), 192. doi:10.4103/2229-3485.115389

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd ed.) Thousand

    Oaks, CA: Sage.

Perret, J., & Holmlund, M. (2013). Ethics and responsibility in relationship marketing:

    The business school and the next generation of managers. *Marketing Intelligence*

    & Planning, 31, 746-763. doi:10.1108/MIP-01-2013-0006

Petty, N. J., Thomson, O. P., & Stew, G. (2012). Ready for a paradigm shift? Part 2:

    Introducing qualitative research methodologies and methods. *Manual Therapy,*

    17, 378-384. doi:10.1016/j.math.2012.03.004

Pitta, D. A. (2008). Product innovation and management in a small enterprise. *Journal of*

    Product and Brand Management, 17, 416-419. doi:10.1108/10610420810904167

Ponomaryov, A. A. (2006). Protected systems in general systems theory. *Cybernetics and*

    Systems Analysis, 42, 724-729. doi.10.1007/s10559-006-0111-6

Poulsen, S. B., & Thogersen, U. (2011). Embodied design thinking: a phenomenological

    perspective. *CoDesign, 7*(1), 29-44. doi:10.1080/1570882.2011.563313

Prindle, R. (2012). Purposeful resistance leadership theory. *International Journal of*

    Business and Social Science, *3*(15), 9-12. Retrieved from http://www.

    ijbssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_15_August_2012/2

Pruett, M., & Winter, G. (2011). Why do entrepreneurs enter franchising and other share relationships? *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship, 24*, 567-581. doi:10.1080/08276331.2011.10593554

Qu, S. Q., & Dumay, J. (2011). The qualitative research interview. *Qualitative Research in Accounting & Management, 8*, 238-264. doi:10.1108/11766091111162070

Rahaman, M. M. (2011). Access to financing and firm growth. *Journal of Banking & Finance, 35*, 709-723. doi:10.1016/j.jbankfin.2010.09.005

Rajasekaran, B. (2013). Sustainable entrepreneurship: past researchers and future directions. *Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management, 2*(1), 20-27. http://www.i-scholar.in/index.php/jem/article/view/37898

Rajavel, N. (2013). A study on cause for business failure: An empirical analysis. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Business Environment Perspectives, 2,* 605-612. Retrieved from http://www.pezzottaitejournals.net/index.php/IJEBEP/article/view/901

Rao, M. S. (2015). The tools and techniques of effective change management: Why some reformers succeed while others fail. *Human Resource Management International Digest, 23*(1), 35-37. doi:10.1108/HRMID-12-2014-0163

Reilly, R. C. (2013). Found poem, member checking and crises of representation. *The Qualitative Report, 18*(15), 1-18. Retrieved from http://www.nova.edu/sss/QR/QR18/reilly30

Ropega, J. (2011). The reasons and symptoms of failure in SME. *International Advances in Economic Research, 17*, 476-483. doi:10.1007/s11294-011-9316-1

Rowley, J. (2012). Conducting research interviews. *Management Research Review*, 35,

260-271. doi:10.1108/01409171211210154

Sahut, J.-M., & Peris-Ortiz, M. (2014). Small business, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

Small Business Economics, 42, 663-668. doi:10.1007/s11187-013-9521-9

Sardana, G. D. (2014). Strategies for sustainability. *South Asian Journal of Business and

Management Cases, 3*(2), 7-11. doi:10.1177/2277977914548346

Saunila, M., & Ukko, J. (2013). Facilitating innovation capability through performance

measurement: A study of Finnish SMEs. *Management Research Review*, 36, 991-

1010. doi:10.1108/MRR-11-2011-0252

Schaltegger, S., & Wagner, M. (2011). Sustainable entrepreneurship and sustainability

innovation: categories and interactions. *Business Strategy and the Environment,

20*, 222-237. doi:10.1002/bse.682

Schatzman, L., & Strauss A. L. (1973) *Field research: Strategies for a natural sociology*.

Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs: New References Jersey.

Shabaya, R. (2014). *Factors that influence entrepreneurs to seek external expertise*

(Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses

database. (UMI No. 3614528)

Shaw, E. H. (2009). A general theory of systems performance criteria. *International

Journal of General Systems, 38*, 851-869. doi:10.1080/03081070903270543

Shepard, D. A., & Patzelt, H. (2011). The new field of sustainable entrepreneurship:

Studying entrepreneurial action linking "what is to be sustained" with "what is to

be developed." *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 35*, 137-163.

doi:10.1111/j.1540-6520.201000426.x

Sheth, J., Sethia, N., & Srinivas, S. (2011). Mindful consumption: a customer-centric

approach to sustainability. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 39*(1),

21-39. doi:10.1007/s11747-010-0216-3

Shideler, D., & Badasyan, N. (2012). Broadband impact on small business growth in

Kentucky. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development, 19*, 589-606.

doi:10.1108/14626001211277415

Simundic, A. (2013). Bias in research. *Biochemia Medica, 23*(1), 12-15.

doi:10.11613/BM.2013.003

Sims, J. M. (2010). A brief review of the Belmont report. *Dimensions of Critical Care*

Nursing, 29, 173-174. doi:10.1097/DCC.0b013e3181de9ec5

Sinfield, J. V., McConnell, B., Calder, E., & Colson, S. (2012). How to identify new

business models. *MIT Sloan Management Review, 53*, 85-90. Retreived from

http://www.sloanreview.mit.edu/

Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy. (2011). *Frequently asked questions*.

Retrieved from http://www.sba/gov/sites/default/files/sbfaq

Soojin, J., Miso, K., & Joonhwan, L. (2011). The system diagrams: Shifting perspectives.

Design Issues, 27, 172-189. doi:10.1162/DESI_a_0078-Jun

St. Pierre, E. A., & Jackson, A. Y. (2014). Qualitative data analysis after coding.

Qualitative Inquiry, 20, 715-719. doi:10.1177/1077800414532435

Stacey, R. D. (2007). *Strategic management and organisational dynamics: The challenge of complexity* (5th ed.). New York, NY: Prentice Hall.

Stake, R. E. (2011). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Strohhecker, J., & Größler, A. (2012). Implementing sustainable business strategies. *Systems Research & Behavioral Science*, *29*, 547-570. doi:10.1002/sres.2139

Stone-Johnson, C. (2014). Responsible leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 50*, 645-674. doi:10.1177/0013161X13510004

Suri, H. (2011). Purposeful sampling in qualitative research synthesis. *Qualitative Research Journal, 11*(2), 63-75. doi:10.3316/QRJ1102063

Svensson, L., & Doumas, K. (2013). Contextual and analytic: Qualities of research methods exemplified in research on teaching. *Qualitative Inquiry, 19*, 441-450. doi:10.1177/1077800413482097

Teng, H. S. S., Bhatia, G. S., & Anwar, S. (2011). A success versus failure prediction model for small businesses in Singapore. *American Journal of Business, 26*, 50-64. doi:10.1108/19355181111124106

Thomas, E., &Magilvy, J. (2011). Qualitative rigor or research validity in qualitative research. *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing, 16*, 151-155. doi:10.1111/j.1744-6155.2011.00283.x

Thompson, J. P., Cavaleri, S. (2010). Dynamic knowledge, organizational growth, and sustainability. *International Studies of Management and Organization, 40*(3), 50-60. doi.2753/IMO0020-882400303

Tideman, S. G., Arts, M. C., & Zandee, D. P. (2013). Sustainable leadership: Towards a
workable definition. *Journal of Corporate Citizenship,* (49), 17-33.
doi:10.9774/GLEAF.4700.2013ma.00004

Toften, K., & Hammervoll, T. (2013). Niche marketing research: Status and challenges.
Marketing Intelligence & Planning, 31, 272-285.
doi:10.1108/02634501311324618

Toledo-Lopez, A., Diaz-Pichardo, R., Jimenez-Castaneda, J. C., & Sanchez-Medina, P. S.
(2012). Defining success in subsistence businesses. *Journal of Business Research,
65*, 1658-1664. doi:10.1016/jbusres.2012.02.006

Trueb, R. M. (2005). Aging of hair. *Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology, 4*(2), 60-72.
doi:10.1111/j.1473-2165.2005.40203.x

Tsang, E. W. K. (2013). Case study methodology: Casual, contextual, and theorizing.
Journal of International Management, 19, 195-202.
doi:10.1016/j.intman.2012.08.004

Ulrich, D., & Smallwood, N. (2013). Leadership sustainability. *Leadership Excellence,
30*(1), 3. doi:10.1002/ltl.20098

Ucbasaran, D., Shepherd, D.A., Lockett, A., & Lyon, S.J. (2013). Life after business
failure: The process of consequences of business failure for entrepreneurs.
Journal of Management, 39, 163-202. doi:10.1177/0149206312457823

U.S. Census Bureau. (2014). The 2011 statistical abstract. Retrieved from
http://www.census.gov

U.S. Department of Labor. (2014). Bureau of Labor-statistics. Retrieved from

http://www.dol.gov

Van Rijn, M. B, Yang, H., & Sanders, K. (2013). Understanding employees' informal

workplace learning: The joint influence of career motivation and self-construal.

Career Development International, 18, 610-628. doi:10.1108/CDI-12-2012-0124

Vassilakopoulou, A. M. (2013). The contribution of technology in business growth: The

case of greek ladies. *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, 2*(1), 1-8.

doi:10.1186/2192-5372-2-3

von Bertalanffy, L. (1972). The history and status of general systems theory. *Academy of

Management Journal*, *15*, 407-426. doi:10.2307/255139

Walden University (2014). Center for research quality: Institutional review board for

ethical standards in research. Retrieved from

http://researchcenter.waldenu.edu/Institutional-Review-Board-for-Ethical-

Standards-in-Research.htm

Walker, J. L. (2012). The use of saturation in qualitative research. *Canadian Journal of

Cardiovascular Nursing, 22*(2), 37-41. Retrieved from http://www.cccn.ca

Walsh, K. (2013). When I say … triangulation. *Medical Education, 47*, 866-866.

doi:10.1111/medu.12241

Wambui, H., & Bwisa, H. (2013). The effects of entrepreneurial marketing practices on

the growth of hair salons: A case study of hair in Kiambu Township. *International

Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 3*, 467-480.

Retrieved from http://www.hrmars.com/journals

Westcott, R. (2014). Leadership challenges. *The Journal for Quality and Participation, 37*(1), 8-12. Retrieved from

https://www.secure.asq.org/perl/msg.pl?prvurl=http://www.asq.org/quality-participation/2014/01/leadership-challenges

Whipple, K. (2012). Failure: The key to success. *Legacy Magazine, 23*(3), 36-37.

Retrieved from

http://www.interpnet.com/NAI/interp/Resources/Publications/Legacy_Magazine/

nai/_publications/Legacy_Magazine.aspx?hkey=d12aa879-5edb-44a3-9a93-

c5e37a3e6ed2

Wiklund, J., Davidsson, P., Audretsch, D. B., & Karlsson, C. (2011). The future of

entrepreneurship research. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 35*(1), 1-9.

doi:10.1111/j.1540-6520.2010.00420.x

Wisdom, J. P., Cavaleri, M. A., Onuegbuzie, A. J., & Green, C. A. (2012).

Methodological reporting in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods health

services research articles. *Health Services Research, 47*, 721-745.

doi:10.1111/j1475-6773.2011.01344.x

Wu, Q., He, Q., & Duan, Y. (2013). Explicating dynamic capabilities for corporate

sustainability. *EuroMed Journal of Business, 8*, 255-272. doi.10.1108/EMJB-05-2013-0025

Yallapragada, R. R., & Bhuiyan, M. (2011). Small business entrepreneurship in the

United States. *Journal of Applied Business Research, 27*(6), 117-122. Retrieved

from http://www.aabri.com

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and method* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study of small business sustainability in the salon industry. The researcher is inviting salon business owners in the Savannah Georgia that have been in business for more than 5 years to be in the study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand the study before deciding whether to take part.

The study is being conducted by a researcher named Militea Johnson, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:
The purpose of the study is to develop a better understanding on how small businesses can remain sustainable beyond 5 years.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to:
- Participants will be contacted by emailed asking to reply back "I Consent" agreeing to participate in the study.
- Take part in an audio-recorded face-to-face interview with the researcher, responding to questions that relate to your knowledge of small business sustainability within your organization.
- Interviews will take place in a suitable environment that is agreed upon by both researcher and participant.
- Member check a synthesized paragraph ensuring your interpretations for accuracy.

Here are some sample questions:

1. What strategies do you use to enhance the growth of your business?

2. How important is having a strategy to you as a small business owner?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
The study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one at Walden University will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as fatigue or stress. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing.

However, the potential benefits of this study is your implied business knowledge on reducing the risk of small business failures.

Payment:
There will be no payment provided for participating in this study.

Privacy:
Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of the research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by password protecting all files in a safe. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via phone at 912-XXX-XXXX or email at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 612-XXX-XXXX. Walden University's approval number for the study is **08-02-15-0414050** and it expires on **August 2, 2016.**

Mrs. Johnson will give a copy of this form to you.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Researcher's Signature   Militea Johnson

Appendix B: Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to enhance the growth of your business?

2. How important is having a strategy to you as a small business owner?

3. How do you compete with larger salons?

4. What are the causes of negative challenges in salons?

5. What are some of the gains or losses of being a successful business owner?

6. What additional information can you provide to assist me in understanding

    successful salon operations?

Appendix C: Letter of Introduction

Invitation to Participate in Research Study

<Date>

Dear (Participant Name),

My name is Militea Johnson, and I am a doctorate candidate at Walden University. In order to fulfill my graduation requirements, I am conducting a study on small business sustainability in the salon industry. As a salon business owner who has been in business beyond 5 years, you are an ideal candidate to provide valuable information from your own personal experiences.

If you voluntarily agree to this study, you can expect:

- You will be contacted again to schedule a face-to-face interview.

- A face-to-face interview that will last no longer than 1 hour.

- Each interview will take place in a clean and safe environment of your choice.

- Each interview will be audio recorded.

- Minimal risks of fatigue or discomfort may occur from participating in this study.

- Your personal information will remain confidential and not identifiable in the study.

- No incentives for your participation in the study.

- Each participant will receive a transcribe summary of the interview to review for accuracy.

Please note that there is no risk for voluntarily withdrawing from this study. Your participation in this study as a successful business owner is valued. If you agree to participate in this study, please email me at ███████████████████ or phone 912-XXX-XXXX.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your cooperation in this study.

Sincerely,

Militea Johnson

Appendix D: Participant Email Invitation

Dear <participant name>

It was a pleasure speaking with you on the phone. As stated in our phone conversation, my name is Militea Johnson and I am currently a Walden University doctorate student. I am conducting research on small business sustainability in the salon industry. Attached you will find a consent form that explains the details of the study and your participation in this research. Please thoroughly read the Consent form and agree to the terms. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. After reading the consent form, please reply to this email by typing the words **I Consent**, if you still wish to participate in this study.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,

Militea Johnson

Walden University Doctoral Candidate