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Economic Freedom Through Entrepreneurship

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Walden University
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Abstract

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MBA, Saint Leo University, 2012

BS, Liberty University, 2008

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Doctor of Business Administration

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Abstract

Entrepreneurship represents a means of increasing personal freedom and designing an attendant lifestyle. The purpose of this multiple case study was to explore strategies sole proprietors used to sustain their small business operations beyond five years and attain profitability levels necessary for freedom and autonomy. Data collection involved semi structured interviews of 10 entrepreneurs who answered open-ended interview questions, granted access to archival documents, and direct observation of their business operations. The conceptual framework was emancipation theory addressing personal freedom through business autonomy. With the modified van Kaam method, the identification of emerging themes involved identifying groupings, clusters, and unrelated antecedents all of which yielded such themes as customer service, personal control, and creativity. The customer service theme was prevalent throughout the interview. The personal control theme arose from participants' perceptions of emancipation, business autonomy, and personal freedom. The creativity theme appeared through the comments of all participants; each participant alluded to the power of creativity and vision. Determination mattered to all the participants. The participants harped on the need for inward strength necessary to overcome all obstacles. Results from this study may contribute to social change assisting sole proprietors in strategies to grow their businesses to profitability, attain personal freedom, and contribute to community economic development which in turn would extend to benefits a stable economy across the community for a safe and progressive society.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to the many people who motivated and inspired me to attain my highest level of educational achievement. I thank my children Nykeisha and Reginald, my wonderful grandchildren Isaiah, Dallas and Farrah and my prayer warrior sister Sherry, for putting up with me and for the countless hours, I spent without them throughout this journey. I would also like to thank my constant and forever friend Stephanie for her unyielding inspiration and assistance. Last, I thank my chair, Dr. Frederick Nwosu, for his expert leadership and caring disposition.

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I thank my Committee Chair, Dr. Frederick Nwosu who took all conceivable steps to guide and supervise me throughout this research activity. I am very fortunate to have a star-studded Committee. Dr. John House was extremely helpful before he left the Committee. Dr. James Fletcher contributed immensely in influencing the direction of my study. Dr. Chris Beehner took over the Second Committee Member role; he hit the ground running, and contributing greatly to identify the remaining missing elements that made my study beautiful. I must also express heart-felt gratitude to Dr. Judith Blando who helped me to score my proverbial touchdown in this research study. I cannot thank my committee members enough. Dr. Al Endres and Dr. Fred Walker command my recognition, as they played important roles in solving my extra-committee problems and keeping me focused on my research. I remain thankful to you all.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

In the context of business autonomy, entrepreneurship research should incorporate the concept of economic freedom through entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship as a means of economic freedom garnered some attention over an extended period, especially as perceived pathways to minority empowerment continues to grow in the United States (Angulo-Guerrero, Pérez-Moreno, **&** Abad-Guerrero**,** 2017; Ayala & Manzano, 2014).

Entrepreneurship studies that incorporate the concept of economic freedom encapsulates examining phenomena and extending the applicability to gender differences, ethnic and racial differences, and socioeconomic status differences among experienced entrepreneurs (Chandra, 2013; Rindova, Barry, & Ketchen, 2009; Zahra, Wright, & Abdelgawad, 2014). Much of the dialog regarding entrepreneurship and empowerment along with the gender, ethnic, racial, and status differences revolves around creating frameworks. Such frameworks are necessary for economic freedom. Future research about entrepreneurship would serve as the avenue (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Zahra et al., 2014). Such scholarly efforts could touch upon issues that have traditionally fallen under the domains of management theory, economics, psychology, and sociology that deepen understanding of how business and business creators benefit themselves and the society (Chandra, 2013). Readers and research users should benefit from the concurrent development of multiple lines of research around small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Background of the Problem

Reaching profitability as an entrepreneur is a time-intensive journey subject to multiple factors (Verduijn & Essers, 2013). Some of these factors are systemic and external to the individual, such as the timing of disruptive opportunities and availability of startup capital (Lamine, Mian, & Fayolle, 2014). Other motivators are internal, driving entrepreneurial behavior internal rewards (Ayala & Manzano, 2014) and perseverance (Lamine et al., 2014). The intrinsic motivation to launch a new venture is at the core of these internal factors such as desires to accomplish tasks (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013).

Developments in the study of entrepreneurship constitute a conceptual framework describing entrepreneurship as a means of increasing an aspiring entrepreneur's personal freedom and designing the attendant lifestyle. SMEs constitute avenues for achieving such freedom. This framework is the emancipation theory (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Rindova et al., 2009). The motivation to attain emancipation can relate to (a) the understanding of profit-driven motivation and (b) a focus on research literature on entrepreneurial motivation (Williams, 2014). Part of the reason for broadening the perspective is an appreciation that different motivators drive different entrepreneurs, and the motivation for lifestyle change goes beyond having financial profit to buy freedom and luxury (Oe & Mitsuhashi, 2013). When developments occur within the realm of entrepreneurship, freedom, change of perspectives, and other positives emerge.

Scholars investigate phenomena and release the results of their investigations to strengthen existing body of knowledge in such areas (Birasnav, 2014). The bulk of the research literature on entrepreneurs over several decades was by scholars who focused on the outcomes of financial profits (Oe & Mitsuhashi, 2013; Winborg, 2015). The motivation for personal freedom is a separate factor in the entrepreneurial equation (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013; Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017). Financial returns often serve as part of the catalysts for freedom and improving the quality of life. This factor must align with quantifying the life changes and opportunities that experienced entrepreneurs create (Baden & Parkes, 2013). Readers and research users benefit from the findings scholars publish after conducting scholarly inquiries.

Problem Statement

United States SMEs comprise 99.9% of private nonfarm businesses that contribute 50% of US GDP, 50% of employment, and 33% of US exports (Faloye, 2015). In 2013, self-employed individuals operating unincorporated firms in Georgia, United States earned $21,100 (SBA, 2015). Thirty-seven percent applied for credit; another 18% were discouraged from applying. Among those that applied, over 40% received no capital or less than they requested (SBA, 2015). The general business problem is that individuals often embark on small business launches without adequate preparation or information. The specific business problem is some sole proprietors lack strategies to sustain their small business operations beyond five years and attain profitability levels necessary for freedom and autonomy.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some sole proprietors used to sustain their small business operations beyond five years and attain profitability levels necessary for freedom and autonomy. Data collection involved interviewing participants, (b) observing business leaders, and (c) reviewing archival records. The specific population was business owners of sole proprietorships located in Cobb County of Georgia, in the United States; all 10 were small business leaders operating 10 different sole proprietorships and had attained profitability levels necessary for freedom and autonomy.

Social change may arise when the experienced entrepreneurs coach motivated community members with knowledge revealing strategies for economic freedom and personal autonomy. Individuals might pursue entrepreneurship with help from knowledgeable coaches encouraging individuals within their community. Coaching and mentoring engender economic growth among community members (Belz, 2013; Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017). Business leaders may mobilize local youths to become sole proprietors. The entrepreneurs could organize mentoring programs to grow local sole proprietorships (Winborg, 2015). Through interviewing, and observing, I generated data saturation when responses became repetitive. Data saturation occurs when no new information, themes, journal entries, and codes emerge during data collection activities (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013).

Nature of the Study

This proposed study involved interviewing, and observing, from which to glean the textual descriptions for reporting to readers and research users. The use of a qualitative method was appropriate for this study. In academic research, a qualitative methodology serves in providing textual descriptions of intricate connections and associations among human beings (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). Using a qualitative method, accomplished the purpose of conveying to a reader what experienced entrepreneurs did to attain profitability levels necessary for freedom and autonomy. Quantitative methodology is appropriate in broad situations involving testing hypotheses, seeking correlations, or using numerical values to identify factors and variables (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017). Because this study had no connection with hypothesis testing; the quantitative method was inappropriate for this study. The mixed method approach could serve in virtually all studies. A researcher would first identify the need to use both qualitative and quantitative methods (in any order) (Caimey & St Denny, 2015). A decision to combine the methodologies must be in alignment with the purpose of the study (Caimey & St Denny, 2015). This substantive study only involved exploration. I conducted incisive data collection to go as far as participant comments may lead, and therein lies the exploration element. The mixed method would involve both exploration and quantitative elements such as numerical associations, hypothesis testing, statistical measurements, and computations. The nature of this study did not require assigning numerical values to factors, which is the quantitative element in research studies.

The daily operational factors facing motivated entrepreneurs while running their businesses require a combination of human touch, precision, revelation, and probing investigation (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014). To convey the strategies and factors through a qualitative method involved learning from those who already succeeded through implementing such strategies. The precision with which they pursued the results was critical to any future reader’s understanding (Aldrich, 2017). Furthermore, during research interviews, revelations of new knowledge occurred. Above all, qualitative research interviews involve probing in multiple layers; the qualitative method is appropriate for this study. Other methods such as quantitative and mixed methods did not apply to this study in that the quantitative method would require (a) considering a broad spectrum of entrepreneurs, (b) research participants could spread across the United States, and (c) numerical values would be sufficient to convey factors, variables, hypotheses, and other elements. These characteristics would fail in conveying the ramifications of motivated entrepreneurs within the Cobb County of Georgia. In the same vein, using the mixed method would involve taking this research study down a different direction of completing both qualitative and quantitative methods in either order (Stentz, Plano Clark, & Matkin, 2012). The scope of this study was narrower than a mixed method would allow, in line with the postulations of Yin (2014); the mixed method was consequently inappropriate. The tenets of qualitative methodology support the use of interviews, observations, and review archival records (Yin, 2014). I implemented these qualitative methods to collect data from sole proprietorship business leaders.

The research design for this study was a multiple case study. The multiple case study design involved exploring the nuances of a phenomenon such that a reader could follow the conceptual and literal presentation (Caimey & St Denny, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Multiple case study design was most appropriate because the design involved collecting data through direct approaches that included more than one data source from multiple locations (Yin, 2014). Other designs exist such as ethnographic, phenomenological, and the narrative.

The ethnographic design would involve studying people groups in their natural habitat to observe and participate in activities (Ketokivi & Choi, 2014; Nathan & Lee, 2013; Vohra, 2014). Such a process, though potentially rich, would be inapplicable because the study had no connection with cultural antecedents that ethnographic designs would normally involve. The phenomenological design would involve capturing the lived experiences of participants (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas's postulations on Van Kaam's (1959) method revealed the role of nonscientific elements such as spontaneity in human activity. Moustakas specified the need to use those elements to create order with which to comprehend and report phenomena. The outcome of Moustaka's ideas led to the modified Van Kaam method.

The narrative design involves the use of stories, biographies, conversations, interviews, and personal experiences to investigate phenomena (Kelley & Bisel, 2014). In this design, a researcher could comprehend the meanings participants convey from their situations. The narrative design would have been applicable but for the need to learn from multiple cases what the experienced entrepreneurs did to achieve economic freedom. The need does not exist in this study to capture and retell the story of an entrepreneur's journey to success. The narrative design was consequently inappropriate for this study.

Research Question

In academic research, investigators focus on questions requiring answers. This study involved exploring phenomena about what participants did to achieve the results central to this study. The following research question remained central to the study: What strategies do sole proprietors use to attain profitability levels necessary for freedom and autonomy?

Interview Questions

Research participants answered the following open-ended questions:

1. What strategies did you use to sustain your small business longer than five years?
2. What barriers did you encounter during the first five years of your small business?
3. What steps should a small business owner take during the first five years of starting a small business?
4. What motivated you to become an entrepreneur?
5. What was the role of profitability in inspiring you about your business project?
6. What role did the need for economic freedom play in your decision to be an entrepreneur? Please explain and give an example of what personal freedom means to you.
7. As an entrepreneur, how would you explain the difference between you and your nonentrepreneurial peers regarding personal control, economic freedom, and autonomy?
8. How important was autonomy as a motivator in your decision to become an entrepreneur?

9. What strategies did you implement at the various stages of your entrepreneurial development?
10. What was the primary factor in your decision among (a) seeking autonomy, (b) repositioning yourself (authoring), and (c) creating change (making declarations) that controlled your business pursuit?
11. What are the important considerations in your motivation to change your life personally?
12. What are the important considerations in your motivation to make a social impact through your business?
13. What do you want us to know that I did not ask?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of emancipation theory undergirded this study. Rindova et al. (2009) first articulated emancipation theory as a framework of entrepreneurship. The theory revolved around the idea of personal freedom—that is, how work activity provides a solution for finding personal freedom (Rindova et al., 2009). The theory received little empirical attention except for few researchers (Chu, Benzing, & McGee, 2007; Goss, Jones, Betta, & Latham, 2011). The emancipation theory from the standpoint of opportunity that entrepreneurs seize when they evaluate their experiences and the kind of future the entrepreneurs envision (Short, Ketchen, Shook, & Ireland, 2010). Identification of personal characteristics is also a dimension relating to entrepreneurship (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Van Nes & Seifert, 2016). Subsequently, personal characteristics were among the internal generators of the perseverance necessary for the pursuit of economic freedom (Rindova et al., 2009). Other generators included the role of family, boards, and groups of other business people, pastors, and other advisors. Such characteristics serve as indices for understanding entrepreneurship.

In an earlier research study, Atkinson (1957) focused on motivation and described it as the determinant factor for entrepreneurs. Atkinson highlighted the risk-taking behavior of individuals; entrepreneurs characteristically take risks. When risk-taking becomes the behavior of an individual, such a person would run a sole proprietorship with the hope of attaining high profitability (Atkinson, 1957; Montuori, 2013). When a small business becomes profitable, the entrepreneur would earn sufficient profits to attain economic freedom and personal autonomy. That goal is achievable through the demonstration of a set of characteristics including perseverance and risk-taking (Rindova et al., 2009).

Operational Definitions

Emancipation: Emancipation is the process through which entrepreneurs free themselves from long-standing repressive and restrictive social conditions those that place socially unnecessary restrictions upon the development and articulation of human consciousness (Verduijn & Essers, 2013; Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017).

Experienced entrepreneur: An experienced entrepreneur is a specific term for a business professional that has taken a new venture from the idea formation stage to the execution of that idea (Lamine et al., 2014).

Homogeneity: Homogeneity is similarity between business owner operation style and business venture focus (Kempster, Higgs, & Wuerz, 2014).

Nascent entrepreneur: A nascent entrepreneur is an individual that aspires to launch a new business venture but has not yet done so (Siemens, 2014).

Social entrepreneur: A social entrepreneur is an individual who uses business as a means of finding and distributing a solution to a pressing social problem (Huault, Perret, & Spicer, 2014; Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions, limitations, and delimitations are ways to delineate the parameters of a study. Often, conclusions are assumptions that could becloud business situations (Yin, 2014). Researchers have underpinning beliefs about the subjects of their research studies. Those beliefs and values often create understanding for readers who have no specific thoughts regarding the topics under study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Emancipation could be political or social, but fiscal considerations are fundamental to the concept (Fan, 2013).

Assumptions

Assumptions are underlining beliefs surrounding an issue, and controlling the perception people have about the issue (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Yin, 2014). Through this study, I built upon several assumptions. First, I assumed that emancipation might have been a stronger motivator for ethnic minorities as compared to Caucasian individuals though the research on this is unclear. An aspiring entrepreneur is more likely to fail within the first five years than achieve economic freedom and autonomy. No published evidence existed to support any racial or ethnic differences in the applicability of this theoretical framework. Minority-owned small businesses do not have as many opportunities as other small businesses for the entrepreneurs running them to attain economic freedom. Future studies with larger, multiracial samples will serve as platforms for researchers to address this issue.

Other assumptions related to valid data collection. I assumed that participants would answer questions honestly articulate their life experiences. I also assumed participants would relate to the interview questions. The participants had no hesitation to provide answers as soon as they heard the questions. That singular act showed the comfort level of participants with the questions. Using the snowball sampling method led to enough respondents (Acharya, Prakash, Saxena, & Nigam, 2013).

Limitations

Limitations of a study consist of the structures and boundaries that confirm a study’s validity (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). If a researcher follows steps other than the steps in the study’s design, the validity of the study could come under scrutiny. These boundaries occasionally impose constraints on a study, affecting the acceptability of the study (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014). A potential weakness of this study was the limited external validity that could result from the sampling method. The sampling method proved to be appropriate, and no weakness emanated from the process. This snag was merely potential, as readers and research users retained the capacity to transfer the study findings to other domains. Having an equal ratio of 25% across all minority platforms may not be accurate in capturing the minority composition of the population. Even though the study population was comprised of a diverse minority grouping, the findings might not apply to all entrepreneurs within the population (which population are you referring to here? majority and minority?).

Delimitations

Some elements delineating the research borders must be clear to readers and research users; therefore, a researcher must provide a clear delineation of methodological elements before commencing data collection (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Knowing such external boundaries helps to ensure a researcher of the exact scope of the study (Yin, 2014). This process of narrowing the scope of the study constitutes delimitation (Denzin, 2012). I attempted to assemble the most diverse sample possible. The sample included both males and females that had different levels of experience with launching their business ventures. The participants provided answers that could help in gender, age, and experience-related categorizations that future researchers could use. This delimitation does not imply generalizability. These precepts constitute the pillars and posts on which the research project occurred regarding the internal and external environments of the study. Any sole proprietorship outside Cobb County, Georgia, United States was not included in the study. Any Cobb County, Georgia sole proprietorship belonging to a nonminority grouping was also not part of the population.

Significance of the Study

The organization of profitable ventures relies on the needs that experienced entrepreneurs identify; an entrepreneurial effort must be of significance to practitioners and communities (Teigen, 2012). Business entities succeed or fail based on diverse factors, regardless of the gender of the organizers. Financial factors play vital roles in the success or failure of such entities (Ahmeda & Mmolainyane, 2014). The significance of a study often depends on the extent to which professionals, researchers, and readers apply the content of the study.

Contribution to Business Practice

Facilitating entrepreneurship has long been a discussion topic as a solution to the unemployment and economic struggles of a disproportionate number of minority individuals in the United States (Belz, 2013). Business failures lead to questions, and individuals who have solved related problems are able to answer such questions (Arasti, Zandi, & Talebi, 2012). In the case of this study, the opportunity to find answers created further opportunity to identify solutions that contribute to business practice (Xun, Hwee, & Zhenyu, 2013). During the interviews, research participants made comments that warranted follow-up questions as well as follow-up interviews. For instance, the unemployment rate for African-Americans has consistently been double that of White Americans over a period of 50 years (Bates & Robb, 2013). Improving minority unemployment rates might be achievable through increased minority entrepreneurship, presenting an alternative to unemployment, overcoming discrimination in the labor market, and providing a path out of poverty (Blount, Smith, & Hill, 2013). Having African Americans and other minorities in positions of authority to hire new staff is a bottom-up solution to excluding minorities in business dynamics. In this instance, power would flow from the lower to the upper echelons.

Researchers indicated that minority business owners are more likely to hire minority applicants than are nonminority business owners would (Bates & Robb, 2013;

Blount et al., 2013). Darker-skinned job applicants receive less favorable assessments than their fair-skinned counterparts, especially when the hiring decision-maker is male (Blount et al., 2013). Minority entrepreneurs support their broader community by providing jobs and negating these trends of hiring discrimination in the labor market and cycles of unemployment and poverty. The outcomes of this study included participant responses about whether emancipation theory can assist researchers in understanding how minority entrepreneurs could find freedom outside of the system and invent their business systems and culture or otherwise (Bhachu, 2017).

Implications for Social Change

Business diversity is critical to the growth of a nation's economy and the equitable distribution of wealth amongst its citizens (Belz, 2013; Welter, Baker, Audretsch, & Gartner, 2017). The presence of minorities from different ethnicities among experienced entrepreneurs drew attention. Entrepreneurial sole proprietors stocked wares that often reflected their ethnicities, but their ambition remained the same – to attain profitability levels necessary for personal freedom.

As business owners and business ventures become increasingly homogenous, the gap of wealth inequity widens (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Kempster et al., 2014). Wealth becomes concentrated in the hands of the few. The mean wealth level increases disproportionately among the minority of extremely wealthy individuals, while the modal wealth of the citizenship stays at a relatively constant, low level (Lamine et al., 2014). In addition to spurring on social unrest, as seen with the *Occupy* movements, wealth disparity has connections with many other social challenges (Kempster et al., 2014). A meta-analysis of data from the United Nations, the World Bank and the World Health Organization shows that, in countries where income differences between rich and poor are high, rates of crime, imprisonment, mental illness, teenage birth rates, and obesity are also higher (Galpin, Whitttington, & Bell, 2015). Controlling for average level of income, in countries where wealth is more equally distributed, indices of health and literacy are more favorable, and living standards are better (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Galpin et al., 2015).

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The entrepreneurship platform includes elements with diverse approaches individuals follow to pursue profitability. Often, the motives might vary from person to person or from geographic location to geographic location. Some of those differences come from cultural, social, peer-group and personal psychology (Bates & Robb, 2013; Nathan & Lee, 2013; Saucet & Cova, 2015; Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017). The above considerations influenced my search for scholarly guidance in pursuing the understanding of this research topic.

In the process of reviewing literature for this study, I identified mainly scholarly works from peer-reviewed journals, a few books, applicable seminal research, and any additional sources that bring value to this study. The sources I used included ProQuest, Science Direct, Business Source Complete, and ABI/Inform Complete databases. Catchwords and phrases for this literature search came from the key words in the problem statement, purpose statement, and the research question. Keywords included *profit, personal control, freedom, entrepreneurship, Black businesses, emancipation, economic* *freedom*, *retail*, *autonomy*, and other terms that emerged in the process of searching the above terms. Table 1 includes the reference tracker.

Table 1

Reference Tracker

Item	Number	Percentage
How many sources are there in the entire proposal?	247	100%
How many of the sources in the entire proposal are peer-reviewed and what is that percentage?	215	89.92%
How many of the sources in the entire proposal are current and what is that percentage?	209	88.41%
How many sources are in the literature review?	169	71% of Total
Of the sources used in the literature review, how many are peer-reviewed and what is that percentage?	155	91.83%
Of the sources used in the literature review, how many of them are current and what is that percentage?	151	89.25%

Intersecting Emancipation Theory with Study Topic

The interconnectedness of theory and study topic encapsulated cognitive processes and abilities (Hyett et al., 2014; Rindova et al., 2009). The motivation of aspiring entrepreneurs constituted a major consideration for comprehending the intersection of theory and the study topic. The emancipation framework includes essential elements for comprehending the motivation of profit-minded entrepreneurs (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Goss, Jones, Betta, & Latham, 2011; Hyett et al., 2014). Motivational factors are critical to understanding the connection between emancipation theory and the topic of study.

New elements relevant for developing the emancipation framework may become noticeable through the business encounters of individuals from different demographics, especially under case study conditions. A novel way of conceptualizing entrepreneurial motivation exists through a framework that casts the process and outcomes of entrepreneurship as a search for emancipation or personal freedom (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Goss et al., 2011; Rindova et al., 2009). This emancipation framework includes assessments of the motivations and cognitive processes of entrepreneurs using three components. This research will help to build a better understanding of the essential nature of what drives modern entrepreneurs and provides some of the first empirical data to refine the conceptual framework for emancipation.

Theories help to circumscribe concepts, especially when contextual interpretations are necessary (Montuori, 2013). The emancipation framework is a novel viewpoint from which to study entrepreneurship, but because the viewpoint is still relatively new to the research literature, many unanswered questions exist, and the need for empirical work is high (Hyett et al., 2014). The concept of emancipation presents a new opportunity to study business processes and success outcomes using a new theoretical lens for guidance, and perhaps even redefining what success means to modern entrepreneurs (Rindova et al., 2009). The importance of theory to aspects of a research study must remain important to researchers.

Objectivity in collecting the responses of all participants is critical to the success of the study. The topic of entrepreneurship is broad, covering many industries and motivators that start and sustain the experienced entrepreneur (Saucet & Cova, 2015). A quantitative measure would narrowly focus on the point that some questions would not adequately capture (Hyett et al., 2014; Montuori, 2013). Such attitudes are diverse and circumscribe experiences of a wide range of entrepreneurs. No standardized quantitative measure exists that sufficiently taps into the constructs needed to assess qualitative elements (Cokley & Awad, 2013). A collection of quantitative instruments would lead to insightful results, but would also be more burdensome on the volunteer participants, who receive no financial remuneration or any other incentive for donating their time. Response rates usually suffer under such situations. The methodology for this study was qualitative. The design was multiple case study. I asked qualitative questions in a user-friendly manner requiring just minutes of each participant's time.

The objective of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some sole proprietors used to sustain their small business operations beyond 5 years and attain profitability levels necessary for freedom and autonomy. The motivations entrepreneurs are using might align with the framework of the emancipation theory. The investigations served as processes by which participants revealed the connection between the activities of freedom-seeking entrepreneurs and the three elements of the emancipation theory (a) seeking autonomy, (b) authoring, and (c) making declarations.

The conceptual framework of emancipation theory for this study served as a basis for determining a structured way to examine the subjective experiences of entrepreneurs. I focused on the entrepreneur's internal thought processes that drove their business behavior rather than focusing on external business results. I intended to use the emancipation theory to find new pragmatic approaches to educating and supporting a new generation of entrepreneurs. With the widest scope of this research, I sought pragmatic ways to improve the professional and economic status of entrepreneurs through the lens of each participant.

Phenomena are can be more fully developed when researchers approach the inquiries from multiple angles. Such angles are consistent with study types, methodologies, and designs. Researchers have analyzed gender relationships between empowerment and entrepreneurship (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013; Montuori, 2013). For example, Al-Dajani and Marlow focused on displaced Palestinian migrant women, working at home-based enterprises making high quality traditional embroidered goods in Amman, Jordan. Through continuing interviews with 43 of these women, entrepreneurial activity became noticeable as a socio-politically motivated activity. These conversations illustrated how the women used their traditional position to create change through businesses that emphasized traditional products.

High achievers contribute to development in different places and at different times. High achievement appears to be an attitude inherent in entrepreneurs. McClelland (1961) postulated the theory of high achievement and other scholars also called this concept the theory of achievement motivation. In this theory, McClelland expressed the importance of character in the process of making achievements. McClelland explained that people often made decisions when the path forward was unclear. High achievement people see nothing but the goal of succeeding and becoming entrepreneurs (McClelland, 1961). The motivation level for such individuals is usually high; the individuals constantly evaluate themselves to ensure adherence to the tenets that would bring them to the goal of authority, freedom, and power they set for themselves (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; McClelland, 1961). The high achievement people make concerted efforts to go over obstacles because of the future expectations.

A thorough consideration of motivation is necessary for circumscribing the nuances of entrepreneurship bordering on emancipation. Motivational factors in self-employment has drawn the attention of scholars (Chu et al., 2007; Lvarez & Sinde-Cantorna, 2014). Researchers have studied individuals' desires to be a boss. Some scholars relied on the emancipation theory for the examination they conducted. Some entrepreneurs focus on financial enrichment and amassing wealth. Other entrepreneurs pursue personal happiness through creating businesses, thus representing a class of serial entrepreneurs. The former would go to all lengths to buy and sell with the motive of piling up riches. The latter would predetermine the costs and benefits before venturing. The characteristics of a person manifest in behaviors revealing, in the case of economic emancipation, whether an experienced entrepreneur wants to amass wealth for the sake of wealth or generate enough wealth to live a debt-free and happy life (Atkinson, 1957; McClelland, 1961). Motivational behaviors surrounding emancipation and manifesting entrepreneurship require scholarly investigation.

The dynamics of emancipation transcend political realms. For example, women have lamented disadvantaged positioning in various societies, and economic and social ramifications of self-determination has increased the need for emancipation for women (Goss et al., 2011). Entrepreneurship coming out the personal characteristics McClelland (1961) addressed would lead to economic emancipation, even though the difference would reside in the motives of Person 1 wanting to amass wealth for the sake of wealth versus Person 2 wanting to generate just enough wealth to live debt-free. Through this exploratory study, I captured the strategies entrepreneurial sole proprietors use in attaining the level of profitability necessary to achieve freedom and autonomy. In the process of achieving the above purpose, research participants had the opportunity to reveal the intersections of the three facets of the emancipation theory such as (a) seeking autonomy, (b) authoring, and (c) making declarations.

Historical Bias for Emancipation

The biases people have exhibited over time might be insufficient for a true comprehension of a person's quest for freedom. Entrepreneurship as a means of economic freedom drew the attention of scholars, as the issue of Minority empowerment grows in the United States (Ayala & Manzano, 2014; Wageeh, 2016). Existing literature contained scholarly examinations of gender differences, ethnic and racial differences, and socioeconomic status differences. Much of the dialogue revolved around creating frameworks for the field or around establishing data for further research (Ayala & Manzano, 2014). Scholarly literature on the quest for freedom through entrepreneurship, and especially on the platform of emancipation deserves comprehension.

The statistics regarding how African American entrepreneurs are not performing as well as other demographics required developing the desire to act. Long-term professional goals are necessary to support Minority business professionals. From a business leader's perspective, business operation changes one's life and views of the world. From an educator and nurturer's perspective, business skills can grow through training. Trainers aspiring to be the most effective must understand where young minorities are, compare Minority efforts and successes with those of other groups, and explore strategies to change any imbalance that might exist.

Under certain circumstances, gender might have positive or negative effects on entrepreneurship. Researchers conducted a specific examination of gender differences regarding resilience factors and successful entrepreneurial outcomes (Ayala & Manzano, 2014). Resilience is a component of success in the enterprise. Ayala and Manzano examined the Spanish tourism trade and tested connections between success and the resilience dimensions of hardiness, resourcefulness, and optimism. The researchers measured the resilience of the subjects five years before the follow-up data collection.

From a historic perspective, rudimentary questions become necessary for comprehending the background of the individuals who venture into business. The inspiration and motivation behind African-American entrepreneurship lead to such questions. Of critical importance also are the thought processes of African-Americans as catalysts to comprehending business directions. The above considerations might serve as starting points to develop meaningful entrepreneurial training programs (Adkins & Samaras, 2013; Blackburn, Hart, & Wainwright, 2013; Weinzimmer & Nystrom, 2015).

The disparate statistics on Caucasian and African-American entrepreneurial ventures point to entrepreneur emergence from the environment; the inspiration, motivation, and thought process are not birth traits (Van Ness, & Seifert, 2016). What young African-American need to learn, assimilate, or reject to move into successful business careers become appropriate topics for investigation.

Entrepreneuring-as-emancipation theory circumscribed the scaffolding necessary for executing this entire dissertation project. Many questions required answers along the way, most meaningful postulations I kept in view throughout this work were as follows: As an ethnic Minority, the experiences of entrepreneurial progenitors should serve as lessons in tackling the economic systems that define life on one's terms. A review of pertinent scholarly works was helpful in reaching the answers.

Scholars would be interested in the extent to which an intending entrepreneur might resist challenges, succeed, and grow into a serial entrepreneur. Resilience factors into success (Ayala & Manzano, 2014). Resourcefulness was a factor applicable to both genders. Predicting success was different between genders with optimism playing a larger role for women than for men. This format is emancipation in action—a daily experience of freedom and empowerment, an alignment of identity and action where personal philosophy and career philosophy are the same.

Resistance to obstacles would require willpower on the part of a budding businessman. Persistence is critical to success in entrepreneurial ventures (Al-Dajani, Carter, Shaw, & Marlow, 2015; Lamine et al., 2014). The purpose was to extract insights regarding persistent behaviors in nascent entrepreneurs, particularly the impact of social skills in new technology-based firms. The design was longitudinal to track the impact of social skills, which involved continuing relationships. The impact of social skills on entrepreneurial perseverance was high; additionally, these skills affected the creation process for new technology ventures (Birasnav, 2014; Lamine et al., 2014; Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017). Researchers contributed primarily to the knowledge base necessary to train new technology entrepreneurs. Vassilakopoulou (2013) and Moylan, Derr, and Lindhorst (2015) emphasized the strong presence of technology in business growth, corroborating the postulations in Lamine et al.'s (2014) study. This revelation is important to schools, think tanks, and future researchers on the elements of successful start-up ventures.

In some instances, researchers must pay attention to diverse demographics to learn valuable lessons. The gender-informed conceptual framework could be necessary for meeting business growth and personal autonomy goals among diverse populations (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013). The importance of this project hinged on the discussion of these diverse population benchmarks and methods for traditionally subordinated women to achieve individual success and contribute to positive social change. Through the course of the study, a cycle of growth was visible in five stages: welfare, access, conscientization, participation, and control.

The State of Minority Small Business

Statistical data have consistently been an asset to business practitioners. Such data often contain trends. Some trends for Minority small business owners vary disproportionately with their White counterparts (Anderson & Ullah, 2014). White businesses profit more, start up quicker, and survive longer than their minority counterparts. For example, in 2002, total yearly earnings averaged $74,018 for African American businesses, $141,044 for Latino businesses, and a hugely disproportionate $439,579 for White businesses (Fairlie & Robb, 2008). These numbers are staggering, but when combined with evidence of a high rate of exit from self-employment, credit barriers, discrimination in the customer base, reduced avenues of accruing needed experience, and a tendency toward locations of poor Minority concentration, the plight of the Minority entrepreneur is overwhelming (Andersson & Öhman, 2015; Banwo, Du, & Onokala, 2015). Government tendencies, competitor tendencies, local market indices, and other elements are factors in an entrepreneur's quest for business success.

Other trends might include race, ethnicity, tribe, nationality, and other patriotic tendencies. A connection exists between race/ethnicity and venture success in the end (Freeland & Keister, 2016). Data from the Panel Study of Entrepreneurial Dynamics II were critical to answering this question. Specifically, the authors studied how race/ethnicity, supplier credit access, and amount of personal financial investment affected three business outcomes: continued engagement, new business creation, and disengagement. Results were in line with other research studies, indicating that Blacks were less likely to receive credit and consequently more likely to put up personal money to form an enterprise.

The goal of an entrepreneur is business wealth, leading to personal wealth, and the potential to contribute to society. Starting a new business generates jobs to service the economy (Mims, 2015; Williams, 2014). The jobless members of the communities, and especially minorities, earn income to alleviate poverty. The launching process of a new business venture has significant challenges. One needs little or no financial capital to generate a few hundred dollars' worth of annual revenues from self-employment (Lvarez & Sinde-Cantorna, 2014; Winborg, 2015). This small income does not necessarily constitute ownership of a viable small business (Federal Reserve Bank, 2016; Miles, 2013; Mohamed, 2013). Historically, Pierce (1947) found that over 96% of all African-American-owned businesses operated in low-barrier fields such as personal services and low-profit retailing. Nationwide Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data subsequently indicated that African-American self-employment grew 185% in the finance, insurance, and real estate (FIRE) field and 175% in business services from 1960 to 1980. Likewise, many Latino businesses are in the services, landscaping, and mechanical industries. These are also all low barrier to entry enterprises. The gap is narrowing between minority and White presence in high barrier versus low barrier industries, but the precedent is important, shaping the way minorities view their options when looking for entrepreneurial opportunities (Miles, 2013; Powell & Baker, 2014). Minorities with entrepreneurial vision pursue with the goal vigor, whether they are Whites or minorities.

The effects of success or failure on new enterprises often dictate an entrepreneur's attitude (Arasti et al., 2012). When a business is doing poorly, African-Americans are twice as likely to stick it out as their White American counterparts are, and six times as likely as Latino owners are (Freeland & Keister, 2016). This conflict with the results of the Kauffman Index of Entrepreneurial Activity [KIEA] (2014) puts the rate of African-American initiatives slightly lower than that of Whites, and other research studies pointing to high levels of attrition among Minority-owned businesses. Some discrepancies exist in the research data pool, strengthening the argument for additional research. A big question was why a Minority business lagged so profoundly in low-barrier industries - concentration areas of Minority entrepreneurial efforts. Starting personal wealth gaps and differences in the level of education are not the culprits (Lofstrom & Bates, 2007). Regarding starting new enterprises, minorities suffer primarily from a disadvantage at securing the two primary elements of success in small business ownership: experience and capital.

Cultural, ethnic, tribal, and national antecedents appear to vary in manifestation. Hispanics did not differ from Whites on these two dimensions, but Hispanics were more likely than both groups to disengage after two years of operation (Freeland & Keister, 2016; Nathan & Lee, 2013). Blacks had more persistence, remaining engaged for longer than Hispanics and Whites. Successful small businesses have two characteristics in common. First, their owners possess experience and backgrounds necessary to run a business. Second, they have enough capital to operate at a productive scale, pay their bills, deal with periods of poor revenue, and most importantly, take advantage of unique and transient opportunities when such opportunities arise (Bates & Robb, 2013). If the capitalization is high (both financial and personal), the chance of remaining open for business will also be high. Hiring new labor, and earning viable revenue becomes feasible (Fairlie & Robb, 2008). Postulations by Deichmann and Stam (2015) echoed Fairlie and Robb's above postulations. The attitudinal variations may become clearer after research participants provide data from their respective vantage points.

Entry Factors

Micro- and macro-emancipation are the dominant lenses through which individuals create and view economic freedom studies. Positive leadership attitudes are critical to the success of such business creations, especially when the ventures are new (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Yang, 2015). Macro-emancipation focuses on large-scale societal challenges to entrepreneurship, and micro-emancipation focuses on the immediate daily activities. These views are not sufficient for resolving some challenges that emancipation theory has caused researchers to discard (Huault et al., 2014). The authors used the work of the French philosopher, Jacques Rancière, to create a new framework with which to re-examine these issues.

All entrepreneurs face challenges. Minorities are facing some challenges when entering self-employment (Ates, Garengo, Cocca, & Bititci, 2013; Baden & Parkes, 2013; Lvarez & Sinde-Cantorna, 2014). Of critical importance is the relative equality in the rates of new business *creation* across races, but long-term success, industry opportunities, and financial earnings differ radically between African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, and Whites. Emancipation is the outcome of the demand for equality in the face of patterns of inequality in organizations (Huault et al., 2014). The authors also contended that emancipation worked through a process of defining and articulating *dissensus*, which is the concept that what exists in an institutionalized system is not in line with what the experienced entrepreneur believed should exist. Finally, emancipation denotes the creation and realignment of institutional standards and redefines what is *sensible*.

The personal net wealth of a potential entrepreneur often represents a factor in the entry. Minorities tend to have lower net worth than their White counterparts do. African-American entrepreneurs were more likely to sink their money into the enterprise, as they have difficulty securing loans (Freeland & Keister, 2016). High net worth should correlate positively with high rates of African-American entry into self-employment, but is not necessarily the case. Any approach to emancipation theory would involve actualizing dimensions of discontent with the status quo (Huault et al., 2014). Rather than a revolution (macro) or daily coping measures (micro), the authors framed the argument regarding redefining the *sensible.* Rather than finding a middle ground between two dichotomous theories, this approach presents a new paradigm where emancipation is the struggle to define dissensus, which means, variation in opinion, and create a new consensus. This research activity was fundamental to exploring participant viewpoints ways and means to emancipation through entrepreneurship.

Securing credit is a real and proven obstacle for minorities, especially African Americans. African-Americans are five times less likely to secure credit for a startup compared with Whites, although counterintuitively, Latinos do not differ statistically from Whites (Freeland & Keister, 2016). Even so, the total net worth of a company correlates to its long-term survival; and securing loans when resources are of critical need is the most important way to capitalize financially. African-American persistence in high-barrier fields, like that of other diverse peoples' groups, is under pressure from lower net asset holdings and inability to secure credit (Blount et al., 2013; Coad, Frankish, Roberts, & Storey, 2013; Federal Reserve Bank, 2016; Smith, 2017). The obstacles antecedent to securing credit appear to be standard; some budding entrepreneurs overcome the obstacles while others succumb to the obstacles.

Entrepreneurs are not of the same stock. Each entrepreneur acts and reacts in line with individualistic tendencies. Perception of difficulties affects the decision to start an enterprise (Crossman, Mazutis, Seijts, & Gandz, 2013). Women and Minority business owners might so face actual challenges in the business environment, that even the perception of these challenges would influence the decision to go ahead with a venture (Adkins & Samaras, 2013). For example, business owners might choose not to attempt to secure capital because of a belief that the effort would be futile. The importance of perception on business creation spans the domains of planning, theorizing, engaging, and researching (Martin, & MacDonnell, 2012; Mohamed, 2013; Nirupama, & Etkin, 2012; Verdonk, Räntzsch, de Vries, & Houkes, 2014). While theories are standard, the applicability would often depend on the circumstances of the business owner or unique factors.

Experience plays a role in the business entry behavior. When an entrepreneur comes to a venture from extensive unemployment, the entrepreneur will probably experience a low personal capitalization. This experience applies to both self-employment and wage-employment. The experience occurs because prior joblessness keeps the worker from accumulating labor market skills. Previous self-employment experience raises the value of self-employment about the other options, as the new business owner has some experience with the benefits and consequences of self-employment. Minority workers tend to be unemployed for longer periods than do White workers. Estimated 20% of African-Americans, 10% of Latinos, and only 3% of Whites have been unemployed for more half of a ten-year observation window (Ahn, 2011). When an entrepreneur comes to a venture from extensive unemployment, the entrepreneur will probably possess reduced personal capital for both self-employment and wage-employment because of joblessness keeping the worker from accumulating labor market skill

Exit Factors

Entrepreneurs plot business entry and exit strategies. Businesses that fail within 5 years lack either the strategies or the resources to survive the initial years in business; the need to plot business exit strategy is as important as that of business entry (Hitt, & Duane Ireland, 2017; Siemens, 2014). Accessing appropriate data to guide in entry and exit remains the responsibility of the aspiring entrepreneur.

The literature includes postulations in which scholars highlighted distinct trends in the low rate of minority businesses. This trend is not because White entrepreneurs are more likely to enter self-employment; but because minority business owners are more likely to *exit.* The short lifespan of Minority businesses skews the numbers toward White dominance. For example, Latinos do not lag behind Caucasians in their rates of self-employment entry nearly as dramatically as they lag behind Caucasians in their self-employment survival rates (Ahn, 2011; Parish Flannery, 2015). More than one-third of new enterprises African-American and Latino men started lasted less than one year. Only

26% of White enterprises are that short. Using a multinomial logit model, Ahn (2011) assigned African-Americans and Latinos the same work histories as Whites. The predicted gap between African-American and Caucasian survival rates in the first year dropped 31%. The Latino versus White gap decreased 14%. Work histories and the experience gained from those histories weigh heavily on the choice to persist in a venture.

Entrepreneurs often have opportunities, and some instances arise from an unexpected turn of events. Some new enterprises in rural communities revealed a decrease in natural resource-based income and turned into entrepreneurship (Siemens, 2014). The researcher aimed to create data for the establishment of location-specific aid programs to support new entrepreneurs in these constrained environments. Survey instruments contained questions with which the researcher found that people in these rural areas engaged in their ventures because of lifestyle choices more than economic benefit. While rural areas might constitute hostile environments for economic growth, community empowerment engendered small businesses growth (Coad, 2014; Coad et al., 2013). Siemens (2014) used community-based support as a basis for program recommendations. The research participants harped on networking among community members. Such networks also included not only fellow entrepreneurs but also regular community members. The entrepreneur’s environment may be friendly or unfriendly, which determines the extent of the entrepreneur’s success (Smith, 2017).

Data from the 1979 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth contained an identification of racial differences in cross-sectional self-employment rates. These differences were largely because of Minority workers' short-lived periods of self-employment leading up to unemployment (Ahn, 2011). Minority workers' weak experience in the labor market before beginning a self-employment venture determines in part the transition from self-employment to unemployment, rather than wage employment (Henriques, Werbel, & Curado, 2014; Lvarez & Sinde-Cantorna, 2014). In other words, the trend is cyclical. Lack of experience beforehand causes an enterprise to fail, the lack of experience afterward leaves the worker unable to enter wage employment where they can gain the experience needed to succeed in self-employment (Inyang, 2013). Data content is critical to understanding phenomena, and entrepreneurs stand the chance of successfully growing their businesses when data are available.

The disparity between the net worth of Minority enterprises and White enterprises is part of the content in the initial part of this chapter. The reasons struggling minorities might exit a venture included, particularly, situations in which they cannot secure credit to float the business and operate it until it produces steady revenue. Well-capitalized firms possess a buffer, heightening their ability to withstand periods of poor business performance (Adom, Amakye, Doh, & Anku, 2014; Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013; Bloodgood & Chilton, 2012; Srivastava, 2013). Without this buffer of financial capital, and the corresponding personal capital to direct the enterprise, nascent Minority businesses face closure, especially in high-barrier industries.

Five critical stages exist in the emancipation entrepreneurship process. The gender-specific variations that manifest during implementation are important to note. The five stages are (a) welfare, (b) access, (c) conscientization, (d) participation, and (e) control stages (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013). These stages manifested in the themes that emerged from the study. The welfare stage is critical because the actual difference in resources is apparent at that stage (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013). At the access stage, women realize their unequal position and act to improve their socioeconomic position. At the conscientization stage, women realize that their unequal access is a social construction and can change. During participation, the women begin to act to change their status, making decisions in the household and their traditional spheres of influence, leading to increased courage and competence in other fields. Finally, at the control stage, women use their increased participation to influence access to resources and address general gender inequalities.

A socio-political framework for personal autonomy constitutes a noticeable motive for entrepreneurship. The cycle starts with home-based ventures, which leads the women through each stage of the cycle (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013; Bhachu, 2017). As they move through the stages, they become role models to other women in the culture and propagate this cycle. These women operate in a society with extreme male-dominance. This research includes a presentation of the positive framework for change based specifically on a group that has difficulty achieving self-actualization because of tradition.

Minorities venture into businesses because of economic hardship rather than opportunity exploration. Entrepreneurship often suffers abandonment when these hardships go away (Bates & Robb, 2013). This abandonment is particularly true in the urban centers of large cities or anywhere poor Minority entrepreneurs attempt to thrive among poor Minority clientele. The location of such businesses is itself a hardship, arising from some factors, but predominantly by the factor of race.

Inner City Development

Differences exist between urban and rural entrepreneurial efforts. The plan to succeed in business among minorities would be the same as among other groupings (Bates & Robb, 2013). Associating the inner cities with a specific grouping might explain the motivation behind the business location. The demographics of inner cities often change. Structural changes of the inner cities might be the cause of population changes that influence the choice of location among budding entrepreneurs (Pofeldt & Max, 2016). Entrepreneurs must pay attention to the demographics their ventures align with, whether such alignments are voluntary or involuntary.

Entrepreneurship elevates minorities out of unemployment and poverty and gives them a self-driven solution that works outside of the system that has failed them. Importantly, entrepreneurship inspires real social change beyond wealth acquisition - a chance to emancipate oneself from that failing system (Bates & Robb, 2013; Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017). The unemployment rate for African Americans has consistently been double that of Caucasians over a 50-year period. Boosting the rate of successful entrepreneurship has long represented a way for the African American community to address this disproportionate unemployment rate (Bates & Robb, 2013; Pofeldt & Max, 2016). Evidence indicates that the opportunities for winding up are rampant in urban centers and low-profit ventures among low-income customers (Bates & Robb, 2013). For the theory of entrepreneurship as a socio-economic remedy to work, a wider panel of social-geographic options should be available to new business owners. Americans are betting on their business ideas, driving the percent of the population involved in startup activity to 12% - from less than 8% in 2010 (Pofeldt & Max, 2016). The U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC, 2010) reported small- and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) contributed $4.7 trillion to the United States economy in 2004 or roughly 50% of U.S. private nonagricultural Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Selling to customers of the same race or ethnicity has been a popular starting point for Minority entrepreneurs (Adom et al., 2014). As an example, consider the African-American-owned barbershops and beauty parlors found in every African-American residential area. These personal services and low-profit retail entities constitute the most widespread African-American business ventures in cities across the United States (Bates & Robb, 2013). The solidarity found among members of the same ethnicity or race provides labor, advice, and customers instrumental to building a successful enterprise in a poor region. Lack of profitable networks is a disadvantage Minorities face when starting and growing a new business; and the automatic network of fellow members of a demographic is an easy springboard (Smith, 2017). Co-ethnic advice and labor do not have a significant impact on survival, likely because the network participants do not individually have the experience and skills necessary to become viable as a business network (Smith, 2017; Wang & Altinay, 2012). More than 50% of startups fail, while 85% of the returns come from only 10% of the entrepreneurial efforts (Nanda & Rhodes-Kropf, 2013). Goods and services are in demand, and buyers often pay little or no attention to demographics when they buy.

Critical elements of business success exist that entrepreneurs must understand. The two elements necessary for success are experience and capitalization (Abdul-Rahamon & Adejare, 2014). One challenge facing these ethnic communities is retaining educated and skilled owners. Those with higher skills or personal capitalization enter ventures in areas with better financial performance (Bloodgood & Chilton, 2012; De Hoogh, Greer, & Den Hartog, 2015; Dzisi, & Ofosu, 2014; Srivastava, 2013). An educated and skilled business owner would enter viable ventures, provided such business owners experience no other barriers to entry. Serving local clienteles in Minority neighborhoods has a strong connection to firm closure and low profitability (Bates & Robb, 2013). The disproportionate exit of Whites from these areas leads to Minority dominance, making it appear in statistics that minorities have a strong entrepreneurial foothold in many areas of the economy (Bates & Robb, 2013; Wang & Altinay, 2012). This dominance may be proof that Whites can enter areas barred to minorities, and do so because of the low profitability of serving urban, poor, ethnic neighborhoods (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013; Ucbasaran, Shepherd, Lockett, & Lyon, 2013). Minority-owned firms in this sector reflect only the least desirable market niches accessible to the leaders of such firms. Profitability may be a function of experience or capitalization.

These skilled entrepreneurs have problems as well, for they must have sufficient access to credit to achieve financial capitalization to exploit business opportunities. In a scholarly study of African-American businesses and inner-city economic development, three observations emerged. First, a lack of financing hinders inner-city economic development. Second, new business ventures serving this market have low profits and high exit rates. Third, private venture capital investment in the inner city has not generated attractive returns even though inner-city lending can be profitable under the right conditions (Aldrich, 2017). Why investments in ethnic centers are failing to return profits remains unclear.

The choice to build businesses in areas of ethnic Minority concentration comes down to simple discrimination. Ethnicity can lead to bias among majority race clientele; and the businesses some ethnic entrepreneurs operate face intolerance, especially for a business that falls outside the demographically conventional specialization (Bates & Robb, 2013). If a Minority entrepreneur wishes to operate a business in nonminority areas, the individual must choose an industry acceptable as a minority industry (Jacobsen & Bøgh Andersen, 2015; Rogers & Lange, 2013). Such choices lead to changes arising from positive frameworks. Latinos often restrict themselves to accepted business areas such as landscaping to operate in predominantly White areas, like the urban southwest. Latino niches define Los Angeles, yet Whites hold power and resources. It would be interesting to see research on the roots of this interesting business survival technique among Latino minorities.

Supporting Minority Entrepreneurship

Government or communal support might be necessary for growing businesses. Assistance programs often exist for minorities to learn how to create wealth (Verduijn & Essers, 2013). The presence of role models is critical to the dissemination of information. Incidentally, role models for Minority entrepreneurs appear to be few to compare with other groups (Ucbasaran et al., 2013). Support systems would include education, training, mentoring, and other contingent approaches in growing and developing entrepreneurs (Blount et al., 2013). An entrepreneur must seek any potential support that might help in building the enterprise.

A non-traditional stance on the positive aspects of entrepreneurship became appropriate for comprehending the roles of traditionalism in small business ventures (Verduijn & Essers, 2013). The stance embodies an assertion that Western nations romanticize entrepreneurship as an absolute way to create wealth for the economy and to emancipate people who are in marginalized positions. The objective was to create a problem in a domain most researchers have taken for granted. Entrepreneurship is important to the economy, responsible for growth, and a path to success for all people (Schoonjans, Cauwenberge, & Bauwhede, 2013; Uddin & Bose, 2013). This positive view underwent examination through comparing actual experiences of Minority women with institutionalized views of entrepreneurial activity.

Success rates of minority businesses vary because of human or geographic factors. Regarding boosting the rate of minority entrepreneurship to be commensurate with White entrepreneurs, training skills for young entrepreneurs in the opportunity recognition process is likely the most easily addressed factor educators and policymakers elevate (Verhoef & Lemon, 2013). Some studies show that minority entrepreneurs have less contact and familiarity with family members or other potential role models who are self-employed. The lack of business role models provides an educational disadvantage and results in the young minority entrepreneur lacking the social and professional contacts to call upon to help secure critical business resources (Chollet, Geraudel, &

Mother, 2014). Access to an entrepreneurial father correlates with becoming an entrepreneur (Ucbasaran et al., 2013), which meant that a deficit of African-American entrepreneurs within a generation might depict a declining trend of entrepreneurship in the subsequent generation. Human, geographic, or other factors must stay in the experienced entrepreneur's focus for accurate navigation.

Educational background helps to predict self-employment patterns in the low barrier industries; advanced educational credentials predict lower entry rates. College graduates are less likely to enter low-barrier small business ownership (Lofstrom & Bates, 2007; Verdonk, Rantzsch, de Vries, & Houkes, 2014). Education alone does not rectify the problem of opportunity. Research results included suggestions that foundational measures are necessary to promote healthy Minority-owned business growth. School-to-work programs that create an opportunity for early employment of minority workers and other programs intended to provide opportunities to gain experience might be the best bet when determining how to close the entrepreneurial gap (Ahn, 2011). Scholarly researchers postulated that entrepreneurs must embrace formal or informal education to achieve success to grow their enterprises.

Hiring practices can change the outcome of future self-employment, especially if the vision behind the organization relies on positive frameworks for change. If previous experience is required to help ensure success in a new venture, minorities need to have a way to gain the personal capital necessary to succeed (Ahmeda & Mmolainyane, 2014). One way to increase the entrepreneurial entry experience and the options available at the exit is to have more minorities in hiring positions. Minority business owners are more likely to hire Minority employees and other minority applicants than are White business owners. Researchers have shown that darker-skinned job applicants receive less favorable assessment than their fair-skinned counterparts do; this trend is especially applicable when the hiring decision-maker is male (Blount et al., 2013; Owens, Kirwan, Lounsbury, Levy, & Gibson, 2013; Rogers & Lange, 2013). This phenomenon means that the solutions will snowball and build beneficial equity as more minorities succeed both at self-employment and at wage employment.

The concept of emancipation provides a filter to examine how the entrepreneur feels connected to their work on a more personal level. Understanding an entrepreneur’s work may serve in designing a lifestyle that has more personal freedom than otherwise. Economic freedom as a central motivator for driving the individual toward entrepreneurship deserves attention (Ainin, Parveen, Moghavvemi, Jaafar, & Mohd Shuib, 2015; Lvarez & Sinde-Cantorna, 2014). Findings from this exploratory study will constitute contributions to the growing literature on the different motivators and behavioral traits, cognitive patterns, and personal demographics (e.g., race, gender, experience level) of entrepreneurs.

This study involved exploring how achieving economic freedom would motivate entrepreneurs to engage in launching new business ventures. Toward this end, this research study had an undergirding of the emancipation theory of entrepreneurship (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Rindova et al., 2009) as an overarching framework to guide data collection efforts. The research explores the motivations that drive entrepreneurs to gain financial freedom and control in their lives through their work. At the broadest level, the goal of this exploratory research is applying it to help support diversity among business professionals. Of interest to the researcher is how the construct of emancipation offers unique insights into studying how minorities have underperforming rates of entrepreneurship (Welter et al., 2017). This study involved exploring how the business activities of entrepreneurs seeking economic freedom aligned with the emancipation theory toward achieving the purpose of this study.

Future Study

Scholarly activities reveal the state of affairs through the lens of the scholar. Information already in circulation would form a basis for further investigation. Business autonomy, personal freedom, entrepreneurial success, and other applicable elements circumscribe the topic of this study. The actual cause of disparities in business profitability among different ethnic groupings is unclear (Freeland & Keister, 2016). Through engaging in future studies, scholars may identify the fundamental and causal factors undergirding success or failure among business owners from diverse ethnic groupings (Arasti et al., 2012; Welter et al., 2017).

Contradictions in the evidence within this chapter point to the complexity of the issue of racial gaps in entrepreneurship. Researchers need to conduct studies to solidify and refine the gains prior researchers made. Studies with which subsequent researchers track such progress would be useful, especially to examine what has worked to close the gaps in succeeding years. Such progress tracking efforts would be appropriate for providing a rubric for potential changes over time. As an example, consider the well-documented rates at which minorities are dropping out of new business ventures when compared to Whites. African-Americans were twice as likely to *persist* and remain engaged in a nascent venture if they did not achieve success *after two years* of operation, whereas Hispanics were three times more likely to disengage (Freeland & Keister, 2016). These findings indicate a need for further research. Freeland and Keister specifically addressed exploring more outcomes than the traditional pass/fail model of business creation to obtain a clearer picture of the struggle of Minority business owners over time.

Similarities and differences between racial/ethnic entrepreneurs in the United States and other nations call for a cross-national assessment of Minority business creation (Freeland & Keister, 2016). The co-ethnic supply of facilities and resources contributing to *success* are unexplored in the United States. Examining the impact of Minority hiring managers, Minority operated financial firms, and preparatory programs across nations would be beneficial (Wang & Altinay, 2012; Welter et al., 2017).

Aspiring entrepreneurs usually have a purpose, but little or no difference existed between Whites and African-Americans in their reasons to start a business; African-Americans indicated that the desire to innovate was a prime motivator to *grow* the business (Adkins & Samaras, 2013). Whites indicated both a desire to innovate and a desire for financial success. Innovation is a form of control, and freeing oneself from social constraints regarding enterprise; and labor is a powerful way for minorities to exert themselves in the business world (Al-alak, 2014; Alstete, 2014; Amat, Renart, & García, 2013; Amoako, 2013). Pursuing this focus on innovation as a motivator is a possible step for the future researcher.

Defining Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurs strive to create and sustain social advancement, but there is no definitive agreement among scholars on the definition of social entrepreneurship (SE). Dacin, Dacin, and Matear (2010) listed 37 different definitions of social entrepreneurship accessible from academic papers over a two-decade span. Many different disciplines, fields, and organizations align with social entrepreneurship: nonprofit and corporate business; large and small-scale enterprises; public and private ventures. The social entrepreneur resembles the social activist, and indeed, much debate occurs in academia regarding the boundaries between entrepreneurship and activism (Abu-Saifan, 2012; Prieto & Friedrich, 2012; Saucet & Cova, 2015; Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017). Some have proposed to delineate the boundaries by profit requirements or organization foundation. Others have sought to define SE by the resources and processes toward achieving the particular entrepreneurial goals (Smith, 2017; Williams, 2014).

Like all other entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs are representative of ability to create change within an existing paradigm, leveraging undiscovered resources, and exercising innovation, creativity, and critical decisiveness (Eisenberg, Johnson, & Pieterson, 2015; Hai, Jing, & Jintong, 2013; Welter et al., 2017). Unlike activists, who tend to work within an existing framework for a change, social entrepreneurs are interested in gaining a larger understanding of how an underlying social issue relates to society. Experienced entrepreneurs ensure the entrenchment of positive elements within the above framework for change. This interface with society allows social entrepreneurs to develop innovative solutions and mobilize available resources to affect the society.

Unlike traditional business entrepreneurs, social entrepreneurs focus on maximizing gains in social advantage, rather than fiduciary profit (Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017; Singh, 2014). Essentially, a person who uses entrepreneurial methods to the end of advancing society is a social entrepreneur. Many activities related to community development and higher social purpose fall within the modern definition of social entrepreneurship (Chollet et al., 2014; Prieto & Friedrich, 2012; Shaffer, Hasan, & Zhou, 2015). The types of resources entrepreneurs mobilize might play a part to determine whether an endeavor is a social one or not. For example, using public outrage (resource) over a toxic waste spill to create a watchdog group relying on grants from the EPA (resource) is social entrepreneurship. Securing a bank loan (resource) to create a HAZ-MAT cleanup business to carry out government contracts (resource) surrounding spills is conventional entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurship falls into three categories. Those categories are as follows: (1) Charitable organization, with individualized orientation and design, serving to provide relief to the needy (Williams, 2014). (2) Social activism, directly involving politics and justice involves a goal of bringing about societal changes (Cokley & Awad, 2013; Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017). (3) Developmental ventures, creating no new methods might seek to bring existing economic activities to underdeveloped areas (Vassilakopoulou, 2013).

In social entrepreneurship research, an investigator may focus on no less a goal than social advancement for all humankind (Laforet, 2013; O’Donnell, 2014). This goal is rare in traditional business models where entrepreneurs focus on profit, control, and growth. Beyond the gains from entrepreneurial projects about environmental capitalization, social change, and community integrity, the field of social entrepreneurship generates research data on contextual motivations for entrepreneurs of all types (Welter et al., 2017). Insights from existing literature provide a foundation for investigating patterns, relationships, and trends in social entrepreneurship (Dacin et al., 2010; Goyal, Rahman, & Kazmi, 2015; Laitinen, 2013; Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017). Some consensus exists in the literature that social entrepreneurship is worth examining as an environmental factor to other branches of entrepreneurship and as an in-depth venue for examining the resources of social change.

Scholars debate whether SE should constitute a field separate from other business, social study, and management organization fields of research. Even within the entrepreneurial theory, debate continues over its difference from conventional entrepreneurship, institutional entrepreneurship, and cultural entrepreneurship. In the context of this study, participants stated that conventional entrepreneurship pertained to the everyday creation of new businesses by individuals who simply believe that private business was the best way of life. The participants further explained that institutional entrepreneurship was a paradigm in which some business adventurers made efforts to portray themselves as business growth assets. Participants related more to cultural entrepreneurship, especially as this study pertained to minority business development, growth, and profitability. Some scholars are investigating what it means to be social and how this might distinguish social entrepreneurship from other organizational forms (Lawless, 2014; Ployhart, Nyberg, Reilly, & Maltarich, 2014; Shepard, 2013; Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017).

Business creation itself can represent a social gain; and indeed, a robust economy engenders jobs, education, and services for society. In this manner, conventional entrepreneurship is a social enterprise (Abdul-Rahamon, & Adejare, 2014; Liu & Shao, 2013; Welter et al., 2017). In that regard, making a profit should be the only social goal of business. Every entrepreneur has a social context, and should consequently strive to impart dignity, fulfill creativity, and demonstrate a potential for attaining economic freedom (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Konsti-Laakso, Pihkala, & Kraus, 2012; Malmstrom, 2014).

Conventional entrepreneurship also includes a goal of advancing a social agenda; and indeed, many companies deliberately put social change in their mission statements, claiming environmental, community, or patriotic motives as the basis of their processes (Saucet & Cova, 2015). If social entrepreneurship can be both for-profit and not-for-profit, the lines begin to blur between social and traditional entrepreneurship. Both styles earn profits by pursuing their missions in innovative fashions. Social entrepreneurs appear to use resources in much the same way as conventional entrepreneurs (Hymel, 2014; Saucet & Cova, 2015).

Social entrepreneurship resources mimic those in use within institutional entrepreneurship, involving grants, volunteer labor, public opinion, and nonprofit organization (Bonney, Davis-Sramek, & Cadotte, 2016; Marom & Lussier, 2014). This interconnectedness is particularly the case in areas where the advancement of a social agenda ties to a larger economic advancement in the society, such as emerging capitalism in a former communist state (Du, Swaen, Lindgreen, & Sen, 2013; Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017). This pavement seems to put social entrepreneurship in the purview of institutional ventures. Note that institutions interfere in the entrepreneurial process, with regulations or domination of resources, for example. Social entrepreneurs enjoy one advantage over institutional counterparts, though the resource of legitimacy, hinging on the social betterment of the goal rather than advancing established agendas (Dacin et al., 2010; Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017).

When speaking of Minority advancement, and the entrepreneurial spirit of bettering the communities in which they build businesses, emancipation theory of entrepreneurship is worth mentioning (Jones, Beynon, Pickernell, & Packham, 2013; Hahn, Preuss, Pinkse, & Figge, 2014). Emancipation entrepreneurship theory interacts closely with social entrepreneurship theory, as they share a common basis: enterprise for betterment (self or social) rather than financial gain (Verduijn, Tedmanson, & Essers, 2014). Businesses fulfilling the dignity, creativity, and potential of *free men* would serve as particularly salient examples (Konsti-Laakso et al., 2012; Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017). The use of the phrase *free men* creates a concrete bond between the concept of social entrepreneurship and emancipation theory. Gender is not a factor. Emancipation theory might be an individualized personal form of social entrepreneurship. Both platforms use the same processes as conventional entrepreneurship. Both concepts relate to the use of resources such as emotion and morale stemming from perceived inequity, and both strive toward a goal of advancement within the context of satisfaction, freedom, and rights.

Cultural entrepreneurship mirrors the emancipation aspects of social entrepreneurship, often with music or arts groups forming a bridge for minorities to have their voices heard in society. Many famous rappers such as Lil Wayne, Ice T., and Queen Latifah advance Black rights, in the United States and abroad, with the for-profit structures they use in gathering funds for social enterprises (Lombard, 2012). Cultural entrepreneurs use the same emotional capital that social entrepreneurs use when mobilizing resources, especially human resources (Nathan & Lee, 2013; Powell & Baker, 2014; Welter et al., 2017). One such resource is a youth's desire to change the future, and a general anti-establishment vision embodying the entrepreneurial spirit.

The theme of resistance, for example, prevails throughout many styles of music, particularly rap and *hip-hop* (Blount et al., 2013), galvanizing labor toward a goal of social change. Treating social entrepreneurship as a specialized lens through which other factors of entrepreneurial theory may undergo analysis could prompt considering emancipation entrepreneurship part of SE. Emancipation theory could undergo treatment as a facet of social entrepreneurship at large, pertaining specifically to the individual's motivation for freedom.

The Emancipation Approach to Entrepreneurship Research

An exciting new development in entrepreneurship research is the influence of the emancipation framework (Rindova et al., 2009) as well as entrepreneuring-as-emancipation theory (Goss et al., 2011). In some ways, the concept is a call back to basics as its application builds on a new definition of entrepreneurship, one that emphasizes collective social capital. Entrepreneurship refers to efforts in change-oriented activities and projects that tilt toward creating new economic, social, institutional, and cultural environments (Rindova et al., 2009; Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017). Autonomy, authoring, and declarations, are internal propulsions that fuel an entrepreneur’s business behavior (Foley & O’Connor, 2013; Oe & Mitsuhashi, 2013; Sahut & Peris-Ortiz, 2014).

A basic pillar of this framework—in effect, defining the framework or the differences from the more common historical approach to entrepreneurial studies—pertains to wealth creation via new business ventures. Instead, the emancipation approach highlights the freeing or emancipatory process and results of becoming a new business creator. Importantly, this approach also emphasizes significant change potential, characterizing the entrepreneur as evolving him/herself even as new states emerge and propagate in the external world (Verduijn et al., 2014). The entrepreneur is the agent of change, using business as a tool to create ripples of change within his or her community and possibly creating change for the world (Du et al., 2013; Hai et al., 2013).

The role of agency remained a unique way because the pertinent term was *emancipation* because of references to *the act of setting free from the power of another* (Rindova et al., 2009). The pursuit of freedom and autonomy was in alignment with the purpose of their research study. Rindova et al. viewed entrepreneurial projects as disruptive activities that changed status quo by introducing new paradigms. As much as economic considerations underlined the emancipatory efforts, the aspiring entrepreneurs envisaged a change in the social order surrounding them.

Agency must remain a construction that matches owner and helper expectations (Welter et al., 2017). In the context of this research study, participants were entrepreneurs who had experience as agents. In comparing their expectations as former agents and current entrepreneurs, they revealed essential factors such as trust, availability, and essence. These three elements were essential whether an individual was a business agent or business owner. The research participants harped on the importance of maintaining the same level of trust, availability, and essence in transacting the entrepreneurial business, as those factors are essential for business success. When predominantly focusing on wealth creation, the entrepreneurship researchers focused little attention on how the intrinsic motivations of the individual (i.e., creating for its inherent reward) might be separate from (or supersede) the extrinsic drive for monetary profit (Armache, 2013; Berger, 2015; Chatterji & Patro, 2014; Delmar, McKelvie, & Wennberg, 2013; Zhang, Bessler, & Leatham, 2013). The demographics of the participants in this study include motivated individuals. From the interview activities, the motivation types behind each participant's business decision manifested. A greater number of the participants had intrinsic motivation than those who had extrinsic motivation. A systematic study of how intrinsic motivation interacts with specific demographic or social contexts of the nascent entrepreneur has not occurred. Much of the published literature that provided a wide social context for entrepreneurship had been conceptual and not empirical (Dacin et al., 2010; Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017). In empirical situations, researchers focused on the social implications of what entrepreneurs learned in university degree programs and how to refine such curricula (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Harris, Edmunds, & Chen, 2011). The researchers need more data-driven studies using the responses of active entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurship theory serves as a vehicle for advancing the understanding of empirical studies that detail the patterns of entrepreneurs' thoughts, beliefs, and motivations, and how these interior realities metamorphose through purposeful behavior into business ventures (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Montuori, 2013; Sharma & Shirsath, 2014). This doctoral study and the emancipation theory are compatible with the view that an entrepreneur may highly value wealth creation. The reason for such valuation is to attain personal freedom (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013; Welter et al., 2017). This interpretation supports the notion that wealth creation is a means to an end, not the preeminent goal that drove the individual into business.

Diverse research literature emphasized attitudes, behaviors, and cognition (including opportunity recognition), all factors modifiable, and to a large degree, trainable (Harris et al., 2011; Sengupta, & Sahay, 2017). The entrepreneur is as the entrepreneur thinks, whether those thought tendencies come to fruition and undergo refinement by learning or remain solely learned tendencies (i.e., the pervasive nature-nurtured question that touches all areas of human behavioral research) (Aldrich, 2017). The entrepreneur evolves through empowerment of self.

The proponents of classical literature on entrepreneurship devoted little attention to how social engagement or the drive for professional autonomy and working in alignment with one's value systems mattered to the entrepreneur (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Dacin et al., 2010). Building a new venture makes a change in a niche or a market, but does not make a change in the social world (Stewart & Gapp, 2014). Some of the earliest empirical works belonged to scholars such as Goss et al. (2011) and Rindova et al. (2009) who launched the emancipation perspective were self-report data on the desire to be less under the influence of authority and conventional (often restrictive and not lucrative) income generating options. Delmar et al. (2013) as well as Sengupta and Sahay (2017) corroborated the social perspectives in those scholars' entrepreneurship treatise. From these foundational studies, the emancipation approach solidified and contained three fundamental elements of entrepreneuring such as (a) seeking autonomy, (b) authoring, and (c) making declarations. A common denominator across these three elements is how they reflect entrepreneurship as a process (Goss et al., 2011) and how they reflect the prevailing social order (Rindova et al., 2009). Sengupta and Sahay (2017) further supported the existence of the common denominator. The three sections below include details of the three fundamental elements and contrast how an emancipatory perspective differs from the perspective of profit as a sole driver of business and differs from the dominant themes of past and current entrepreneurship research.

Autonomy. The need for developing the emancipation theory is the expressed motivation for autonomy from existing structures of authority, income reliance, and resource constraints (Delmar et al., 2013). The hope for autonomy is consistently top self-reported motivators of individuals who are self-employed (Belz, 2013; Bird & Schjoedt, 2017). The creators of the emancipation theory emphasized how the individual could create change, which did not negate creating wealth as well. Autonomy is a fundamental goal of breaking free from the control of another agent—finding release from existing power structures—and finding an agency in oneself.

In general, the autonomy construct is congruent with the Schumpeterian idea of creative destruction, although not identical because the emancipation proponents view creative destruction as a *goal* whereas the proponents of Schumpeterian perspective treat it as a *means*). Getting more specific, Rindova et al. (2009) determined the usefulness of distinguishing between the concepts of *breaking free* and *breaking up*. According to these authors, *breaking free* relates to one's hunger to find his or her path in the world, whereas *breaking up* emphasizes creating a better world. Some might consider this distinction subtle. The distinction points toward two possible subgroups of experienced entrepreneurs. A group advocates freedom for the self-motivated. Another group consists of those with inspiration to increase freedom and opportunities for their social community (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Weinzimmer & Nystrom, 2015). These motivations may lead to different behaviors and different outcomes in the business world.

In contrast to seeking autonomy, the theme of entrepreneurship research involves a focus on seeking opportunities and, after recognizing them, developing a new system or technological innovation to provide a new solution (Dacin et al., 2010; Jussila, Kärkkäinen, & Aramo-Immonen, 2014; Varum & Rocha, 2013). According to entrepreneurship theory, the individual removes the constraints in their environment; these constraints could be economic, social, institutional, technological, or cultural (Goss et al., 2011; Sengupta & Sahay, 2017). These constraints are familiar to many. Social attitudes may have served in rationalizing them. Rules or formal legislation may also have legitimized them. To the nascent entrepreneur seeking freedom, the constraints indeed exist. Entrepreneurs are not to work around them. Entrepreneurs work to expose, debunk, disempower, or destroy the constraints (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Goss et al., 2011). In other words, systemic change is a welcome phenomenon as part of the work. A lack of education may be a strong suit in instigating systemic change.

Entrepreneurs without formal and professional business education might be at an advantage in this regard because they do not manifest in specific behaviors against norms or implicit judgments (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Delmar et al., 2013). While educated business professionals may not condone certain behaviors as permissible, the uneducated entrepreneur may move boldly against the status quo, ignorant, indifferent, or contemptuous of the existing constraints. A compelling example exists of young entrepreneurs achieving staggering success by defying odds to create value on locations such as the World Wide Web (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Prior & Miller, 2012). The most comparable examples using famous African-American entrepreneurs pertain to musical artists in the hip-hop genre (Spence, 2011). Indeed, a handful of scholarly works use hip-hop as a model for African-American entrepreneurship, via, a case study approach (Lombard, 2012), which involves an inherent bias because only high profile and very successful individuals are subjects of study. These are interesting cases nonetheless, but such cases may represent highly diverse experiences of freedom. That is, becoming a superstar musician (or professional athlete) brings personal freedom in some situations (e.g., the ability able to afford travel and indulgences); diminishing choices and freedom in other situations (e.g., restricted ability to move around in public places, behavioral adherence to the personal brand that has undergone the creative process). The degree to which these high-profile cases map onto the emancipation framework under consideration is unknown, although the cases arguably inspire Minority youth to believe that freedom and prosperity are possible with hard work applies to magnify one’s talents and interests (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Verduijn et al., 2014).

Sidestepping or destroying constraints touches upon the issue of breaking free and breaking up. Breaking free of constraints means an individual is no longer personally limited, although the limitations may still be around to hamper others (Biddle et al., 2013; Smith, 2017). Breaking up constraints refers to the process of making an old system obsolete. In line with current understanding, the entrepreneurship theory applies equally to but does not distinguish between two entrepreneurs who may have different styles regarding breaking free and breaking up (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Jones & Lentz, 2013). This distinction reveals a needed line of empirical inquiry and support for the emancipation theory. The only related study is an analysis of artistic innovation Becker (2008) conducted along with scientific discoveries. The theory proved to be a fertile field in which researchers could examine the process of producing work that goes radically against convention. Accordingly, the cost-benefit analysis of artistic innovation rests on the potential earnings that motivate the budding entrepreneur (Becker, 2008; Bird & Schjoedt, 2017).

In general, breaking with existing conventions and their manifestations in social structure and material artifacts increases an artists' trouble and decreases the circulation of their work; at the same time, such a break increases the artist's freedom to choose unconventional alternatives and depart substantially from customary practice (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Lombard, 2012; Spence, 2011). If that is true, any work may constitute the product of choice for conventional ease, success, unconventional trouble, and lack of recognition. Conventions make collective activity simpler and less costly in time, energy, and other resources but do not make unconventional work impossible; such works only become costly and difficult.

Additional research is also necessary regarding entrepreneurs' aspirations to change the world. Researchers should also conduct the much-needed examination of the conditions and environments in which new business ventures evolve (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Lombard, 2012). In other words, how individuals and social contexts interconnect deserves scientific examination. Connecting this idea with the Becker quote above, social support surrounding the innovative entrepreneur apparently played an important part in buffering the personal costs and challenges. Business profitability necessary for personal freedom is high, as entrepreneurs fail within the first 5 years (Halabí & Lussier, 2014). Private businesses contribute substantially to the national economy; motivations for entrepreneurship are wealth-related (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Moreno, Zarrias, & Barbero, 2014; Raco & Tanod, 2014).

Authoring. The term *emancipation* is from the Latin root *mancipare,* which refers to taking ownership. To be emancipated means no longer belonging to another, but is the one who owns or trades. When breaking up or breaking free from conventional constraints, the emancipated entrepreneur authors the self (Marx, 1843). In this light, *authoring* refers to taking ownership and developing a sense of responsibility for oneself and one's actions, as well as developing and executing one's willingness to engage in an exchange in the field. Becoming an author means writing the story and shouldering the responsibility for behaviors and outcomes (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Chu et al., 2007). Briefly, the experienced entrepreneur authors new rules of engagement. The emancipation theory includes an argument that more research attention pertains to how institutional structure revolves around new projects and services.

Authoring refers to how the entrepreneur positions himself or herself in the middle of some new exchange relationships. The entrepreneur authors or drafts a variety of new relationships, new norms, and new systems or infrastructure to create the entrepreneurial project. As mentioned above, the focus is on the work regarding active processes (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017). The need for authoring in contrast with a more goal-oriented perspective involves activities within the entrepreneuring process. Through authoring, entrepreneurs engage economic and social resources in a manner that enables them to preserve, institutionalize, and expand the social base of the entrepreneuring process (Al-Dajani et al., 2015; Rindova et al., 2009; Welter et al., 2017). Previous researchers emphasized the need for entrepreneurs to mobilize resources to accomplish objectives (Kozan & Akdeniz, 2014) but did not explicate the *strings attached* that came with the resources. The emancipatory perspective pertained to an emphasis on the need to consider the possibilities for resource mobilization through authoring as a process for protecting the emancipatory potential of new ventures (Kozan, & Akdeniz, 2014).

Authoring means becoming an engaged actor (Goss et al., 2011; Kozan & Akdeniz, 2014; Rindova et al., 2009). To be a successful entrepreneur, one forges relationships with other actors of power. This relationship structuring can constitute a pitfall on the progress path of many young entrepreneurs. The need to raise capital for a new business venture is often an avenue to getting a project off the ground (Polyhart, Nyberg, Reilly, & Maltarich, 2014). Seeking capital can lead to later limitations. For example, the financial support of a venture capitalist may be invaluable, but this support may come at the expense of giving up the control of the entrepreneurial project (Oe & Mitsuhashi, 2013). To receive a favorable return on investment, the venture capitalist is interested in the degree to which the idea fits with the marketing desires and strategies.

Building something that consumers desire could go against the motivation of doing something utterly novel and daringly creative while on the path to autonomy and authoring (Foley & O'Connor, 2013). Venture capitalists position themselves to mobilize and leverage resources, but they may place the entrepreneur back into a subordinate position with less power and less authoring capacity (Oe & Mitsuhashi, 2013). Receiving start-up funds may force a trade-off with the creativity and change the potential of the project. Ideally, the entrepreneur needs to author a leadership role and company structure that does not compromise the vision and original intent of the work (Engelen, Gupta, Strenger, & Brettel, 2015). As with the autonomy construct above, a fruitful avenue for further research with authoring is also very social. Relationship dynamics between the entrepreneur and other social actors need clarification.

Declarations. Making declarations refers to the intentions and acts of creating change as a necessary component of the change creation path. Just as the Declaration of Independence was an important act ritualized into a document about the intention for freedom, here the term declaration refers to an unambiguous expressed intention and action toward meaning in the creative project. Through declarations, an entrepreneur may position the new venture in a way that stakeholders might perceive as meaningful and valuable (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Weber, Heinze, & DeSoucey, 2008). Declarations serve as the interface between two phenomena. One phenomenon consists of the new ventures as an idea in the mind of the entrepreneur. The other phenomenon pertains to how the rest of the world might receive the idea (Alstete, 2014; Welter et al., 2017). The reception of the new venture in the marketplace is critical to the financial success of the new venture. An entrepreneur's declaration of contestation goes farther than deploying economic tools; it also means altering others' beliefs about what products and services can and should exist (Sahut & Peris-Ortiz, 2014; Ucbasaran et al., 2013; Winborg, 2015).

Future studies would serve the literature well to substantiate the different declaration styles. How these declarations relate to action-oriented investments of time and resources would be critical. Understanding how the entrepreneur conceptualized and expressed different declarations as well as how other business professionals and the public received such declarations would be useful (Hitt, & Duane Ireland, 2017; Polyhart et al., 2014). Studying the relationship between declarations (intentions) and contestations (results) may forge a natural bridge with the more established research literature in strategy, especially relating to competitive attacks and counterattacks.

Social Interactions and Personal Power

The tendency on the part of researchers has been to focus on the investigation of entities like markets, institutions, and forms of exchange. The researchers create change by removing constraints (Rindova et al., 2009). Those researchers do not explore the nature of constraint as an action; neither do they explore how an individual may overcome the constraint. The researchers provide a list of an economic, institutional, or cultural nature at the social level, saying constraints could be intellectual or psychological at the individual level (Rindova et al., 2009). This list indicates a conception of constraint as a static barrier (concrete blockage) rather than as a dynamic social process. Barriers or constraints need verbs as well. Framing constraint as a dynamic social force regarding power-as-practice is how Goss et al. (2011) built upon the work of Rindova et al. (2009).

Building on the foundational work of Rindova and colleagues, Goss et al. (2011) contributed to the effort to reframe entrepreneurship theory by including emotional motivation and social interplay. These theorists assert that a detailed grasp of the dynamics of micro-situations is helpful to understanding power models that often remain at the macro or societal level. Their paper specifically addressed entrepreneurial barriers and agency in active terms, using this micro power-as-practice model. In doing so, the theorists further developed the theme of entrepreneurship as Rindova et al.'s (2009) emancipation. Entrepreneurship as emancipation describes entrepreneurial agency not just as a positivist model subject to concrete forces, but also as a complex process (Dobbs, 2014; Welter et al., 2017). The process involves and affects the social interplay an individual's empowerment might motivate. Emancipation entrepreneurship describes how one could use business creation to realize goals of autonomy and expression of personal values (Rindova et al., 2009).

As previously mentioned, Rindova et al. (2009) advocated framing inquiry regarding verbs rather than nouns—*entrepreneuring* rather than *entrepreneurship*. Moving terminology away from nouns like *barriers* and toward verbs as *barring* will help describe a wider range of organizing processes that share a capacity for transformation and change. Goss et al. (2011) furthered this goal in the study, applying these active terms to constraint as well as the agency.

Power-as-practice is the micro-analytical model professionals use to evaluate and explore how emancipation and constraint interact. Goss et al. use the construct of *power rituals* to establish a *practice-based* understanding of power that focuses on what actors concretely do and think. This construct pertains to the role emotions play in status quo and initiating resistance to it (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Williams, 2014). Conventional entrepreneurship research has limitations arising from a reliance on positivist ideals that define entrepreneurship as a purely economic activity at the expense of emotional factors. Goss et al. (2011) sought to explore entrepreneurship as a social action stemming from how the entrepreneur reacts to power rituals.

Power rituals emphasize the fluctuating balance between order-givers and order-takers. The result is a potential for one party to an interaction ritual acquiring control over the resources or participation of the other parties (Welter et al., 2017; Williams, 2014). Emotional energy is one outcome of any interaction rituals, and this energy can expand and affect the macro level of social institutions. In power rituals, order-givers dissipate their emotional energy at the expense of order-takers (Birasnav, 2014; Deichmann & Stam, 2015). If order-takers consistently conduct their interaction rituals outside of the order-givers' domain, emotional energy can replenish and grow to effect change in the macro environment. These are *counter-rituals*. Between power rituals and counter-rituals is a compensatory level of ritual, where order-takers regain a little emotional energy, but the scope is too small to affect the macro level interactions (Galpin et al., 2015). An example is a situation in which employees are complaining about the boss behind his or her back rather than organizing a company-wide strike.

Emotions constitute factors in the decisions people make in personal and professional relationships. Deviant emotions constitute a driving force among subordinates' part in a power ritual (Verduijn et al., 2014). Deviant emotions are the feelings experienced in response to a power ritual situation, but that diverge from the social norms governing that situation (thoughts that do not coincide with the perspective of the order-giver). This divergence causes emotional friction, which by itself does not necessarily invoke agency. The divergence expands into social change by challenging the status quo. This phenomenon occurs when consolidated with others in a counter-ritual (Smith, 2017). The diverging individual's role constitutes a change agent.

A case study of a social entrepreneurial venture in the UK contained elements relating to changing established attitudes to amend the law and proscribe the practice of forced marriages in the UK (Goss et al., 2011; Hitt, & Duane Ireland, 2017). Scholars characteristically use autobiographical narratives akin to the treatise in the book, *Shame*, to illustrate this process (Sanghera, 2007). This case captures the essence of entrepreneuring-as-emancipation and social change (Calás, Smircich, & Bourne, 2009; Rindova et al., 2009). The authors used this text instead of interviews for the sake of the candor. The case study also serves to the capture of affective and behavioral changes over a significant duration of time, something difficult to achieve through other methods of qualitative data capture. Depth and duration are the strengths of autobiographical sources

(Al-Dajani, Carter, Shaw, & Marlow, 2015; Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013). Problems with accuracy, self-promotion, and selective focus still exist.

A summary of this case study drew the attention of scholars. The scholars also considered how the case study related to power rituals and personal control (Anyan, 2013; Arham, Boucher, & Muenjohn, 2013; Belz, 2013). Jasvinder Sanghera established Karma Nirvana in 1993 as an entrepreneurial community-based organization to offer support, advocacy, and advice to women experiencing abuse (e.g., forced marriage, domestic violence) within ethnic Minority communities. In such cases, honor and shame are psychological tools belonging to order-givers in communities to bar agency. Sanghera's entrepreneurial project originated within these micro situations and developed, through the interplay of agency and constraint, into a more macro pattern. It eventually culminated in changes to social policy and law.

The sometimes-turbulent process that led to these changes followed the power-as-practice model that Goss et al. described. First, power-ritual constrains agency by design. Women carry the label of order-takers at the macro level. Social traditions and sanctions create a standard that sets the stage for all micro or interpersonal interactions (Bendassolli, 2013). Second, individuals engage in compensatory rituals and experience deviant emotions. Sanghera and her friend turned the issue of forced marriage into a joke, and Sanghera carried out a secret romance outside of the order-givers' purview. Finally, the counter-rituals and defiance of barring would occur. Reading and participating in a women's self-help and the listening course gave her the opportunity and scope for her compensatory rituals to become true counter-rituals, allowing her to form Karma

Nirvana, an organization that provided a counter-ritual at the macro level to resist barring power rituals within her community. In conclusion, Goss et al. (2011), as well as Hitt and Duane Ireland (2017), advocated the use of active terminology framing entrepreneurial theory and the use of a power-as-practice model to evaluate concrete social interactions. They further developed the concept of entrepreneurship with desire as a motivator to free oneself from constraints, especially in acknowledging that constraint (barring) is an active ingredient as much as is an agency.

Defining the Layers of Emancipation

The achievement of freedom conjures diverse understandings from person to person. Further than that, Verduijn et al. (2014) drew the attention of research users to different concepts such as intellectual enlightening. Williams (2014) demonstrated an interest in the concept of macro-emancipation. Kempster et al. (2014) addressed the micro-emancipation issue of weak points in managerial control. Over a 14-year period, Rancière (1995, 2009) dwelt on the theoretical component of *dissensus*, which is another internal element in an aspiring entrepreneur. All these concepts constitute layers that strengthen the resolve of an aspiring entrepreneur.

Intellectual enlightening. The exploration of emancipation occurred in macro terms as intellectuals enlightening dominated people as a wide-scale social transformation. This concept fell out of favor as grandiose, and research turned toward micro-emancipation (Verduijn et al., 2014). How an individual might escape domination in everyday activities was of interest to research scholars. Huault et al. (2014) challenged the dichotomy between macro and micro models of emancipation theory. They sought to move past these definitions and focus on where research literature intersects. The foundation of their work drew upon the work of French philosopher Jacques Rancière, who posited that emancipation should manifest as an attempt to actualize equality through creating a dissensus that interrupts the common order.

Theoretical frameworks involve diverse approaches to enable users to interpret phenomena, and this capacity to interpret is necessary for comprehending the emancipation theory. Rancière's approach extended the emancipation process in three ways in and around organizations (Huault et al., 2014; Rancière, 2009). First, the emancipation process allows aspiring entrepreneurs to acknowledge emancipatory themes business practitioners have ignored. Those themes fall between macro revolutionary movements and micro daily compensatory activities (Baden & Parkes, 2013; Rancière, 2009). Second, the emancipation process allows business practitioners to rethink these forms of emancipation work to change the world. Through ascetic disturbance and general attempts, the entrepreneurs reposition themselves to disturb the patterns societies accept (Hyder & Lussier, 2016; Rancière, 2009). Third, and most importantly to entrepreneurship and minorities, the process allows us to consider emancipation as a function of a universal claim for equality (Rancière, 2009; Yang, 2015). These phenomena are in line with the attributes of theoretical frameworks.

Research on emancipation often pertained to the painful actions of resistance that individuals must undertake to gain freedoms and achieve autonomy. Freedom represents an ability to remove oneself from onerous conditions; freedom implies the intrinsic right to do so as well (Baptista, Karaoz, & Mendonca, 2014; Bird & Schjoedt, 2017).

Emancipation processes are traditionally in two divisions between (a) macro-emancipation or the pursuit of freedom through broad social change, and (b) micro-emancipation, or the utilitarian tools that an individual could use to achieve small freedoms and make psychological adjustments to the dominated position.

Macro-emancipation. The process of freeing oppressed individuals occurs through changing the social construct around such individuals (Williams, 2014). Radical transformation theory references an assumption that emancipation involves a radical break whereby the entire socio-symbolic structure is fundamentally changeable. Such a change would arise from the activities of intellectuals encouraging critical self-reflection that allows people to see the conditions of the oppression they suffer (Verduijn et al., 2014; Bird & Schjoedt, 2017).

The need for radical social change at the macro level is perceivably necessary because piecemeal changes do not adequately challenge the processes of domination that have deep roots in existing structures (Kempster et al., 2014). At worst, such piecemeal changes are visible as an alibi that the powerful could use to provide immediate satisfaction to the demands of those they oppress. Actual transformation of the underlying causes of oppression often remains a mirage.

Three central problems plague the radical macro-emancipation process. First, the core tenet involves the assumption that free human rational thought is sufficient to bring about awareness of and change to the dominant system. Real physical or emotional holds often exist over the dominated parties that cannot break by thought alone (Welter et al., 2017). Second, the structure requiring change or overthrow receives treatment. In reality, the structure is a complex system requiring treatment as multiple units (Morse, Lowery, & Steury, 2014). Treating the system as a single unit could lead to paradoxical solutions or unnecessary changes where the organization does not function oppressively. Third, the structure involves focusing on negativity, sometimes promoting cynical resignation rather than changes.

Micro-emancipation. The greatest contributions micro-emancipation has made to the research field shift the focus to a narrowly defined set of tools and provide precedent for moving thought on the subject away from traditional big idea methods of intellectual change. A narrowing and practical search for weak points in managerial control would permit an individual, local, and temporary emancipation (Kempster et al., 2014). This narrowing element would involve a researcher’s focused endeavor without any of the sweeping changes emanating from macro-emancipation models. This system seeks to provide direct relief to the oppressed members of an organization and ends up as catalogs of the escapist activities employees undertake (Baptista et al., 2014). Micro-emancipation occurs through practices as varied as daydreaming, developing cynical countercultures, engaging in private activities in the workplace, and strategically resisting managers on chosen issues (Baptista et al., 2014; Bhachu, 2017). The problems with micro-emancipation theories are ignoring real problems with employee misbehavior, failing to address the fundamental organizational controls creating the problem, and creating a fragmented response to oppressive structures (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Chinomona, 2013). The problems and contributions evidence progress along the entrepreneurship continuum.

Emancipation is not an ideal target that exists somewhere in the future, but a set of guided practices relating to the assumption of everyone’s equality. Rancière proposed that emancipation does not manifest through creating consensus, but rather through creating dissensus. Emancipation involves an attempt to interrupt what individuals consider a common belief (Huault et al., 2014). More than focusing on the managerial distribution of resources, identities, or political agency, this method involves questioning, and challenging ideas understood to so-called sensible voices and claims (Rancière, 2009; Hitt, & Duane Ireland, 2017). The efforts toward entrepreneurship success manifest in the form of future attainment of entrepreneurial emancipation.

Macro models encapsulated the postulations that oppressors do not need to show the oppressed the act of oppression. Research studies on the subject of financial freedom in the business world start with an assumption of equality (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Kaczynski, Salmona, & Smith, 2014). Organizational emancipation research has traditionally begun with the assumption that people are unequal. Rancière saw equality as a founding premise rather than the final goal serial entrepreneurs needed to achieve. The oppressed need a new vision of themselves as they truly are. If knowledge were necessary for personal freedom and autonomy, emancipation would not occur until the future; that is, until knowledge acquisition occurs (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Birasnav, 2014; Brutus, Aguinis, & Wassmer, 2013; Chinomona, 2013). The central tenet is that an employee, or entrepreneur, changes how they see the system within which they, and thereby changes their position within it (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Oe &

Mitsuhashi, 2013). Accepting that they need the system to succeed is the cornerstone of the prison in which oppressed individuals find themselves.

Theoretical layers. Rancière described dissensus as the conflict that arises when two conversationalists have differing definitions of the terms they are using, unintentionally causing confusion, or anger (Rancière, 1995). This concept would mean that those who seek personal and business autonomy should actively challenge what is commonly true, even if they agree with those that they challenge. The creation of this friction drives a re-assessment of positions and paradigms within an organization and provides a shift in the vision of self (Hyder & Lussier, 2016). Theorists might approach phenomena from different angles, but experienced entrepreneurs are able to relate the theoretical antecedents that apply to their respective business directions.

Creation processes necessitate inserting oneself into cultural and intellectual areas under formal prohibition. Huault and colleagues borrowed the final point from Rancière as the means of creating dissensus. Employees may insert themselves into managerial discussions. Managers may insert themselves into product design (Huault et al., 2014). Workers may create art or literature surrounding the structural tenets of their organization. Anyone may pursue an entrepreneurial venture. In conclusion, equality, dissensus, and claims for a reconfiguration of common knowledge provide a theory that allows visionaries to think about the connection between individual and collective change (Oe & Mitsuhashi, 2013). This concept of *individualism* versus *collectivism* denotes the bridge between macro and micro models of emancipation. Business creation efforts are individualistic or collective in line with the vision undergirding the business creation.

Behavioral elements are critical to the success of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship as emancipation involves the need to shake off the socially normal behaviors or dominance by large business organizations (Blount et al., 2013; Carrahera & Van Auken, 2013). Actualizing individual freedom from management's control of resources and identity, and creating dissensus are what an entrepreneur might be seeking when setting out on a venture. The drive to change the field of capacities is what causes entrepreneurs to create new businesses, provide new products, and fill new niches (Glaub, Frese, Fischer, & Hoppe, 2014). Social elements go with behaviors in charting the course of business enterprises.

Emancipation occurs through the articulation of dissent. Similar in effect to the civil rights movements of the 1960s, Rancière's process deviates from this historical model by dismissing the value of organized consensus. This process is highly individualized, and relies on almost anarchist political thought. Rather than a group of workers reaching a consensus that a new venture must emerge, ten individual workers venture in all directions. Such a venture must endure until the proponents achieve equality. The equality would pertain to business control (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Oe & Mitsuhashi, 2013). One successfully starts the personal entrepreneurial venture. When a visionary adventurer expresses dissent with status quo, the pursuit of freedom ensues. Entrepreneurship is a major avenue to satisfying the dissent.

Personal attachment and bonding with visionary activities such as taking steps to demonstrate the belief in a result-oriented effort bring emancipation. Above all, Huault and colleagues made their contribution to the study of entrepreneurship by emphasizing the concept of visualizing one's self as something else (Huault et al., 2014). For instance, a barista sees himself as a coffee roaster instead. An accountant sees herself as a private tax agent. A construction worker sees himself as a salesperson. The employee sees herself launching her company in a year's time. A change in one's vision of one's place in the world at large drives entrepreneurship (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Halabi & Lussier, 2014). The fundamental principle that business equality is real and simply needs actualization is the most powerful assumption Huault et al. (2014) set forth. Those who labor under the bonds of oppressive systems need only discard their beliefs that they should be laboring within these systems.

The theory circumscribing the entrepreneur's actions manifests in the attitude with which the entrepreneur seeks the freedom. The development and expansion of the emancipation theory are of salience to Minority entrepreneurs, as they already struggle with issues of identity in a majority-dominated world (Jennings, Jennings, & Sharifian, 2014; Verduijn et al., 2014). This field of study contained elements with which researchers might illuminate additional areas of the endeavors of those seeking freedom and a new self-image (Hitt, & Duane Ireland, 2017). Rigor is critical to accessing the depths of participant experience through qualitative investigation (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). Pursuing such emancipation would involve creatively applying the tenets of the influencing theory.

Social Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship might have different depths of connotation from one person to another. Many entrepreneurs are redefining themselves, and their relationships in the service of society, and business is increasingly serving as a driver of social change (Dacin et al., 2010; Hitt, & Duane Ireland, 2017; Rindova et al., 2009). Social relationships constitute an important determinant of modern entrepreneurs' objectives and motivations (Berner, Gomez, & Knorringa, 2012; Bird & Schjoedt, 2017) and social entrepreneurship has become a field of study in its right (Dacin et al., 2010). Scholarly works in this field would define the direction that interests the scholars in each work.

Both institutions and Minority women form dichotomies concerning Minority women's role in new venture creation. Both formed an *us vs. them* attitude, highlighting a foundation to the struggle actual Minority women experience. Institutional dialogue revolves around a positive core message of success focusing on the assimilation of Minority women into *the right way* of doing things (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013; Verduijn & Essers, 2013). Minority women also felt that they were outside the *normal* system, but in many cases used their individual or ethnic differences as a competitive advantage. They viewed assimilation as a very nebulous term. Minority women's acceptance of assimilation varies wildly between individuals (Adkins & Samaras, 2013).

Regarding personal control and autonomy through entrepreneurship, the positive message of institutionalized business creation ideals was erratic and unconfirmable in the Minority women's experience. Not only did it not hold true for many, but the positive message also obscured the necessary truths about obstacles to Minority engagement in ventures. The positive message of uplifting downtrodden minorities through entrepreneurship is itself a prejudiced notion. Under the circumstances, prejudice, dichotomy, and treatment of assimilation skew the effects in real-world scenarios

(Armache, 2013; Beadle, 2013; Bird & Schjoedt, 2017). Autonomy would enable an entrepreneur to tower above the prejudice, dichotomy, and other negative influences that propel the vision.

Entrepreneurship occurs within a much broader social context and has the potential to evolve social norms and improve the quality of life for individuals beyond the unidimensional criterion of wealth creation (Bolton, Gustafsson, McColl-Kennedy, Sirianni, & Tse, 2014). As an example of this shift in focus, some researchers explored the social impact of entrepreneurship. How sociological researchers' augmenting of the understanding of entrepreneurship impact was of critical importance in the study. The social impact occurred at the levels of (a) the individual entrepreneur, (b) the institution, and (c) the community (Jennings, Greenwood, Lounsbury, & Suddaby, 2012). This work on the social influence of business fell under the umbrella term of social entrepreneurship.

The term *social entrepreneurship* became prominent in more than 30 studies in some ways to describe how new business ventures leveraging could fulfill social missions (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Du et al., 2013). These definitions highlight motivations of the entrepreneur, the ability to recognize opportunities, leadership skills, and the means to garner necessary resources. Like the way social entrepreneurs with rankings depend on the degree of altruistic benefit to society, entrepreneurs serve an important role for their communities as instigators of proactive social change (Du et al., 2013; Mazzei, Flynn, & Haynie, 2016). When the entrepreneur attains emancipation, social change manifestations become visible.

An individual could receive motivation from one but not the other. The personal freedom motivation and the drive to instigate social change may be separate motivations (Verduijn et al., 2014). Venturing entrepreneurs showed curiosity (a) whether the tendency was for individuals to be of high motivation in both ways, or (b) whether a time-based progression existed in which nascent entrepreneurs tend to start out in business. The need existed to explore the role of motivation for the entrepreneurs to (a) change their lives, (b) increase their personal freedom, or (c) move towards creating greater impact for others.

Racial Differences in the Existing Entrepreneurship Literature

This section provides a brief overview of the racial differences in the entrepreneurship literature to date. The content includes substantiating the importance of recognizing racial disparities in entrepreneurship. The macro view of the effect racial differences would have on society drew the attention of scholars. When minorities suffer underrepresentation in business leadership positions, diverse outcomes manifest.

The role of context in the advancement of entrepreneurship research subsists in contextualization; this context could be important to entrepreneurial research (Zahra et al., 2014; Welter et al., 2017). The nature of entrepreneurship research was a major part of the article, both with and without context-specific examination. Several dimensions of entrepreneurial context underwent examination, including temporal, industry, spatial, social, organizational, ownership, and governance.

Temporal and spatial contexts present opportunities to find causation for success and disengagement according to specific locale or timing of a venture (Angulo-Guerrero et al., 2017; Othman & Rahman, 2014). While general research studies existed on, say, an urban Minority engagement, much less research activity occurred on the success of Blacks living in Chicago. These groups are of basic homogeneity, but differences exist in both the members of the group and the nature of the respective enterprises. Perhaps social contexts are the most difficult to assess, as the nature of society is rife with prejudice, obscurity, tradition, and standards, all of which complicate an honest and exact examination of entrepreneurship (Prajogo, C. McDermott, & M. McDermott, 2013). Discussions of ownership and governance often pertain to one group's prevalence in a specific area of development or enterprise.

The challenges inherent in contextualizing entrepreneurship research embodied an integration of the myriad elements of contextualization that could prove prohibitive. Uncountable combinations of contextual elements deserve consideration (Jonsson & Lindbergh, 2013; Kozan & Akdeniz, 2014; Welter et al., 2017). The importance of considering the context in the analysis of entrepreneurship is definite. More than that, the process is laborious and resistant to timesaving tools and methods for analysis.

Longitudinal Trends

An understanding of trends is important in every aspect of the business. Benchmarks serve the purposes of researchers in understanding trends (Othman & Rahman, 2014). A consideration of entrepreneurial development through multiple studies over a period contributes to the scholarly presentation. A consideration of the Kauffman Index of Entrepreneurial Activity (KIEA) emerged among other longitudinal investigations.

KIEA is a yearly report the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation put forth to measure national monthly business creation rate at the individual owner level. It includes reports of new business enterprises by non-business-owning adult individuals working more than 15 hours a week, reporting them as a percentage of the population and as a discrete number. Measuring new enterprise creation involves using data from the Current Population Survey (CPS). The Index captures all types of business activity, and is reliant on sample sizes of more than half-million observations each year. The Index includes the only national measure of the rate of business creation by specific population groups.

In addition to the rate of entrepreneurial activity, separate estimates for specific demographic groups, states, and select metropolitan statistical areas are also available. The Index reports data on demographic groups in two formats: rate, or percentage of new entrepreneurs within a demographic group, and shares, or the proportional representation of the subgroup to the total number of new entrepreneurs.

Measurements exist in the report for differences between necessity entrepreneurship and opportunity entrepreneurship. Necessity refers to entrepreneurial businesses started due to unemployment rather than an opportunity (Hitt, & Duane Ireland, 2017). The Index operators implemented these measurements to track the effects of the Great Recession. The 2013 report indicates that entrepreneurial rates have returned to pre-recession numbers, indicating that unemployment pressure has lifted, resulting in fewer necessity enterprises.

The percentage of new Latino and Asian subgroup serial entrepreneurs approximately doubled from 1996 to 2012, yet African American entrepreneurial subgroup increase saw a meager growth rate of less than 1% during this same timeframe, a change from 8.4% to 8.8% (Ahn, 2011). The number of American citizens who are self-employed has remained steady at one in nine people for two decades and counting (Hipple, 2010; Hitt, & Duane Ireland, 2017). By partitioning the data according to respondent race, the Kauffman Index served as a more sensitive measure to reveal changing racial patterns within unchanging aggregate nationwide data. The Index uncovered a drop in African American entrepreneurship from 2010 to 2011, which meant that the business startup rate dropped for African Americans during a period in which it increased for other races.

The rate of new business creation by demographic over the 10 years between 2003 and 2013 saw White shares fluctuate, averaging around 0.3%. African American rates paralleled White rates, but at a lower percentage, averaging around 0.23%. African-Americans experienced a slight climb in rates for most of the 10-year span, until the final few years when all races showed a decline in new business creation. Asians showed a general steady climb over the decade, and Latinos experienced robust growth over most of the years (World Trade Report, 2013). These data indicated that Whites and African Americans have a difference between baseline likelihoods to start a new business, but that these demographics are not increasing the rate at which they create new businesses. Interest in entrepreneurship itself has probably not grown within White and African American demographics.

The shares of entrepreneurial activity across the population reflect these differences in rate by demographic group. The Latino share of all new entrepreneurs rose from 16.0% to 20.4% in the 10-year span from 2003 to 2013. This structure reflects a long-term trend of rising Latino rates of business creation, and of a growing Latino population. The Asian share of new ventures also rose but remained relatively small at 6.1%. The White share of new entrepreneurs declined over a 10-year period, whereas the Black share increased minimally (Ahn, 2011).

African Americans and Whites appear to share the native-born disadvantage of having a lower new business creation rate than immigrants, Asians, and Latinos. This disadvantage appears to be leading to a decreased share of the total new venture population with the passage of time. The industry seeing the most growth over the recession years was the construction industry, preceding the service industry. These industries do not require high levels of education or net worth. The Kauffman Index does not differentiate based on the high or low barrier to entry among new businesses, and the growth of a particular demographic's business creation does not necessarily correlate with growth in financial opportunity or voice in the society.

Transition

Section 1 was an introduction to the foundation and background of the study. The problem statement included the gap that necessitated the study while the purpose statement included objectives of this investigative activity. Other parts of Section 1 included the research and interview questions, the significance of the study, conceptual framework, and the literature review. Emancipation entrepreneurship is a description of how one can use business creation to realize goals of autonomy and expression of personal values. Much of the dialog on entrepreneurship and empowerment along with the gender, ethnic, racial, and status differences revolves around creating frameworks for economic freedom through entrepreneurship for further research. The shares of entrepreneurial activity across the population reflect these differences in rate by demographic group. More than 50% of startups fail, while 85% of the returns come from only 10% of the entrepreneurial efforts. Scholars paid less attention to the motivation for lifestyle change than on the motivation for financial gain. The objective of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some sole proprietors use to sustain their small business operations beyond 5 years and attain profitability levels necessary for freedom and autonomy.

Measurements help to determine the differences between necessity entrepreneurship and opportunity entrepreneurship (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017). Several dimensions of entrepreneurial context underwent examination, including temporal, industry, spatial, social, organizational, ownership, and governance (Hitt, & Duane Ireland, 2017). The personal freedom, motivation, and the drive to instigate social change may be separate motivations. If knowledge were necessary for personal freedom and autonomy, emancipation would not occur until the future, especially until knowledge acquisition occurs. The process of pursuing and achieving personal freedom and autonomy involves and affects the social interplay an individual’s empowerment might motivate, especially of the attendant positive framework for change (Welter et al., 2017). The development and expansion of the emancipation theory are of particular salience to Minority entrepreneurs, as they already struggle with issues of identity in a majority-dominated world.

My goal reviewing academic and professional literature involved the exploration of personal control, financial freedom, autonomy, and emancipation theory, with subcomponents to understand how autonomy, authoring, and declaration might be relevant in the motivations of experienced entrepreneurs. The review includes context for investigating the internal motivations, drives, and thought processes of entrepreneurs. The secondary goal of this section is demonstrating how emancipation theory relates to entrepreneurship. Of interest was an opportunity to build, analyze, and synthesize connections between the entrepreneurship literature and the finance-focused mainstream entrepreneurship literature. A critical analysis of unresolved questions in both bodies of literature still exists. In this study, I targeted some of these unanswered questions through participant interviews, thus contributing to a specific niche of emancipation research while simultaneously speaking to the broad base of entrepreneurship scholars.

Discussions within the next section include the qualitative method I used to explore the business encounter of sole proprietorship entrepreneurs. Data collection activity served to learn the diverse nuances of the research topic, to explore how economic freedom and emancipation resonated as motivation among the experienced entrepreneurs, how they saw themselves, and what propelled them to profitability levels necessary to attain the freedom they needed. The section includes highlights of some questions to help researchers begin building a bridge to connect the disjointed areas of entrepreneurship research.

Section 2: The Project

Several elements were critical to the completion of doctoral research. Those elements are in the methodology portion of the project. Methodology is a research execution procedure a researcher follows in addressing elements such as the data collection and analysis plans (Bansal & Corley, 2012; Isaacs, 2014). In this section, I address issues about the participants, investigative approaches, tools, and instruments, as well as participant protections. I also discuss the purpose of the study, sampling, and data collection. Investigating the motivation behind an African-American's pursuit of personal freedom, and venturing into entrepreneurism for that purpose drove my research process. This project involved steps in implementing the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some sole proprietors used to sustain their small business operations beyond 5 years and attain profitability levels necessary for freedom and autonomy. Data collection was in the forms of (a) participant interviews, (b) participant observation, and (c) review of archival records. The specific population was business owners of sole proprietorships located in Cobb County of Georgia, in the United States. The sample consisted of 10 small business leaders that lead 10 different sole proprietorships and have demonstrated a strategy to attain profitability levels for personal freedom and autonomy. The geographic location for the study was Cobb County, Georgia, in the United States.

Solidifying this study involved taking steps to conduct an outcome-based investigation. Outcomes include providing beneficial strategies to the business and civic societies within the Cobb County community in Georgia, United States. The contribution to social change may include coaching motivated individuals in the immediate community, and probably beyond, with knowledge revealing strategies community members could emulate to achieve the same results. Members of the community achieving economic freedom and personal autonomy may arise from the social change elements from this study. The findings from this study may also aid in encouraging individuals from diverse backgrounds to pursue entrepreneurship. Coaching motivated individuals with knowledge would involve revealing strategies and encouraging individuals from diverse backgrounds (Belz, 2013). This assistance could motivate an increasing number of mentees to pursue entrepreneurship, thereby bringing economic growth to the community. For instance, (a) entrepreneurial sole proprietors who have achieved business autonomy and personal freedom may mobilize local youth and teach them how to become entrepreneurs using sole proprietorships, and (b) the entrepreneurs may organize mentoring programs to grow local talent in a sole proprietorship (Winborg, 2015). Achieving the above elements would mean a realization of the purpose of the study.

Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I engaged in all steps of the recruitment, data collection, and data analysis procedures. The topic of this dissertation represents personal and professional passions. My relationship with the topic of this study stems from my role as an African American grandmother, my scholarly activities, and my professional business exposure. My past experiences have created a professional and personal commitment in the success of young African American business leaders and entrepreneurs.

The Belmont Report Protocol is an instrument belonging to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Human Research Protections [OHRP], 1979). Through this instrument, the government instituted a policy with provisions guarding against violation of participant privacy in research. In line with the Belmont Protocol, and according to Shivayogi (2013), some populations require more safeguards than others. A researcher must consider diverse population perspectives in designing the investigative activity.

Knowledge of the provisions of the Belmont Report protocol arises from a training program to prepare an intending researcher for the tasks of collecting data from human subjects without violating the rights of such research participants (OHRP, 1979). I ensured the privacy and confidentiality of information belonging to, or about my research participants. This ethical consideration is critical to the success of securing a participant, and the consent letter is the instrument for that process. Researchers must pay utmost attention to the process of protecting research participants. Interacting with research participants requires additional knowledge available through attending a training by the National Institute of Health (NIH) (Connelly, 2014; Hardicre, 2014). Appendix A is my certification.

Because of my passion for this research topic, I am likely to have a bias for or against different antecedents in this study process. A researcher must try to mitigate bias to produce a usable research study (Bansal & Corley, 2012; Yin, 2014). To mitigate bias, I endeavored to be diligent in interacting with participants. I also discounted whatever I might know in the field of this study. By so doing, my personal bias was minimal. I also used journaling and field notes in addition to member checking and triangulation to ensure participant thoughts dominate the investigation.

Protocols are documents containing systematic guideposts for execution of tasks. In the case of this study, an interview protocol guided my interview process (see Appendix B). A researcher uses an interview protocol to take sequential steps to conduct the interview piece of the study. Bartkus, Hassan, and Ngene (2013) demonstrated the strength of such protocols and set an example for researchers.

Participants

The eligibility criteria for the 10 small business leaders participating in this study included operating a sole entrepreneurship business for a minimum of five years. Prospective participants were men and women of minority groups within the community. My strategy for gaining access to participants included referring to the local yellow pages and social media networks to identify initial contacts to call and inquired after sole proprietors in the local area. I called five prospects from the yellow pages. Two individuals declined. Three individuals showed interest. The interested three prospects continuously provided names and contact information to other potential participants. Soon, 32 individuals showed interest in the study. When the initial contacts increased to 32, some of those initial contacts became either inaccessible or apologized for their inability to continue. Some of the prospects were unqualified due to diverse demographic factors. The remaining prospects referred me to other entrepreneurs they knew, in line with the sampling method for this study. In the end, I identified 10 research subjects to interview.

Establishing a working relationship with participants involved placing follow-up phone calls to prospects who indicated interest. In line with Audretsch, Bönte, and Mahagaonkar (2012) as well as Khanin and Mahto (2013), I sent emails to 32 prospects who appeared interested in the study. The communication exchange continued until prospects converted to participants. One critical component of confirming eligibility during communication exchanges was the potential for a prospect to know the issues enough to provide interview responses that led to answering the research question. Orser, Elliott, and Leck (2011) noted that email was an effective way to do this. Audretsch et al. (2012) also relied on emails for sourcing participants.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

The research method for this study was qualitative. The situations facing motivated entrepreneurs required a combination of human touch, precision, revelation, and probing investigation (Bansal & Corley, 2012; Cleary et al., 2014; Hlady-Rispal & Estèle Jouison-Laffitte, 2014). The qualitative method was appropriate for this study. Other methods such as quantitative and mixed methods would not have served this study well in that (a) the quantitative method would require considering a broad spectrum of entrepreneurs, (b) research participants could spread across the United States, since the quantitative method would and (c) numerical values would be insufficient to convey factors, variables, hypotheses, and other elements. Numerical values would not have been adequate to represent each participant's motivational level. The quantitative method characteristics would have failed in conveying the ramifications of motivated entrepreneurs within the Cobb County of Georgia State because readers would need more than mere numeric values to comprehend the phenomena. The study occurred within a local area. Quantitative studies involve examining broad spectra of phenomena. In the same vein, the mixed method would have involved completing qualitative and quantitative methods in either order (Beck, 2014; Stentz et al., 2012). The scope of this study was narrower than a mixed method would require, therefore, the mixed method was inappropriate.

Quantitative methods involve analyzing hard numbers with the largest feasible sample to gather observations supporting a specific thesis statement or hypothesis (Stentz et al., 2012). They are mainly in use when the research question pertains to defining or quantifying cause-effect as well as analyzing deterministic information. These methods reference quantitative research, positivist/postpositivist research, empirical science, and post-positivism (Beck, 2014; Birasnav, 2014). A quantitative approach involves using post-positivist claims to develop existing knowledge and employing empirical strategies to collect discrete data, such as experiments on established instruments yielding numerical results.

The use of qualitative methods allows research participants to express the full complexity of the question asked and to respond with their individualized interpretations. Several reasons underscore the use of qualitative research (vs. quantitative research) (Day, 2014). The definition of research success pertains to discovering something new (vs. explicit hypothesis testing). Research participants use unlimited and evolving descriptions by subjects (vs. predetermined choices or rating scales). A researcher has ample latitude to emphasize the understanding of phenomena for what the phenomena represent (rather than from some outside perspective) (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

The nature of qualitative research is holistic, thematically emergent through data analysis, and contextual, demonstrating a subjective perspective to explain a phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Yin, 2014). Through qualitative research, an investigator attempts to explore the nature of something through a flexible dialogue and interviews. This flexibility makes exploratory research ideal and appealing. Appropriate questions lead a researcher to the answers (Bendassolli, 2013; Hlady-Rispal & Estèle Jouison-Laffitte, 2014). In line with Baillie's (2015) suggestions, exploratory questions suitable as the base for the qualitative inquiry are typically appropriate when: (a) investigators know little about a particular research area; (b) existing research is confusing, contradictory, or not moving forward; or (c) the topic is highly complex. Most studies of human nature or decision-making adhere to the highly complex criterion.

Qualitative research is appropriate when the purpose of the research is to describe and explicate, explore and interpret, or construct a theory (Adams, Hester, Bradley, Meyers, & Keating, 2014; Bansal & Corley, 2012; Day, 2014). Qualitative research involves exploring and expressing subjects and objects using words, whereas quantitative research involves using numbers (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). In each of the instances, and especially in qualitative studies, scientific rigor is essential in capturing all necessary nuances (Baillie, 2015). Qualitative methods involve asking participants open-ended questions and analyzing subjective, self-reported information for themes. The qualitative method involves investigating the why and how of behavior and decision-making.

Research Design

The specific nature of this study warranted the pursuit of precise conceptual and literal nuances of the topic. The research design for this study was the multiple case study. The qualitative case study design involved exploring the nuances of a phenomenon such that a reader could follow the conceptual and literal presentation (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). This design applied to this study. Some qualitative research designs include case study, ethnography, phenomenology, and descriptive design (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Moustakas, 1994; Yin, 2014). Many different discrete qualitative research designs exist, and the specific design a researcher uses is dependent upon the topic of the study, the purpose, and the sample.

Phenomenological researchers focused on the lived experiences of entrepreneurs, using their stores to frame an understanding of entrepreneurial drive and success. Authors in such studies examined the essence of entrepreneurship emerging from real entrepreneurs. Phenomenology is a viable research design to use when researching entrepreneurship from the angle of an entrepreneur's lived experience (Raco & Tanod, 2014). Phenomenology would involve investigating the lived experiences of research participants, especially those in extenuating circumstances (Moustakas, 1994). Several researchers focus on external factors influencing entrepreneurship. Phenomenology involves an attempt to illuminate a concept through the members' perception from the standpoint of the participant's lived experience, which does not apply to the forthcoming study (Moustakas, 1994). The strength of this imminent research was the personalized picture of entrepreneurial activity from the perspective of those sole proprietors who experienced all the aspects of new venture creation and achieved business autonomy and personal freedom. The phenomenological design was inappropriate for this study

People groups exist with diverse cultural antecedents worthy of investigation. Ethnographic design involves a study of people groups in their natural habitat; a researcher would embed in that world to capture all the nuances of that group (Nwosu, 2013). The specific nature of this study warrants the pursuit of precise conceptual and literal nuances of the topic. The natural habitat of a people group constitutes the best locations for understanding the nuances of life and living among such groups; personal contact is essential in qualitative studies among which is ethnography. Researchers must pay particular attention to those cultural artifacts of the people group in investigating such a group (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Moustakas, 1994; Yin, 2014). This design did not apply to this study.

Some research studies require investigating phenomena in the order or sequence of an incident. Appropriate research designs would serve such purposes. The narrative design would involve exploring a phenomenon in the form of storylines to understand the situation in which research participants have found themselves (Miner-Romanoff, 2012; Vaitkevicious & Kazokiene, 2013). Case study design would involve the exploration of phenomena on a case-by-case basis to compare different situations (Yin, 2014). All above designs could have applied to this study. Only one design should serve in a study. The choice of a case study arose from the need to focus on diverse elements such as the entrepreneur’s motivation, the level of profitability that might lead to personal freedom, and an entrepreneur’s autonomy arising from entrepreneurial profitability. Personal accounts of participants included such participants’ encounters from start-up to profitability and consequently involve more depth and detail.

Participants may offer experiences the researcher did not think of when designing the study and thus could not have included it in the design (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). Qualitative research interviews are distinguishable by the active participation of respondents in the research process. Respondents are encouraged to express their perspective and to point out what they see as important features of the research topic.

I used the qualitative method with a multiple case study design to explore the experiences of sole proprietorship entrepreneurs in line with Yin’s (2014) recommendation that a researcher should endeavor to explore participants’ experiences and perceptions. A researcher could use the case study design to gather information, store, code, and analyze for themes (Englander, 2012; Hlady-Rispal & Estèle Jouison-Laffitte, 2014; Nayelof, Fuchs, & Moreira, 2012). The case study element in this research study involved depicting the participants accurately in all aspects of the data management. The manifestations included my perception of the participants and my capturing of the interview and other data during my interaction of with the participants.

Using a case study design, a researcher could focus on what is present in the data, which can lead to intriguing paths of investigation and exploration of phenomena (Jackson, 2009). Recording and exploring of relationships between phenomena, events, and situations are appropriate; and these capabilities provide an image of the study population (Raco & Tanod, 2014). No causal associations occur, but the collection of pertinent data can serve in elucidating future research elements. In this study, a case study approach helped to illuminate the presence or absence of emancipation goals as a motivation in participants for engaging in entrepreneurial ventures. This information could serve to improve education, policies, and services to a diverse group of entrepreneurs (Ainin et al., 2015).

The case study design served in this study, contrary to using the phenomenological design because of a desire to explore the facts of the study with as little personal bias as possible. In phenomenological designs, the researcher pursues knowledge from the perspectives and lived experiences of the participant. Explicitly on the part of the participant helps a researcher in interpreting the data (Moustakas, 1994). Groenewald (2015) explained that the phenomenological design cannot be separate from the data itself and that the design dictates the participants, collection, and interpretation of all information a researcher gathers. In case study designs, the researcher methodologically excludes personal perspectives and experiences from analysis and extraction of data while still presenting a possible confluence, the experiences of the interviewer are not part of the design.

Case studies suffer from two confines thus: (a) expectancy effects and (b) sample bias from atypical participants. Expectancy effects can metamorphose into misleading data, as the researcher is specifically looking for certain data (Ainin et al., 2015; Bansal & Corley, 2012). Sample bias occurs as the researcher is seeking out atypical participants who represent the phenomena sought for investigation (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Yin, 2014). This research study involved using the snowball sampling method to find appropriate participants within the population of entrepreneurs. Researchers must be mindful that while finding participants through the above means is appropriate; the researchers must prepare for possible vulnerabilities (Bird & Schjoedt, 2017; Raco & Tanod, 2014).

Saturation involves capturing so much of participant response data that new information ceases to emerge (Elo et al., 2014; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). At that point, successive participant responses become repetitions of what other participants already said. Folta, Seguin, Ackerman, and Nelson (2012) recommended the use of no more than 10 participants. I heeded the advice, focused on 10 sole proprietorships, and interviewed the 10 entrepreneurs operating the sole proprietorships. I was attentive and identified the point participant responses began to be repetitive. If saturation did not occur by Participant 10, I pre-scheduled tentative rounds of additional interviews with each participant. If saturation occurred before Participant 10, I concluded the interviews. On the other hand, if saturation still did not occur, I used the snowball sampling process to reach new prospective participants, processed them accordingly, converted them to participants, and continued the data collection process until I achieved saturation. Researchers should follow the above process (O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). During data analysis, the continued emergence of new themes would have warranted continuation of new participant inclusion through snowball sampling until data analysis begins to yield no new themes. Once emerging themes constitute repetitions of themes from prior participants, saturation becomes clear. I used these pointers to ensure data saturation in this study. Repetition of themes and general verbiage signaled the attainment of data saturation using an inductive approach, which was similar to what Massey, Chaboyer, and Aitken (2014) did.

Population and Sampling

The population for this study consisted of sole proprietorship entrepreneurs in the Cobb County of Georgia State. The sample for this study consisted of 10 minority small business entrepreneurs representing 10 sole proprietorships in Cobb County. Cobb Chamber of Commerce had a listing of 409 business categories (Cobb Chamber, 2016). The availability of this listing could present a temptation to use purposeful sampling method in this study. Using such a sampling method served well in recruiting the participants. Initially finding an eligible prospect led to exploring the phenomenon through the appropriate successive research participants.

To satisfy the selecting and interviewing, (a) the snowball method served well, (b) the local yellow pages and Cobb County Chamber of Commerce contained information for accessing those who understand the economic topography applicable to this study, (c) the lifespan of the enterprise from formation revealed appropriateness to the study, and above all, (d) any sole proprietorship entrepreneur without the attributes fell outside the scope. A study sample should be a specific choice relating to the research topic (Yin, 2014). Using 10 participants through snowball sampling to pursue the purpose of this study was justifiable because the entrepreneurs created their ventures and ran them from formation to profitability.

I used the snowball sampling method for this study. The uncertainty of each local entrepreneur's eligibility warranted using a snowball sampling method because existing entrepreneurs often knew their friends and competitors (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Robinson, 2014). Because the research was qualitative, conducting a statistical power analysis was not necessary for determining how many participants were enough, as is the case with quantitative research. To reach a sufficient sample size, the researcher examines and analyzes the data on a weekly basis for the presence of new categories of responses (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013).

Data collection and analysis continued until participant responses began to yield redundant themes. The continuation of data collection was important for achieving data saturation (Yin, 2014). Exhausting any possible themes helped to ensure an inclusion of all aspects of the topic under study, in line with the postulations of Fusch and Ness (2015). Redundancy means that additional participants would not introduce novel ideas; in other words, the constructs of interest have received sufficient exploration (Bansal & Corley, 2012; Morse et al., 2014). Thematic or data saturation is a data collection state in which a researcher receives no new information, no new themes, and no more surprises in the data (Fusch & Ness, 2015; O'Reilly & Parker, 2013). Using 10 participants was appropriate to obtain reliable and valid data, considering the preceding scholars postulated between five and 10 participants would be sufficient for a study such as this.

The snowball sampling method served in my effort to reach participants for the study. Chain referral sampling, otherwise referencing snowball sampling, is a method of finding additional participants with the assistance of an initial batch of participants. A targeted sampling method can produce large samples from otherwise small or difficult-to-reach populations (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Sydor, 2013). This method is in most extensive use within social psychology experiments. The use occurs when participants share sensitive traits, such as drug users, or when participants share rare traits, such as recessive genes (Sydor, 2013). The first prospect came from the Cobb County Chamber of Commerce list or the Cobb County Yellow Pages. Once the prospect showed interest in the study and made a commitment, such a prospect became a participant. After that, some referrals became necessary from one participant to the next. Participants were likely to know others who had the similar characteristics appropriate for the study.

The first advantage of snowball sampling is the ability to reach hidden populations. With snowball sampling, a researcher can include in a study people that the researcher would otherwise never know existed (Perez, Nie, Ardern, Radhu, & Ritvo, 2013). In some situations, a sample could comprise of individuals possessing traits or behaviors that society does not condone, leading subjects to be reclusive and extremely difficult to contact. This uniqueness is the primary advantage of snowball sampling and is a counterweight against the disadvantages of the method. In many cases, snowball sampling is the only feasible method to garner participants (Robinson, 2014).

The second advantage of snowball sampling is the ability to study the social chain of referral itself (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Studying social systems involves referrals and the use of networks, so this method is specifically advantageous to these types of studies. The method itself constitutes a contribution to the data, not just the participant pool. Researchers study how initial subjects go about referring, whom they choose to refer, and why they may choose not to refer anyone. Snowball sampling is a process by which a researcher illuminates how extensive the social networks are within specific or hidden groups.

Finally, the third advantage of snowball sampling is the ability to reach very specific populations (Yin, 2014). When no obvious way exists to locate or contact participants with desired traits, finding enough participants to support strong conclusions from the data may be challenging. The primary value of snowball sampling lies in amplifying the population of participants when they are few or difficult to reach (Acharya et al., 2013). This particular study did involve the use of the snowball sampling method to generate a significant sample of ethnic minorities meeting the criteria. As this was a study of participants sharing certain racial traits, the advantage of snowball sampling overcame the inherent difficulty of reaching enough participants within these small populations. The participation of each minority grouping strengthened this study's internal validity regarding results from within each Minority group sampled.

Some disadvantages of using this method do exist. The first disadvantage of snowball sampling is that the researcher cannot know the true size or distribution of the population. Snowball sampling is inexact and can produce inaccurate representations of how the sample fits into the world (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). The 32 interested contacts received emails, and further screening rendered these potential disadvantages nonexistent in this investigative activity. By the time the 10 participants emerged, participant attributes matched the research design. Respondents may comprise the entirety of the subgroup within a given population, or only a small fraction of the existing subgroup. In the process of confirming the research participants, the prospects who became participants represented the wide gamut of minorities. Furthermore, since the participants must know one another, at least in a serialized sense, a researcher could gain access to every member of a small group and not know it. The outcome of the sampling process was different from the potential disadvantaged hereinbefore expressed. Rather than interviewing a small group of people from one circle, the individuals who emerged for interviews were of diverse minority backgrounds; the individuals did not know each other, even though they received a reference from someone they knew at the stage of 32 prospects. Generalizing results to a larger population is extremely difficult (Elo et al., 2014).

The second disadvantage is that the method could be challenging to the researcher. The sampling method was not a challenge in that the burden of the method started and ended with finding 80 seemingly appropriate prospects in the yellow pages. The rest of the burden and challenge was on the individuals who already received an initial verbal invitation to participate. Success in the use of the method depended on how strong the initial pool of subjects was as well as regarding the objectives of the study. Snowball sampling requires constant contact with subjects and a good pool of initial participants, depending on the researcher’s own ability to network (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). This potential disadvantage did not prevent the use of the method. No personal acquaintance existed before the yellow pages access. The greatest disadvantage of snowball sampling is the inherent bias present in the process. The first participants have a great amount of influence over the sample, resulting in possible sampling bias

(Robinson, 2014). Initial participants tend to help recruit people that they know well, and these people often shared the same traits as the initial subjects. Sampling bias could occur because participants are not under a researcher's control. Snowball sampling makes it possible that the researcher would only be studying a small subgroup of the larger population, but in this study, snowball sampling is an advantage because the goal is to target specific subgroups of the larger population of entrepreneurs.

Snowball sampling is most appropriate for a large population sharing common traits and indeed has the disadvantage of creating disproportionate samples sharing these traits (Yin, 2014); the best method to use in this study was snowball sampling. Using random sampling for this would not have led to a large enough number of minority participants because the minorities were, by definition, a smaller percentage of the population. Using the snowball sampling method, I maximized the presence of minorities in the study's population.

I explored similarities and differences within subgroups of the greater population. The strategy was to get a large and equal number of participants in each racial group to strengthen the internal validity of the study. Also, this method produced a significant number of respondents akin to the initial participants. Because the initial participants were themselves diverse, and their number was sufficient, the process served to generate a sample population large enough to mitigate the bias present in snowball sampling. In some instances, larger samples bolster validity (Yin, 2014), but the reverse was the case in this study because the county-specific, minority demographics, and qualitative methodology warranted the interview of 10 participants as sufficient.

I successfully contacted five prospects from the local yellow pages. I saw on the social networking site, LinkedIn, 10 individuals who seemed qualified to participate. I sent them messages also as a starting point for recruiting the initial subjects. None of the LinkedIn prospects responded. Some successive participants arising from the local yellow pages access became serious contacts from the first participant. If the first participant did not know anyone who met the criteria, the first participant still qualified to participate. Another effort would have become necessary to find a second participant who might know potential participants. However, such an effort became unnecessary as the local yellow pages initial contacts yielded positive results for the investigative activity. Baltar and Brunet (2012) demonstrated that snowball sampling could benefit from the use of online social networks more effectively than other recruitment methods would due to an increased level of confidence among participants when the researcher's information is available in the form of Facebook profiles.

LinkedIn is a large database of potential participants. Unlike Facebook, LinkedIn is in synchronism with professionals for career networking. Many business professionals frequent the site, based on the long lists of LinkedIn members lined up for invitation or acceptance of invitations from several others. The names, pictures, and professional descriptions on LinkedIn reflect high-level professional profiles, even though verification of same might be difficult to accomplish by a LinkedIn user. Initial research participants are easily accessible through the LinkedIn system. The site design is appropriate for staying in contact with participants. The research study involved the use of local participants. I used demographic inquiry to ensure diverse backgrounds within the initial ethnic sample. Profile pictures were helpful in narrowing down participants by race. Short query messages requesting demographic information helped in further narrowing down the sample. With a strong initial sample size, and diversity within the starting sample, I used the method of snowball sampling to provide a tailored, varied, and robust sample for this project.

Data saturation is a situation that arises when research participant responses and themes begin to emerge repeatedly (Yin, 2014). Research participants answer the same interview questions. The participants expectedly have diverse experiences, thereby capable of providing information different from those of other participants (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A manifestation of data saturation occurs when successive interviewees begin to say the same things, even though they do not know each other. Data saturation is achievable in qualitative research when a researcher makes concerted efforts to capture all possible details a research participant could proffer (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). To conduct verifications after interviewing the participants, I (a) asked follow-up questions during interviews, (b) contacted participants during transcription to verify any unclear or poor audio instances, (c) contacted participants after transcription to confirm the accuracy of the transactions (d) contacted participants after the transaction to verify the meanings I ascribe to their comments are correct, and (e) took note of analysis elements that warranted content verification.

Sampling in qualitative research may help in contributing to saturation through converting the appropriate prospects to participants and interviewing them properly to gather all essential elements that might help in answering the research question.

Qualitative research involves attempts to sample broadly enough and to interview deeply enough that all the important aspects of the research question are constituent within the sample (Marshall, Cardon, & Poddar, 2013). Saturation is the stage in data collection at which no new information emerges along research parameters (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Ethical Research

The importance of protecting research subjects warrants instituting the informed consent process. Such a process involves assuring the University and a research participant no risks may arise from the study (Hardicre, 2014). The informed consent process involved providing a prospect with a consent letter explaining the ramifications of the study. Once a prospect agreed with the content and indicated an interest in the study, such a prospect became a potential participant. The potential participant became a participant when the individual honored the interview appointment and began to answer interview questions.

This study did not involve potential risks to the participants, even though the investigative activity did not involve online data collection. All participants signed consent and confidentiality forms before data collection. These forms assured the participants that their participation was voluntary and that their identity and responses to the interview questions would remain anonymous and protected. To ensure confidentiality, no participants' names or business names appeared in any published or written documents that could identify any individual participant in this study. Participants had the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants did not receive any incentives for participating. Research studies in which individuals receive compensations could lose scholarly luster and rather possess commercial than academic values (Perez et al., 2013). Participants understood the non-commercial nature of this study. Thereby, interview responses contained usable data.

Ethical protections available to participants were adequate in that (a) an individual entrepreneur understood the content of the consent letter before consenting, (b) the participant decided on the interview location, (c) I answered all pre-interview questions the potential participant might have had, and (d) I asked the potential participant all questions that crossed the mind regarding his/her satisfaction in the process prior to engaging in the interviews. The above elements were critical to the protection of research participants (Connelly, 2014). Research subject protection necessitated the completion of National Institute of Health training and the attendant issuance of completion certificate (see Appendix A).

Before any recruitment or data collection began, I gained approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure that no ethical violations would occur and to protect the rights of all individuals involved in this research. No ethical infractions occurred. The IRB application process involved the assessment of risk potential (e.g., physical or legal harm) to participants in the study. The IRB application constituted an electronic submission. The package included a brief overview of data collection techniques, community research, stakeholders, partners, potential risks, other checklists, and electronic signatures. I complied with Walden University, National Institute of Health, and applicable federal regulations regarding the conduct of research. The IRB number for this study was 10-02-17-0353856.

Through careful record keeping, a researcher ensures that a qualitative study has an audit trail to support the reliability and validity of the data collected (Hardicre, 2014). This audit trail consists of in-depth records of all recruitment and research activities (Connelly, 2014). In the case of this research study, this audit confirmation involved saving in a special folder and restricted-access cabinet names, phone numbers, email addresses, log sheets, email communication, and all other identifying information. Doctoral committee members for this study served as a valuable resource as well; their expertise helped guide data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This committee review process helped ensure that the study's results and conclusions were sound. Data will remain in a safe place for 5 years to protect the rights of the participants. An approval number constituted the proof of compliance with standards before launching the interviews.

Names and descriptions of the sole proprietors and entrepreneurs underwent a camouflage process through systematic masking. Codes for the masking were alphanumeric, and I alone knew how to associate each alphanumeric code with a specific individual. For instance, if Joe Smith were the first participant, the code would be *P1JS* and additional code to strengthen the naming convention and security.

Data Collection Instruments

I was the primary data collection instrument. This study involved the use of qualitative interview responses to understand the strategies entrepreneurs used to sustain their small business operations beyond five years and attain profitability levels necessary for freedom and autonomy. The research participants faced interview questions. The interview questions were open-ended. The interview format was semistructured to allow me to (a) keep the atmosphere semiformal, (b) ask follow-up questions, in case a respondent appeared to miss the point in the question, and (c) asked other questions arising from the participant’s comments. The study involved learning whether the drive to be an entrepreneur originated from the individual’s desire to find personal freedom or in other paradigms. Open-ended questions also included the emancipation-related constructs of autonomy, control, and intentions for creating change. Since I was the primary data collection instrument, the interview questions constituted the secondary data collection instrument.

The need existed for a standard instrument focusing on entrepreneurship as a means of finding personal freedom and autonomy. Researchers should follow specific steps to access all the information a participant could provide (Doody & Noonan, 2013). The specific steps I followed included recording the responses in two ways thus: (a) audio recording using a Sony ICD-BX140 4GB Digital Voice Recorder, a sturdy and affordable device (b) An analog Sony CFDS70BLK CD/cassette recorder boombox home audio recorder as a backup and (b) hand-written notes while participants answer questions. The purpose of using digital and analog recording systems was to hedge against technical hitches with either device. Several digital and analog recording devices are on the market. Buyers may satisfy their recording needs by purchasing any of them. The research activity did not require sophisticated equipment. The digital and analog devices were sufficient to meet the interview recording needs.

I used the open-ended qualitative questions to tap into the three main constructs of the emancipation theory (autonomy, authoring, and making declarations) and how the constructs relate to the underlying motivation and inspiration for African-American entrepreneurs. This collection of questions included basic demographic information from respondents about their age, gender, and level of business/entrepreneurial experience. Participants did not provide any information that could uniquely identify them. Participants responded to the open-ended questions. I used the interview questions to capture participant knowledge in all areas of this topic.

The interview questions occurred in the order the questions were listed. Any incidental deviations pertained to the substantive question. By so doing, the analysis process was not subject so incoherencies. I used an interview protocol to guide all interaction steps between the participants and me. According to Yin (2014), knowing what to ask a research participant is not sufficient to achieve success; but knowing how to follow the steps and the order in which to ask the questions would be helpful to capture all necessary data.

Enhancing reliability and validity of the data collection instrument occurred through involving participants who provided the data. Member checking is an effective process to ensure reliability and validity of data (Mangioni & Mckerchar, 2013; Raval, 2012). Through member checking, a researcher may verify meanings. Member checking for qualitative is when the researcher paraphrases the participant’s responses for each question into the researchers’ own words. The researcher then asks the participant to ensure that the research accurately interpreted his/her intended message for each question

(Hahn, Preuss, Pinkse, & Figge, 2014; Jennings, Edwards, Jennings, & Delbridge, 2015). I used member checking. A researcher may also verify the accuracy of interview response transcripts. Transcript review in qualitative research involves sharing with a participant the verbatim transcript of exactly what the participant said. The participant would review the transcript and verify that the transcription is correct. These two processes contribute to reliability and validity of a study (Feldman & Lowe, 2015). I used member checking to verify with participants that the data I capture represented the meaning participants conveyed in their responses.

Data Collection Technique

I collected a publicly available gazette with names and pertinent information of small businesses, sole proprietorships, and medium-sized companies. I contacted the owners of the small businesses that aligned with this study. Out of 273 small businesses in the publication, I contacted 109 individuals whose businesses appeared to align with this study. Fifty-eight business owners replied my email. During email exchanges, 12 business owners excused themselves because of tight schedules and low interest. As communication continued, 16 business owners no longer returned calls. The remaining 32 sole proprietors were among those who showed interest, maintained contact, took calls, returned calls, and sometimes called to ask questions. This robust exchange proved this investigative activity advantageous. At the time of participant interviews, some of the 32 prospects made themselves available while others did not. Ten prospects finally emerged as interview-ready participants and answered the interview questions at their respective business locations. Items 1 through 8 highlights the interview steps.

The data collection process occurred after the use of demographic questions to qualify the participants (see Appendix C) consisted of three activities as follows: (a) participant interviews, (b) participant observations, and (c) archival records review. Archival records review and observations constitute veritable techniques (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Raval, 2012; Feldman & Lowe, 2015). Considering the participants in this study were sole proprietorship entrepreneurs, my focus in this study was on their motivation for going into business. Archival records consisted of the articles of business registration, list of major inventories, correspondences with government agencies, banking records, and profit and loss accounts. Participating entrepreneurs agreed to release the documents for review. I noted the profit seasons, loss seasons, profitability projections, and loan applications - approvals and denials as well as projected and actual costs. Reviewing such archival records was useful in confirming their business autonomy and personal freedom elements for this study. Participant responses included revelations showing that the minority entrepreneurs faced similar challenges in the areas relating to the documents from archives. I used participant observation because motivation often manifests in behavior, discussion tone, facial expressions, and involuntary interjections. Context as a researcher presents it, must reflect a participant’s thought pattern (Jennings et al., 2015). Context was prominent in the research process because participant recruitment was a factor of context – the context of using sole proprietorship to pursue a level of profitability that would lead to business autonomy and personal freedom. I used an interview protocol (see Appendix D) to guide the interviewing process. Participants provided responses that revealed their connection with the pursuit of personal freedom as well as business autonomy.

The use of member checking sufficed to determine appropriate contextual representation in the data. I scheduled appointments with each participant to present the transcription and interpretation of the individual's interview responses. The participants generally found the transcripts both accurate and representing the meanings they intended. Four participants read their respective responses on the day of the appointment and confirmed their satisfaction at that first review appointment. Two participants looked at a second version, not because of inaccuracies but because the initial transcription triggered more comments from the participants. This member checking activity took place over a period of 10 days. One participant modified his responses four times before confirming his contribution satisfactory; and this activity occurred over a period of two weeks. Three participants made cosmetic or mechanical enhancements to their respective responses on the day of each person's appointment.

I commenced participant interview efforts by following the steps below:

1. Used a prospect's phone number or email address to see if prospect was interested in participating (see Appendix E).
2. Confirmed prospect's interest and included prospect on a list thereby changing the prospect to the participant.
3. Exchanged emails or phone calls with the participant questions, asked the questions, gave the participant opportunities to ask questions and to seize any emerging opportunities to establish a good working relation.

4. On the day of the interview, confirmed time and location with participation.
5. Met on location, exchange pleasantries.
6. Obtained permission to turn on the voice recorder.
7. Began asking questions.
8. Asked follow-up questions as needed.

Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2013) advocated setting up a clear and concise process to ensure capturing all essential items during the data collection activity. The above process served in my effort to enshrine order in the data collection process.

All interviews took place at the participants' respective business locations. The interview protocol played an important role in organizing the interview steps (see Appendix B). Participation involved activities such as the participant expecting and receiving me at the business location, and following steps occurred:

1. Arrived at participant's business location.
2. Exchanged pleasantries.
3. Commenced with a briefing session for participants to go over consent letter.
4. Went to the venue the participant determines as convenient for the interview.
5. Wrote down important points in my journal to record identifiable details worthy of note.
6. Asked questions about any item I noticed in the observation needing clarification.
7. Requested the participant to draw my attention to anything worth observing.
8. Concluded the observation session with a debriefing session with the participant.

Every technique in research has advantages and disadvantages. Specifically, the techniques for collecting data must show potential positive and negative antecedents. A researcher takes the advantages and disadvantages of data collection techniques into consideration in executing the research without subjecting the study to skewed assessment (Boblin, Ireland, Kirkpatrick, & Robertson, 2013; Caimey & St Denny, 2015). In the process of this study, no negative antecedents occurred. The participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity of sharing their experiences, motivations, and results.

Diverse positive sides to interviews exist and include the advantages of interviews (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012). Interviews result in first-hand data from those who possess the knowledge and experience. Interviews tend to yield a high volume of material. A researcher can interact with individuals rather than computers. A participant's non-verbal expressions contribute to information ordinarily. Researchers must steer away from negative elements that occur in the process of executing a research study and in particular, the unexpected disadvantages that emerge as the different data collection activities commence (Bekhet & Zauszniewski, 2012; Radley & Chamberlain, 2012). During the interviews, the participants' facial expressions or body language did not conflict with the answers the participants were providing.

The only visible non-verbal expression was the passion each participant had in their business pursuit and in the opportunity to share the information with others. Therefore, nothing extraordinary happened during any interview. A participant might have a tough schedule to manage, thereby constituting a clog in the wheel of the researcher’s progress. This experience occurred with three participants who rescheduled the interviews. One participant rescheduled observation twice because of his travels. The unpredictability of data volume could lead the data analysis in a direction that does not align with the purpose of the study. The researcher activity led to rich data arising from the combination of robust interviews, observations, and document reviews. A researcher could understand something different from the participant’s thoughts and intentions. Because of the possibility of misinterpreting participant meanings, I paid close attention to the nuances of the investigative activity to capture the participants’ exact meanings.

Member checking is an important part of validity and reliability in research. In the same vein, data collection efforts would benefit greatly from member checking because of the accuracy that such an effort engenders (Harper & Cole, 2012). Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2013) used member checking to earn user trust because of the level of validity of the data. Through member checking, Petty, Thomson, and Stew (2012) avoided biases and achieved objectivity and neutrality. I implemented member checking after the interviews to give the participants the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of my findings.

Data Organization Technique

Multiple systems exist for keeping track of data. Considering that data assume multiple forms also, the specific system for tracking specific dataset should be appropriate for the task. Microsoft Excel is appropriate for diverse tracking tasks. A researcher must cultivate the habit of converging pieces of information appropriately (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2015; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). I implemented this data organization technique in line with the postulations of Onwuegbuzie and Byers (2014). File labels consisted of alphanumeric identification such as a participant's initials representing first and last names, a number representing the order in which the participants committed to the study, and a number showing the interview iteration. For instance, PJ01-1 would represent a participant, following the above labeling description. The use of this alphanumeric coding kept each participant anonymous and protected the participant's privacy. That process involved logging my field notes into Excel spreadsheet as I developed the notes. This organizing effort enabled me to associate specific note items with participant responses. The Excel entries enabled me to identify participants I contacted to schedule further interviews or clarification meetings. The themes that emerged during interviews also constituted entries into Excel. Finally, I used the spreadsheet to synchronize themes I observed in scholarly articles with those that emerged during interviews and analysis. With such a system in place, I compiled emerging themes, on-the-spur-of-the-moment reflections, and codes. Coordinating appointments with 10 entrepreneurs was daunting. Analog and digital logs constituted necessary tools. Other items requiring logging were interpretations, occurrences, specific times and sequences, verbal cues, and unexpected occurrences that affected the research process of understanding of emerging data. Robinson (2014) suggested the use of all above efforts because of the value such deployments represent in research. I filed off all responses in a locked container within a filing cabinet in a secure location to undergo destruction after five years.

Data Analysis

The intersection of theory and data analysis outcomes became evident at the stage of participant interviews. The conceptual framework of emancipation theory is in alignment with the data analysis and findings in that (a) participants revealed during interviews that they did not want to be modern-day slaves; (b) business profitability meant the strength to compete with other successful individuals; (c) self-worth was even more important than an accumulation of money in the banks; (d) the sole proprietor or small entrepreneur rejected, ab initio, a lower status than people of other races or ethnic groupings; and above all, (e) participants strongly expressed a desire for freedom from permanent business activity. The above nuances became evident from participant the data analysis and findings.

None of the interviewees knew anything about Rindova et al. (2009) as the creator of the Emancipation theory; each participant had a resolve to operate a sole proprietorship from formation to profitability with the intention of attaining the tenets of Rindova's (2009) postulation of emancipation. Thus, profitability was not an isolated desire. The participants needed profitability to free themselves from the shackles of other antecedents with the similitude of bondage. Raw data contained specific mentions of such words as freedom, emancipate, autonomy, and other subtle references to personal separation from undue subjugation. Analysis reports contained a corroboration of the emancipation mentality. I matched participant comments with the findings from a study by Chu et al. (2007) that preceded the creation of the theory. I also matched findings from this study with scholarly findings by Goss et al. (2011). The participants' plight leading up to business vision synchronized with Short et al.'s (2010) postulation regarding an entrepreneur's evaluation of personal experiences as a foundation for the envisaged future business success.

Upon transcribing the interview responses, I made sure my paraphrase did not reduce or eliminate the interviewees' meanings. I made an appointment to meet with each participant. The participants' reviews of meanings revealed compliance with the participants' intentions. Some participants had enough time to review the document at the time of the meeting. Others held on to the document for two days, and in some instances, for a week before I had to go back and retrieve the document. In all instances, only a few mechanical corrections were necessary. Consequently, changes were minimal, especially because the digital and analog recording gadgets served well in capturing everything each participant said. The above processes were in line with the modified Van Kaam method Moustakas (1994) presented it.

Van Kaam's (1959) method involved introducing a scientific approach to human behavior that had been unorganized. By organizing human processes, an order becomes visible for posterity of researchers to follow. Moustakas (1994) stipulated the concretization of indeterminate elements to become comprehensible units of action, dimensions of research activity to consequently be in alignment with the objectives of research studies, and spontaneity to give way to an order subsequent researchers could follow. Consequently, the modified Van Kaam method became critical to the success of data analysis in this study.

Thematic analysis is the most common form of analysis in qualitative research (Guest, 2012). The thematic analysis involved emphasizing the tasks of labeling, examining, and recording patterns within data. The thematic analysis consists of six phases to create reliable, meaningful patterns. These phases are familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report (Caimey & St Denny, 2015; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2015; Morse et al., 2014; Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen, & Snelgrove, 2016).

Data analysis may be effective with the implementation of triangulation. The four types of triangulation are as follows: (a) Investigator triangulation, (b) methodological triangulation, (c) theory triangulation, and (d) data triangulation. Within the qualitative method, I implemented data triangulation by using different types of data. Interview responses, observation, and archival records review served well. After an interview, I observed the participant in the normal course of transacting business on site. I reviewed inventory records, loan applications approvals and denials, profit projections and actuals, duration of business versus profitability over time, and other documents the business owner deemed applicable to the business autonomy and personal freedom paradigm.

Each participant consented to the review of the business-related document and consequently granted access to the filing cabinets or safes, in some cases. Some participants went online and downloaded inventory order, bank statement, local community and business network recognition records. A participant's streak of losses gave an impression that the participant would be unable to sustain the business. Changes occurred after that period of a streak of losses bringing the participant's business up to optimum performance. The participant in question revealed that such experiences led to the closing of some business belonging to other individuals who started at the same time as she did. Most of the participants harped on the confidentiality of the documents and did not want specific descriptions of such document to become public information. Findings from this study include all pertinent antecedents from those observations. Most importantly, findings from the observations synchronized with the participants' interview responses, and by extension, with the analysis results.

Multiple data collection efforts such as above are appropriate for ensuring trustworthiness (Denzin, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This process formed part of the data analysis exercise in this study. In qualitative research, trustworthiness relates to the parameters within which a qualitative study may reflect acceptability (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). In this study, the elements of trustworthiness consist in the validity and reliability elements of dependability, confirmability, creditability, and transferability. The multiple data philosophies in Denzin's (2012) and Lincoln and Guba's (1985) postulation dealt with ensuring the validity and reliability of this study as a qualitative research study.

Themes are patterns across data sets that are relevant to the research topic or question under consideration (Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, Utriainen, & Kyngas, 2014; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2015). Coding is the primary process for developing these themes based on the raw data. Coding involves recognizing important elements within the data and encoding them before interpretation (Raco & Tanod, 2014). The interpretation of these codes includes comparing theme frequencies, identifying theme co-occurrence, and graphically displaying relationships between different themes (Guest, 2012). Understanding meanings and interpretations from the perspectives of the participant should circumscribe a researcher's activity (Petty et al., 2012). I transcribed the responses from participants in the geographic area.

After interviewing research participants, I transcribed the audio I captured during the interviews by loading the audio into the computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS). The trademark, NVivo 11, served the analysis purposes. NVivo software supports Microsoft Word, audio, and video input. The volume of data would not overwhelm the software in the process of searching to identify themes (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2015; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014; Woods, Paulus, Atkins, & Macklin, 2015). I used the data analysis software to identify the high frequency, medium frequency, and low-frequency themes. I assigned alphanumeric codes to the three levels of themes. I created a cross-participant log to seek matching elements from participant to participant. I coded the matching elements accordingly and used coding to identify those that did into the match. I created a three-column coding chart to confirm conceptual response similarities among the data sources. I coded participant confirmation of meanings against each item on the coding chart. The first initial, last name initial, number order or recruitment, and interview iteration received an additional element at the stage of member checking to follow through on participant response meanings. These activities would have been impossible without the full deployment of NVivo11®.

Diverse software packages exist for data analysis. Many such resources have similarities. In some instances, a researcher could encounter difficulties deciding which package to use. ATLAS.ti is a package for analyzing extensive segments of data. The designers of the software inserted a functionality to meet the needs of small volume researchers. NVivo is an analysis software that comes in Starter, Plus, and Pro versions. Software updates have led to the introduction of Version 11. I used NVivo11® Starter for Windows. NVivo11 is appropriate for unstructured data. The three-level packaging (Starter, Plus, and Pro) makes it easy for a researcher to determine and acquire the package level suitable for the substantive study. Both Atlas.ti and NVivo11 were appropriate for this study because of the capability to produce textual and graphics output. The computer platform feature in NVivo11 makes the software attractive to me, as the software runs on Windows and Macintosh computers. My status and station as a doctoral student in the field of entrepreneurship meant software applications were outside my domain. Therefore, the only pertinent observation was that the software was friendly enough for a regular user. This attractiveness relates to the possibility of switching from Windows to Macintosh and back while processing some of the raw and output data. This attractiveness was important going into the research since the potential stage-wise needs were uncertain at the time of commencement the data analysis portion of this study. A need did not arise to switch from the Windows platform to the Macintosh platform. The Windows platform supported all analysis functions necessary in the deployment of NVivo11®.

Using analysis software that processes only one of the three types of data might lead to ineffective data analysis; NVivo has the functionality to process diverse types of media, leading to deep immersion in data. Such immersion normally leads to data output accuracy (Moylan et al., 2015; Munn, Porritt, Lockwood, Aromataris, & Pearson, 2014). I am protecting raw data in a password-protected hard drive and keep the hard drive in a security safe within a filing cabinet I alone can access for 5 years. After that, I will dispose of all data by destruction, smashing, incineration, and deletion, as appropriate for each type of datum or media.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

Reliability is the degree to which a researcher might consistently reproduce an experiment with the same results. The term often has connections with positivist research but applies to qualitative research when researchers think of it in the context of reliability within the paradigm of the subject under consideration. Lincoln and Guba (1985) used *dependability,* in qualitative research, which closely corresponds with the notion of *reliability* in quantitative research. The researchers further emphasized the *inquiry audit* as one measure that might enhance the dependability of qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated reliability goes hand in hand with validity.

Dependability is a factor in qualitative research relating to the validity and reliability of a study and hinging on the quality audit elements. The two scientific measurement paths to validity are internal and external validity. While these two elements are critical to the usability of a quantitative study, the four elements of dependability, creditability, confirmability, and transferability are critical to the usability of a qualitative study (Yin, 2014). Dependability reflects the extent to which research users may justify a study's conclusion a researcher makes. Such justification is assessable by the extent to which a researcher minimizes bias.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated establishing validity would establish reliability by default. I focused every effort on ensuring consistency in the qualitative data collection to maintain strong reliability. In qualitative research, the dependability of a study helps the researcher to gain the trust of research users.

Validity

Validity refers to whether a study's design involves a scientific exploration of the questions the study should explore. In qualitative research, validity is attainable through forming central criteria within which a recruiter determines participant eligibility to answer interview questions. The validity of data analysis is achievable through focusing on themes across data (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), sifting in relevant points in interviews and sifting out the irrelevant (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013), as well as mapping the interactions between elements of a subject's discourse (Hallberg, 2013). The application of the notion of rigor in qualitative research should constitute a concept from a clear benchmark (Beck, 2014). Some critical measures are important in quantitative research not strictly applicable in qualitative research. In qualitative research, creativity, reflexivity, and the social interaction of interviewing possess high scholastic value.

The validity element in dependability arises from diverse factors such as (a) forming central criteria for choosing participants, (b) structuring the interview questions as open-ended, and (c) focusing on exploration in the process of research execution. The validity of data analysis may arise when a researcher follows the steps, (a) focus on themes across data, (b) sift in the relevant and sift out the irrelevant points in interviews, and (c) map the interactions between elements of a subject's discourse.

Creditability. Personal bias potentially clouds data on the part of the interviewer, or even the interviewee. This impediment is why a qualitative researcher uses a constructively skeptical process of independent auditing to pursue creditability of the study (Cope, 2014). Researchers employ careful internal auditing throughout the analysis, along with a major audit after analysis is complete. Validations by research wherein the original subjects or a subject pool very similar to the originals occur are in alignment with the findings to obtain feedback and correction, if necessary. Lastly, qualitative research resonates with the reader. The credibility of the study manifests to readers and researcher users, as the findings emanate from the hearts and minds of individuals who understand and have solved the problem (Cope, 2014). Because validity must conform to the paradigm of the exploratory question under consideration, the reader must be able to understand and maneuver logically through the collection of present data (Cope, 2014).

Confirmability. Confirmability denotes how bias-free a study might be (Moon et al., 2013). Quality audits, journaling, and triangulation help researchers in achieving confirmability in their studies (Denzin, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Wilson, 2014). Petty et al. (2012) addressed confirmability from quality audits and reflexive journaling. The investigative aspect of a study should be sequential, and the researcher must note the process for quality verification (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). The confirmability of a study constitutes a researcher's contribution to the extent readers and research users rely on the study to enable other researchers to reproduce the same results. This consistency positions a study properly also to serve as an example for future researchers (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014; Wilson, 2014). Confirmability has connections with positivist research, though applicable to qualitative research regarding reliability within the paradigm of the subject under study.

Transferability. Transferability is the quality of a study that allows readers and research users to be confident in applying the study to other platforms (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). A researcher is not in a position to determine the transferability of the study. Research users could generalize the results of a study to other situations of which they are confident (Erlingsson & Brysiewicz, 2013). Research users make the final determination as to the transferability of a study. Researchers must understand that inadequate or poor population samples could constitute a threat to external validity, thereby hindering transferability of a study (Hallberg, 2013; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Also, using overly specific or closed questions narrows the focus to a point where it may no longer generalize beyond that subject (Hallberg, 2013; Moon et al., 2013).

Data Saturation

Data saturation is a subtle barometer to determine at what point data inflow assumes diverse natures. A researcher must confirm through a scientific means that research participants are repetitive rather than filling knowledge gaps (O’Reilly & Parker, 2013). A researcher may achieve data saturation in different ways and could commence analysis as soon as data collection commences. On the other hand, a researcher could continue collecting data until participant responses begin to contain the same verbiage (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen, & Kyngäs, 2014; Munn et al., 2014). I continued to interview participants until repetitive verbiage flows in from the interview activity. Finally, from the standpoint of analysis, data saturation is achievable through sharp focus during the analysis activity. The rigor involved in the analysis may serve as a guidepost for the pursuit of data saturation. I implemented the sharp focus during data analysis as an additional means of seeking data saturation.

During the initial interview, I remained cognizant of the fact that some interviewees might provide partial answers to questions. The initial information from such responses served as prompts for me to ask follow-up questions. The follow-up questions occurred during the initial interview as well as follow-up interview schedules. Through these follow-up interviews, participants were likely to provide more details that were unavailable during the first and second interviews. By combining the review of pertinent business records and observing the business leaders, I gathered all possible information, themes, journal entries, and codes whereby participant responses and other data no longer revealed any new information, themes, journal entries, and codes. Saturation became noticeable when redundant themes began to emerge, even during follow-up interviews.

Transition and Summary

Section 2 included an overview of the research methodology, design, and analysis techniques that served in this study. I justified the choice of the specific research method. The rationale for qualitative data collection in this exploratory study was to capture the motivation of a diverse sample of African American experienced entrepreneurs. I was the primary data collection instrument. Supplementary instruments included open-ended interview questions and participant observation. After interviewing 10 sole proprietorship entrepreneurs, I used member checking for accuracy and meaning of my interpretations. Using NVivo software in analyzing the data, I used data triangulation in the data analysis process. Participant privacy did not suffer any violation because I used the Belmont Report stipulations to guide the process.

The next section contains the results of the doctoral study, the interpretations, and implications of those findings. Analysis and interpretation of the results will possibly manifest a fit with the current version of the emancipation theory. Any refinements in theory, especially about African American entrepreneurs, might occur, since researchers have not yet deployed this theory for ascertaining the entrepreneurs' motivation. Section 3 also contains a detailed discussion of the implications for social change based on these data and recommendations for future research.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The objective of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies some sole proprietors used to sustain their small business operations beyond five years and attain profitability levels necessary for freedom and autonomy. Data collection involved (a) interviewing participants, (b) observing business leaders, and (c) reviewing archival records. The specific population was business owners of sole proprietorships located in Cobb County of Georgia, in the United States among whom were 10 small business leaders operating 10 different sole proprietorships and have attained profitability levels necessary for freedom and autonomy.

Social change may arise when the entrepreneurs coach motivated community members with knowledge revealing strategies for economic freedom and personal autonomy. Individuals might more effectively pursue entrepreneurship with help from knowledgeable coaches encouraging individuals within their community. Coaching and mentoring create economic growth among community members (Belz, 2013). Business leaders can mobilize local youth to become sole proprietors as well. Furthermore, the entrepreneurs could organize mentoring programs to grow local sole proprietorships (Winborg, 2015).

I addressed issues about the participants, investigative approaches, tools, and instruments, as well as participant protections in Section 2. The issues did not constitute problems. The issues represented regular material, human, technological, and social elements. I paid due attention to the details preparatory to deploying my study. In Section

2, I also presented the purpose of the study, sampling, and data collection. Investigating the motivation behind an African-American's pursuit of personal freedom, and venturing into business for that purpose, is of interest to several discussants. This project involved steps to implement the study (see Appendix B).

Analysis of the emergent themes revealed that participant sentiments to significantly favor personal freedom concerning entrepreneurship. Participants also believed that the personal freedom is what makes them stand uniquely from their counterparts in the workforce. Participants also acknowledged the overwhelming influence that family and friends had in their decision to pursue entrepreneurship. I present my findings in this section. A summary bar plot represents each of the emergent themes, showing the distribution of participant responses and their sentiments for that question.

Presentation of the Findings

Exploratory Analysis

All transcripts for the participants were first processed using standard data cleansing and data validation methods. This pre-processing phase was to clear the transcript of possible special characters, researcher annotations, and research questions, leaving only the participant responses. The exploratory analysis then began with the use of modified Van Kaam method with NVivo11® text mining software to create a text corpus and reveal various word associations that contributed toward the identification of emergent themes within the responses. Van Kaam's (1959) method involved bringing order into the hitherto subjective and spontaneous human process to create scientific order (Sikahala, 2014). I relied on Moustakas's work on Van Kaam (1959) to (a) compile participant responses, (b) seek participant confirmation of meanings, (c) analyze data, (d) compile initial reports, (e) assemble the elements, (f) sort elements and identified themes, (g) dissemble all elements, (h) and finally to run the process through multiple times to confirm data stability. After such multiple runs, the exploratory analysis revealed the potential strength of the findings regarding dependability, confirmability, and creditability. The only missing validity and reliability element was transferability, as this missing element would remain the responsibility of reader and research users.

Results of the text mining process revealed numerous themes. Themes that emerged the most included, but were not limited to, customer service, branding & modeling, business strategy, and personal control. The further exploratory analysis utilized qualitative techniques such as coding of responses and categorization to quantify participant responses concerning these emergent themes.

Findings

The interconnectedness of theory and study topic would encapsulate cognitive processes and abilities (Hyett et al., 2014; Rindova et al., 2009). During the interviews, participant responses coincided with the tenets of the emancipation theory. To wit, sole proprietorship entrepreneurs envisioned their efforts as soaring to heights of business empires. Although none of the participants had yet taken their businesses to the stock exchange, Rindova's theory applied to the participants regarding business aspirations and motivational levels. Montuori (2013) referred to this phenomenon as transdisciplinary. Findings from this study revealed that participants were visionary, wanted their sole proprietorships to become big companies, and made concerted operational efforts to pursue the results. All participants had vision, aspiration, motivation, and faith in the workability of their respective visions.

Analysis of the data into themes revealed that participant sentiments significantly favored their personal freedom concerning entrepreneurship. Participants also believed that the personal freedom is what makes them stand unique from their counterparts in the workforce. Participants also acknowledged the overwhelming influence that family and friends had in their decision to pursue entrepreneurship. The findings, concerning each question, are below. Each of the emergent themes are in summary bar plots, showing the distribution of participant responses and sentiments for that question.

Question 1 Cluster of Emergent Themes

Participants answered a question to explain the strategies that helped sustain their business for longer than five years (see Figure 1). Their responses related heavily toward *customer service*, *branding & modeling, and aligning right talent*. The relevance of *customer service* and *branding & modeling* did not come as much of a surprise. Businesses need to sell their goods and services to clients and customers to remain viable. Building business models and creating a brand to attract customers is important.

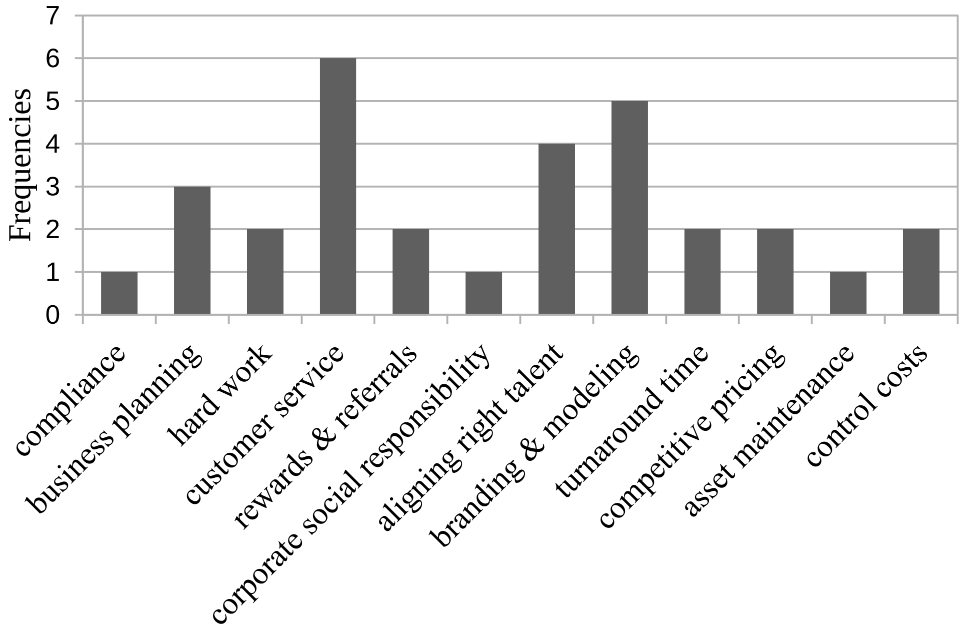

Figure 1. Question 1 emergent themes: sustaining a small business longer than five years.

Customer retention follows almost immediately. The two themes in Figure 1 are key players in building sustainability. Employees and associates (*aligning right talent*) contribute toward the ongoing maintenance of that stability. Participant 1 summarized the sentiment aptly by stating, “My customers know I have their best interest in mind”. Maintaining such a consistent atmosphere for customers must indeed be taxing, particularly as an entrepreneur. It becomes particularly important to “get good help” as Participant 5 shared.

Active and continual search for potential employees is vital. Participant 6 contributed by sharing the strategy of not just hiring employees or associates, but hiring talent that understands the vision and can actively contribute toward sustaining the business. Exploration of participant sentiments showed an understanding of their dependency on the customers and clients they attract as well as the associates they hire to work on their behalf.

Question 2 Cluster of Emergent Themes

Participants revealed the barriers they encountered during their first five years of operating their small businesses. Figure 2 displays the most common themes that emerged from participant responses. A consensus pertained to building one's business. Participants generally agreed that it was difficult for them to cultivate their business.

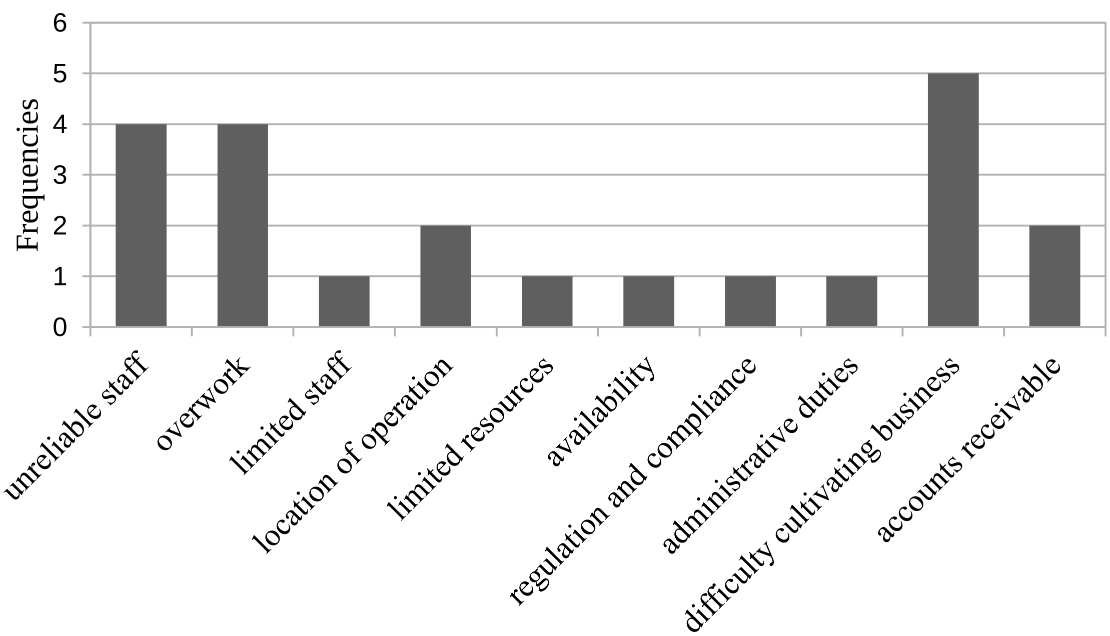

Figure 2. Question 2 emergent themes: Barriers facing small business owners during the first 5 years.

Participant 4 explained that an entrepreneur is required to wear many hats, and sometimes these hats can lead an individual to focus on administrative duties. In turn, the time that might have been spent promoting the business and acquiring new customers and clients is effectively lost. It then did not come as a surprise to the researcher that themes related to staffing and overwork surfaced in participant responses. Most participants tied the difficulty with overwork in some way, reinforcing Participant 4's explanation of the many hats entrepreneurs must wear.

Because of participant emphasis regarding overwork, I expected to see *limited staff* as an additional prominent theme. Instead, *unreliable staff* was more relevant to the participants. A sensible inference could be that small businesses are more so concerned with the quality of staff than the quantity, because small businesses often cannot afford to hire many people. An additional theme, accounts receivables, also emerged within participant responses. *Accounts receivable* is a theme that only recurred twice in the interview, but encapsulates participant sentiments about the likelihood of payment from customers and clients. Participants 3 and 5 both raised this concern as a significant issue. Participant 5 stated that they had to make added effort to vet potential employees regarding their ability to pay.

Question 3 Cluster of Emergent Themes

Participants had to identify steps that small businesses should take in their first five years of operation. The most-recurring theme from participant responses was to develop a business strategy. For Participants 2, 4, 5, and 10, a business strategy or business plan was the most important first step. Slight nuances differentiated each participant's reasoning for developing a business strategy. Nevertheless, a strategy remained paramount. Participant 10 further suggested that the strategy itself should represent a series of short and long-term goals. Though not explicitly stated by the participants, the sentiment connected strategy with *adaptability* and being *customer-*

oriented. Participant 1 summarized the customer-orientation succinctly by stating, "[business owners] should focus on aligning the business with the customers' expectations". For Participant 2, the customer-oriented focus was more so emotional.

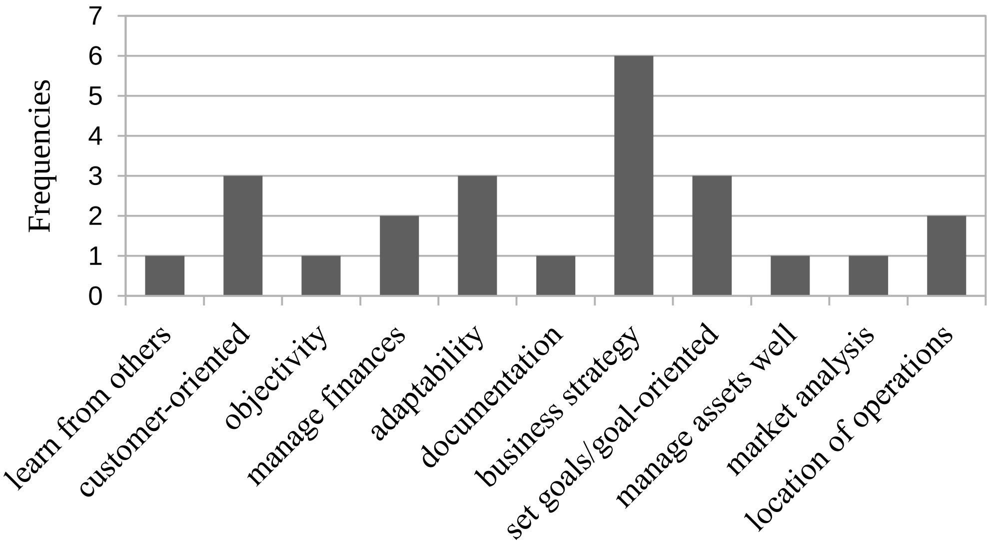

Figure 3. Steps a small business owner should take during the first 5 years.

Among other things, Participant 2 believed that one of the steps business owners should take in the first five years is to simply "treat [their] customers well". Consensus existed among the participants that business strategies and business planning is essential for providing the support needed to maintain adaptability and a customer-oriented operation.

Question 4 Cluster of Emergent Themes

Participants harped on their motivations for pursuing entrepreneurship. Responses varied considerably, but a common theme among the participants was control. Participants valued the personal control they experienced as entrepreneurs. As Participant 4 stated it, "I am motivated by the ability to be in control of my own destiny".

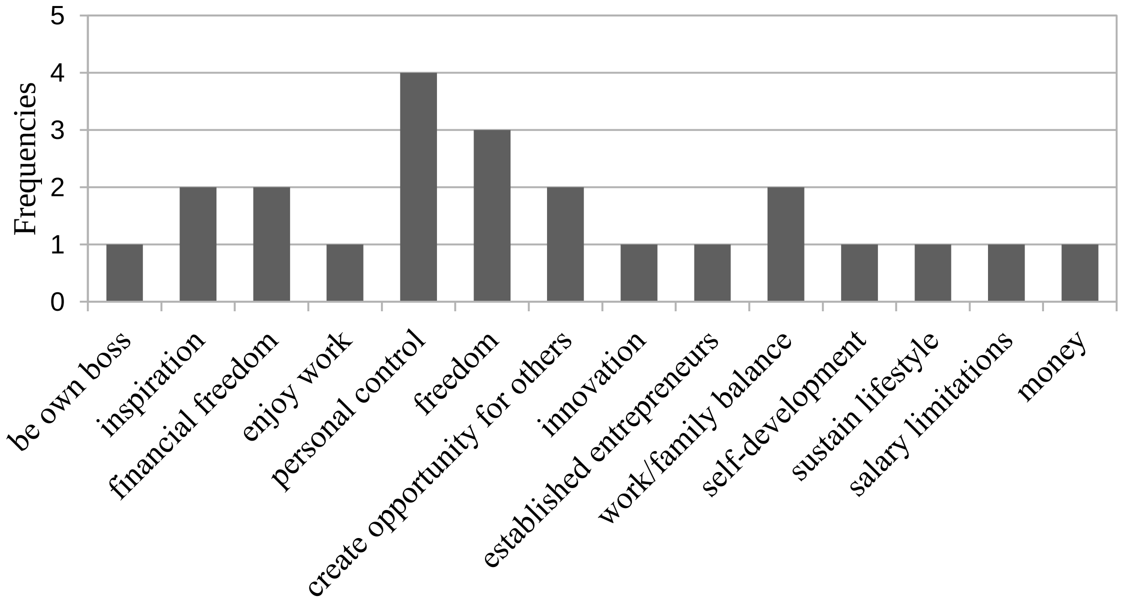

Figure 4. Motivation for entrepreneurship.

The theme of personal control is one that tied in heavily with the other emergent themes discovered in participant responses. In particular, participants tended to credit their personal control and freedom as necessary support for their other motivations. Participant 4, for instance, claimed to find the control rewarding in that it enabled them to create opportunities for themselves and pursue what they enjoy doing on a daily basis. Participants 5 and 8 both received inspiration from the people around them who were entrepreneurs and how those people used their personal control and freedom to create change for others. For Participants 2 and 7, that personal control contributed toward their ability to be available for their family. A work/life balance was important. Nuances existed behind each participant’s motivations. However, the motivations had overwhelming connection with the sense of freedom the participants felt they had as entrepreneurs.

Question 5 Cluster of Emergent Themes

Participants talked about the extent to which profitability played a role in their pursuit of business. The resulting themes from participant responses revealed that although money was a factor, profitability itself was not. Interestingly, participants valued other financial-related motivations over profitability. As Participant 3 stated, "I think everyone, at some point in their journey, wants to be profitable within their business ventures. […] As for me, profitability doesn't rank high within what inspires me."

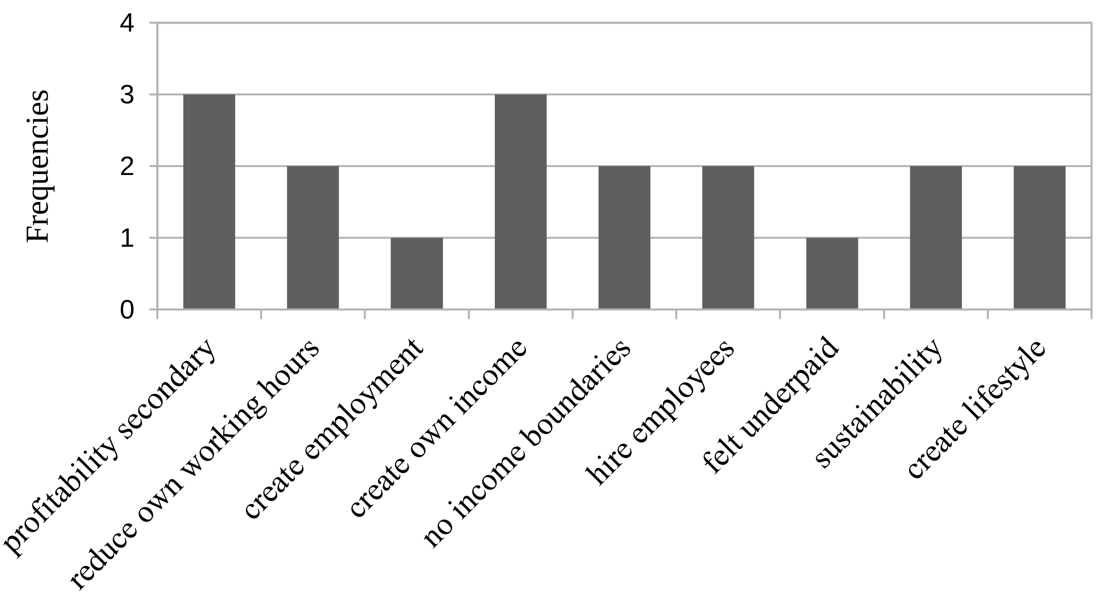

Figure 5. The role of profitability in inspiring a business project owner.

Similar sentiment was also echoed by Participants 8 and 10. Participant 8 in fact did not even note profitability as an inspiration. Participant 10 stated that its role was minor. For the remaining participants, profitability had more importance, yet was only a means to an end. Each had their own unique objectives and reasons for why profitability mattered to them. For instance, Participants 3 and 5 both stated that sustainability for themselves or their family took precedence and profitability contributes toward that goal.

Participants 1, 2, and 6 shared their goals with respect to creating their own income. For the three participants, profitability only inspired them to the extent that they wanted to be able to comfortably continue pursuing their businesses. Of course, nuances existed between each participant's responses. Responses were the most varied for this question, but a consensus existed in that the participants recognized profitability, though did not always consider it an inspiration.

Question 6 Cluster of Emergent Themes

Participants faced the question to explain the extent to which economic freedom played a role in their decision to pursue entrepreneurship. Participant showed personal control to be yet another recurring theme. In this instance, a significant number of participant responses tied economic freedom with personal control. For most, economic freedom is part of their personal control. Participant 8 shared that economic freedom was a major player, giving an "advantage to make [one's] own decisions". Participant 8 linked this personal control with control over business processes, but other participants shared different associations. Most indicated their desire to balance between their work and life, and economic freedom played a major role in that. For those participants, having such balance between work and life is essential. Participant 6 shared that "working for someone else was deciding to let someone dictate your life".

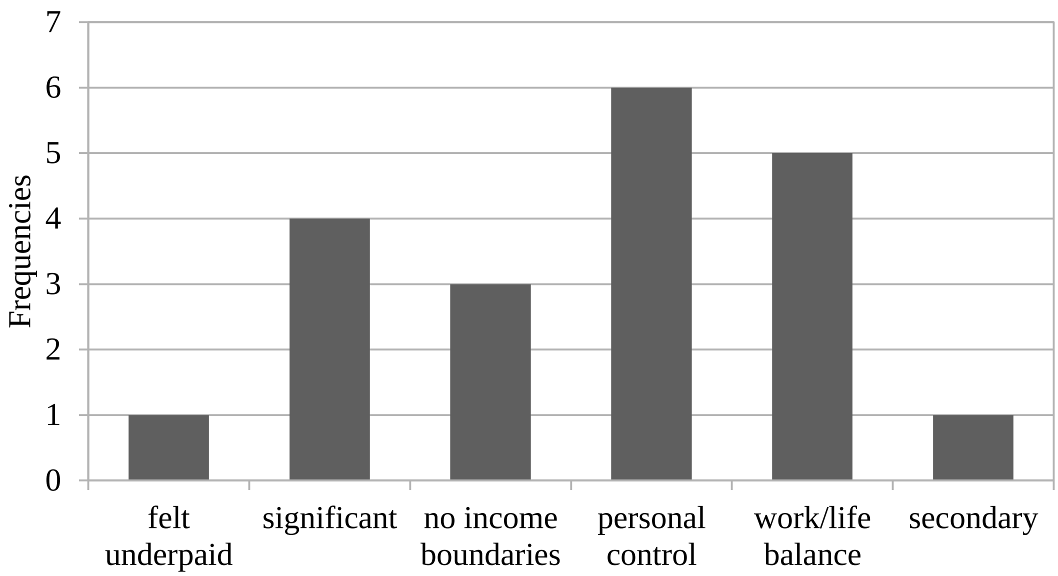

Figure 6. The role need for economic freedom plays in entrepreneurial decision.

The rest of the participants shared such sentiments, consequently making personal control a strong and recurring theme in participant responses. Forty percent of participants in fact noted economic freedom as being significant in their pursuit of entrepreneurship. However, 10% of the population stated that economic freedom was not important to them. For that 10%, economic freedom had already been attained through other means, and the pursuit of entrepreneurship was more so a life-style choice than an economic one.

Question 7 Cluster of Emergent Themes

Participants responded to identify elements that distinguish them as entrepreneurs from their non-entrepreneurial counterparts. Sixty percent of the participant responses revealed personal control as a key theme of distinction between the two populations. Participants believed that their non-entrepreneurial counterparts either were unable to or chose not to seek out personal control of their lives.

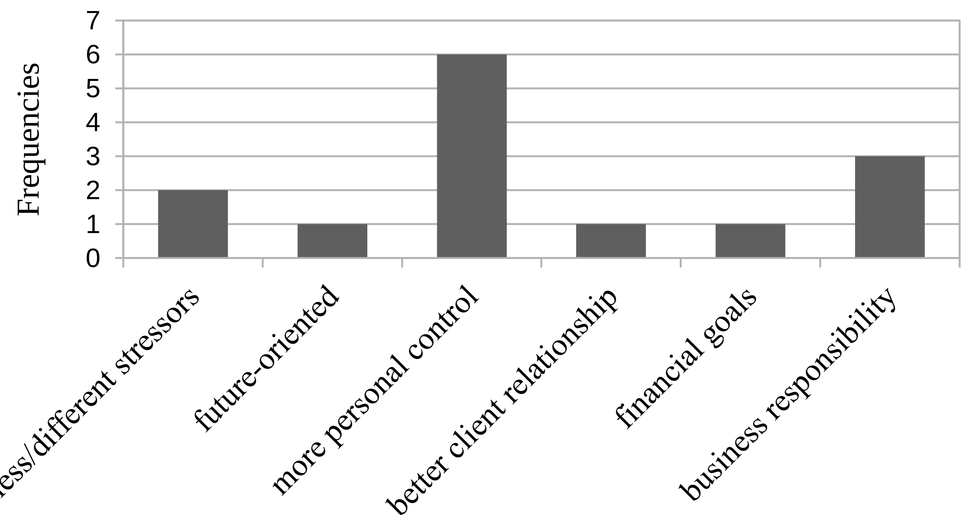

Figure 7. The difference between an entrepreneur and nonentrepreneurial peers.

Thirty percent of participant responses indicated the responsibilities associated with owning and maintaining a business might intimidate non-entrepreneurial persons. Participants 1, 7, and 10 expressed the sentiment that their non-entrepreneurial counterparts lacked the willingness to take on associated responsibilities or to sacrifice as is needed. Consequently, the participants believed that their counterparts were not as interested in personal control. Other emergent themes were not as prevalent as the theme of personal control, but they uniquely stood out. In particular, Participants 3 and 8 identified it and noted the differences in stress faced by the two populations.

As Participant 3 stated, “working in Corporate America [has] the added stressors of having to do the work for someone else and making them rich”. Generally, the participants identified that entrepreneurs often faced different, and sometimes more, responsibilities. They experienced different types of stress, compared with their non-entrepreneurial counterparts, but in turn receive rewards of greater personal control over their lives, finances, and work decisions.

Question 8 Cluster of Emergent Themes

Participants answered a question about the importance of autonomy as a motivator in their decision to become an entrepreneur. Ninety percent of the participants indicated that autonomy was a significant motivator. Only 10% of the participants indicated that autonomy was not significant. Participant 5 was the participant who indicated that it personal fulfillment took precedence over autonomy as a motivator.

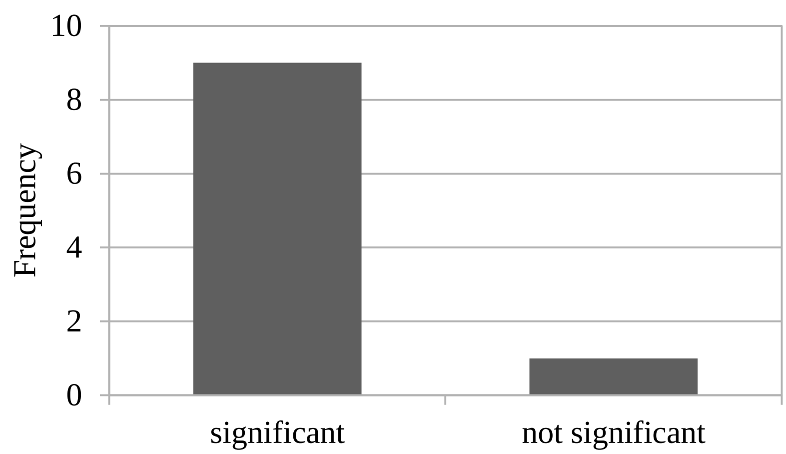

Figure 8. Significance of autonomy as a motivator in entrepreneurial decision.

The personal fulfillment was that of a life-long goal. However, Participant 5 also noted having “admired most of all the autonomy of my entrepreneur role models”. So, autonomy still indeed played a role for Participant 5, but was not a significant motivator. For the other participants, autonomy was important. As stated by Participant 6, autonomy was the number one factor in their decision to pursue entrepreneurship.

Participant 6 added, “My freedom has no value. To be free whenever you want is priceless.” The remaining participants echoed similar sentiments. Participant 10 emphatically added that autonomy was “All important!” Participant 4 expressed the significance in a different light. For Participant 4, the autonomy was significant, especially since autonomy constituted an avenue for them to connect with their clients on a more individual level. Those who pursue entrepreneurship undoubtedly favored autonomy, regardless of the underlying objectives or reasons behind said autonomy.

Question 9 Cluster of Emergent Themes

Participants revealed the strategies they implemented at various stages of their entrepreneurial development. The distribution of strategies was more or less even. Participant responses did not reveal any one particular strategy that the majority favored among anything else.

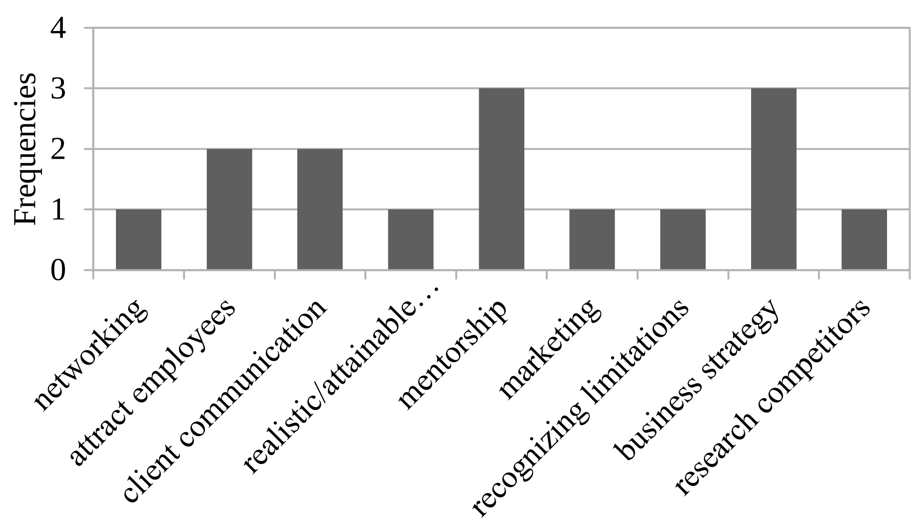

Figure 9. Strategies for various stages of entrepreneurial development.

Instead, emergent themes revealed differing responses between participants. The more common emergent themes were mentorship and implementing business strategies in stages. Participant 2 noted the effect the mentorship had on their entrepreneurial development. For Participant 2, it was a good strategy to find someone "who has done it [entrepreneurship] before you and has knowledge about it and can help". Other strategies mentioned by the participants included, research into competitors, goal setting, and focusing on client communication. The variety of strategies suggests differences in sentiment between the participants. This is a normal expectation, considering that their entrepreneurial goals and the industries they focused on differed.

Question 10 Cluster of Emergent Themes

Participant responses revealed the primary factor in seeking autonomy. The emergent themes in the chart above show the distribution of participant sentiments. *Autonomy* as a theme recurred five times, becoming the most-recurring theme in the set of emergent themes for this question. This indicated that 50% of the participant responses reveal the search for autonomy to have been for the sake of autonomy itself.

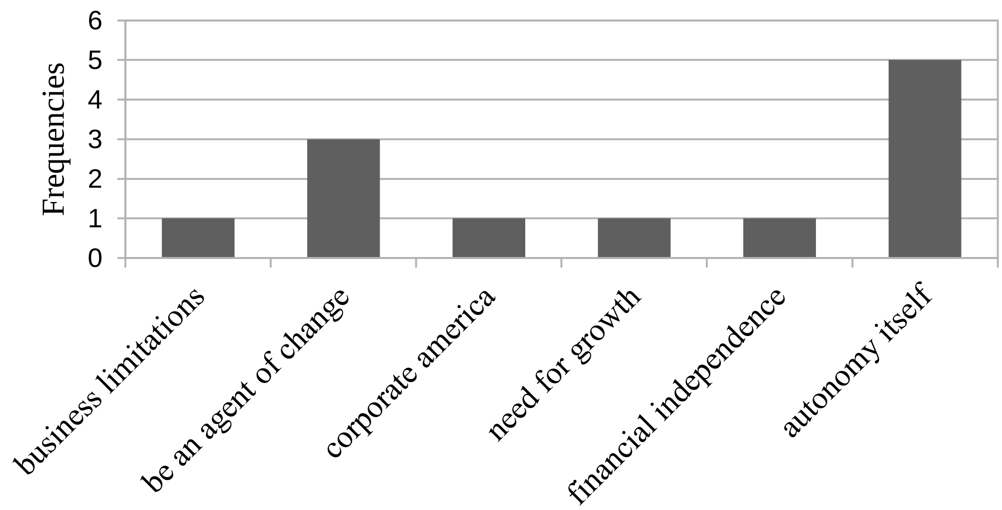

Figure 10. Deciding for autonomy, authoring, and declarations.

By inference, entrepreneurs often seek autonomy for the sake of autonomy. The remaining 50% of entrepreneurial sentiment then varies based off the goals, experiences and expectations of the entrepreneurs. In the case of the participants, *being an agent of change*s showed as the next most-recurring theme. Participant 3 shared that “I consider myself an agent of change”, and it is a sentiment shared by Participants 4 and 8. An interesting response came from Participant 2 who shared that the push toward entrepreneurship and autonomy was because of the dislike for Corporate America. Such sentiment indicates that, at least for a segment of the population, the nature of Corporate America either acts as a deterrent to it or as an incentive to escape it, which Participant 2 shared as their experience. Other themes included breaking business limitations and seeking out one’s personal growth.

Question 11 Cluster of Emergent Themes

Participants answered questions about the personal considerations that motivated them. Seventy percent of participant responses leaned heavily toward the theme of family. For Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, and 10, family presented as a key personal consideration.

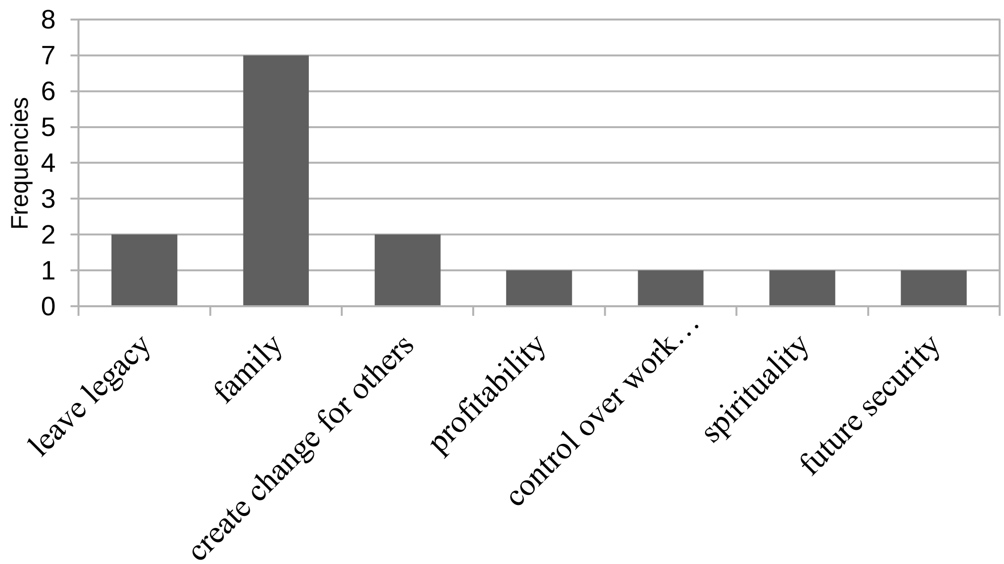

Figure 11. Considerations in the motivation to change one's life.

It is either that the family played a role in encouraging their entrepreneurial efforts, as was the case with Participant 1, or they were motivated to provide and take care of their family. As Participant 5 stated it, the personal consideration was "the ability to take care of my family responsibilities without struggle". Participant 2 added, "I want to be able to leave a legacy for my family, to my children." For some participants, the theme of family intersected with *leaving a legacy* and *creating change for others*, such as the case with Participant 2. Participant responses became variable, beyond the themes of *family, legacy and change*. Each had their own specific personal consideration that motivated them.

Question 12 Cluster of Emergent Themes

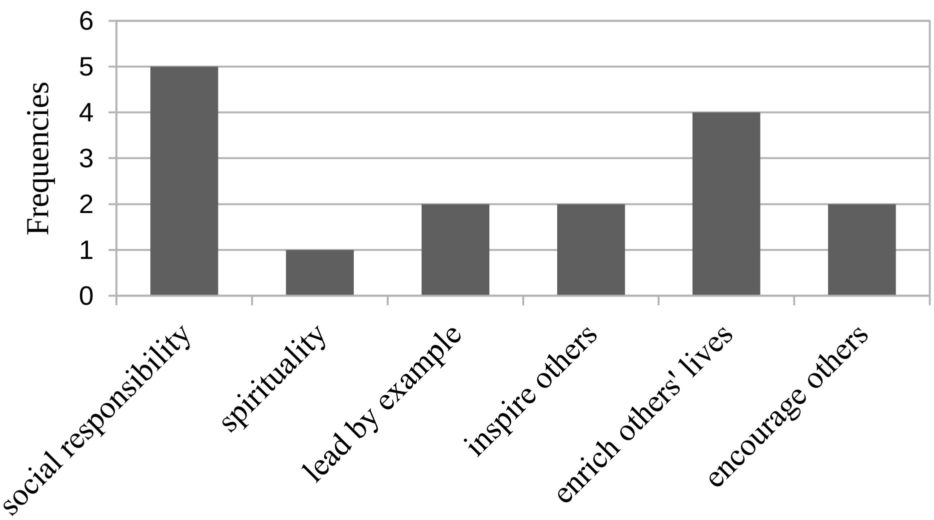

Figure 12. Motivation to make a social impact through entrepreneurship.

A question pertained to the important considerations motivating the participants regarding the need to make a social impact with their business. A sense of social responsibility and the desire to enrich the lives of others were prominent emergent themes in participant responses. As Participant 8 stated it, “Influencing the youth in the area of my business was the most important social impact I wanted to have”. Each participant’s target for social responsibility differed, however. Participant 3 shared that the social responsibility that motivated them dealt more so with teaching others. In their words, “I feel like it is the responsibility of each successful person to be able to reach back and pull the next generation of leaders forward”. Other participants had similar, though nuanced, social considerations. For instance, Participant 9 desired to inspire young entrepreneurs by setting an example through being a respectable and caring black business owner. The overall sentiment for social motivation can largely represent the hope or desire to give back and promote entrepreneurship as well, among other things.

Participants had to share any additional insights that might not have been part of the questions and answers. The variety of responses and themes did not show any specific patterns or trends beyond the shared sentiment that entrepreneurship is hard work. It requires time, strong will and the desire to build networks, and is ultimately rewarding.

Applications to Professional Practice

Results from this study have practical application to professional entrepreneurship. An interesting aspect was that participants tended to focus on family responsibility, rather than particular strategies. For example, participants consistently presented family as a key personal consideration. Either family played a role in encouraging their entrepreneurial efforts, or they were motivated to provide and take care of their family. Minority entrepreneurs support their broader community by providing jobs and negating these trends of hiring discrimination in the labor market and cycles of unemployment and poverty (Bhachu, 2017). The potential outcomes of this study might include participant responses on whether emancipation theory points to how minority entrepreneurs could find freedom outside of the system and invent their business systems and culture.

The entrepreneurs make investments to reaping sufficient profits to live on the inflow rather than on the investments (Hsu, 2013). The applicability of this study hinges on the profitability level of an entrepreneur. Such profits arise from entrepreneurial efforts that go beyond buying and selling. This investment mentality, along with the profitability focus is in alignment with the postulations of Jiang, Cai, Keasey, Wright, and Zhang (2014) mandating an investor to focus on information that supports business decisions and strengthens the business model. Because of the need to strategize properly, the business owner must keep an eye on the problem that might have caused other entrepreneurs to fail. When entrepreneurs fail, the issue of personal freedom becomes nonexistent (Jiang et al., 2014).

The benefit other entrepreneurs may derive from this study would include comprehending the challenges and opportunities that emanated from the participant responses. Until a business owner arrives at the break-even point, the business owner may continue to invest more and more resources. However, the business owner might consider the law of diminishing marginal utility and project the profit potential. The law of diminishing marginal utility relates to the continued addition of input until additional input produces no additional result. The lack of strategies could lead to losses (Nagendran & Venkateswar, 2014) and subsequent inability to attain personal freedom.

Implications for Social Change

Results from this study may foster social change by utilizing scholarly activities that reveal the state of affairs through the lens of the scholar. Business diversity is critical to the growth of the economy of a nation and the equitable distribution of wealth amongst its citizens (Belz, 2013; Welter et al., 2017). Underrepresentation of minorities as business creators and business leaders has for society (Kempster et al., 2014). Economic growth in a country decreases as businesses and the individuals who are driving business innovation become an increasingly homogeneous group (Belz, 2013); racial diversity among business leaders is critical to a nation's prosperity (Welter et al., 2017).

Negative wealth disparity reduces health and opportunities within a country and is socially corrosive (Lamine et al., 2014). Stochastic models of wealth distribution could help to understand the impact of wealth generation from independent entrepreneurs (Kempster et al., 2014). These models involve the random distribution of wealth that might be unpredictable based on any statistical simulation. Under diverse circumstances, the trends could be negative (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Westerman, 2014). Simulation of such models could sometimes reveal economic growth trends, as businesses become less diverse and that the resulting high concentration of wealth into the hands of few (i.e., wealth inequality) adversely affects the country's economy.

Entrepreneurs create the future (Belz, 2013). The ventures emanating from the vision of aspiring sole proprietors often metamorphose into large corporations (Hyder & Lussier, 2016). Diverse small businesses germinate and transform society as those businesses grow (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013). When the voice of an entire demographic goes virtually unheard in the business world, that voice lacks influence in creating and defining culture and shaping humanity's daily lives (Al-Dajani & Marlow, 2013; Bhachu, 2017). Ensuring that minorities have optimal representation in entrepreneurship is a critical step in building a strong economy. Minority entrepreneurs are a necessary part of the mix to create a thriving, heterogeneous business ecosystem that spurs growth in the economy and culturally enriches the nation (Kozan & Akdeniz, 2014).

Recommendations for Action

Entrepreneurs have diverse purposes. This study would be important to such entrepreneurs with small retail outlets to growing their businesses in line with the purpose of this study. Such entrepreneurs need to pay attention to the results herein because the participants went through the process of establishing and growing their businesses in the above-described way. The entrepreneurs must continuously work to counter the effects of lack of profitability strategies. Retail outlet owners must pay attention to the findings from this study. Entrepreneurs who appear to have attained personal freedom could learn from this study because some of the participants revealed situations similar to failing after all factors seemed to be in favor of the entrepreneur. This failure possibility became important to the entrepreneurs who had close encounters with failure (Arasti et al., 2012).

Paying attention to the findings from this study would go beyond reading the results and thinking about them. An entrepreneur seeking personal freedom as the goal would use the results of this study as benchmarks and seek out other entrepreneurs in the similar business arena to confirm the applicability of the factors in this study to their respective operations. In that process, an entrepreneur can learn about situations conflicting with the factors of this study. By paying attention to the results of this study, entrepreneurs and small retail outlet owners may continuously adjust their strategies as well as methods of operation. Market dynamics constitute critical elements in making and adjusting business strategies towards profitability (Baden-Fuller & Haefliger, 2013).

The dissemination of the results from this study might occur through seminars, newspaper article publications, trade journal publications, literature reviews, entrepreneurship conferences, training events, and ProQuest. To achieve this dissemination, business owners would indicate interest to learn more than they currently know and do. Local communities often have stakeholders who rely on literary outlets serving as enabling environments for knowledge dissemination (Kuteeva & Mauranen, 2014; Resnick, 2014). Such local outlets would serve a purpose to reach the stakeholders and engender business knowledge growth in the surrounding communities.

Scholarly journals are the first platform types upon which to disseminate studies such as this research. This dissertation will be in the ProQuest repository. Furthermore, peer-reviewed scholarly journals exist that pertain to entrepreneurship. Excerpts from this study will be featured in such journals. Training events serve to convey new information and deliver knowledge to attendees. This avenue would be appropriate to disseminate the results of this study. Conferences are auspicious in bringing together individuals sharing a common interest.

Entrepreneurship conferences would in like manner serve as a platform for bringing entrepreneurs together to share information. Such a gathering could serve to disseminate the results of this study. The need for new literature necessitates the release of this study to as wide an audience as possible. I will submit materials from this study in increments to achieve complete delivery over a period, since one submission effort might be insufficient to achieve literature review delivery. Trade journals exist for different business lines. Considering that business owners desire growth, regardless of the product types they respectively choose to produce, short articles would appear in the trade publications either as new knowledge or advertisements for dissemination events.

Newspaper article publications are not common platforms for disseminating specific knowledge such as the results of this study; however, some newspapers have trade or business columns or pages. Seizing opportunities will be beneficial, and results of this research will appear in such business or trade pages of regular newspapers. Above all, seminars are important avenues to exhibit a combination of knowledge delivery activities. Results of this study will be among materials to cover at different seminars.

Recommendations for Further Research

Information already in circulation forms a basis for further investigation. Business autonomy, personal freedom, entrepreneurial success, and other applicable elements circumscribe the topic of this study. The actual cause of disparities in business profitability among different ethnic groupings is unclear (Freeland & Keister, 2016). Through engaging in future studies, scholars may identify the fundamental and causal factors undergirding success or failure among business owners from diverse ethnic groupings. Researchers should be studying real-world practice by those who actively engage in the practice. This process will be useful for researchers to start understanding these internal factors for different types of entrepreneurs.

Researchers need to conduct studies to solidify and refine the gains prior researchers made. Studies with which subsequent researchers track such progress would be useful, especially to examine what has worked to close the gaps in succeeding years. Such progress tracking efforts will be appropriate for providing a rubric for potential changes. As an example, consider the well-documented rates at which minorities are dropping out of new business ventures when compared to Whites. African-Americans were twice as likely to persist and remain engaged in a nascent venture if they did not achieve success after two years of operation, whereas Hispanics were three times more likely to disengage (Freeland & Keister, 2016). These findings indicate a need for further research. Freeland and Keister specifically addressed exploring more outcomes than the traditional pass/fail model of business creation to obtain a clearer picture of the struggle of Minority business owners over time.

Similarities and differences between racial/ethnic entrepreneurs in the United States and other nations call for a cross-national assessment of Minority business creation (Freeland & Keister, 2016). The co-ethnic supply of facilities and resources contributing to success are unexplored in the United States. Examining the impact of Minority hiring managers, Minority operated financial firms, and preparatory programs across nations would be beneficial (Wang & Altinay, 2012).

Because this study was a small, qualitative investigation, future researchers may develop further findings by conducting large empirical studies that utilize anonymous surveys. Participant behavior will unpredictable with anonymous questionnaires or surveys than with interviews. Finally, future researchers may compare the entrepreneurial strategies used in larger more diverse organizations to those employed in smaller less diverse categories. Such investigation may present more transparency on *how* and *why* strategies differ, and what these organizations in different categories may be able to glean from one another.

One way to juxtapose the emancipation perspective against the classical approach to entrepreneurship studies is to consider that the discussion of emancipation is usually regarding verbs (i.e., the process of entrepreneuring); the classical approach is understandable regarding nouns (e.g., actors, markets, opportunities, profits) (Rindova et al., 2009). Not just a difference in semantics, the choice of capturing the work regarding verbs reveals that the essence is in the process of building and changing, not the retail product, service, or achievable profit that results in the process. Although the noun-focused approach historically had its advantages, the classical approach defined a productive research agenda for the field (Steyaert, 2007). Literature for this research study largely includes a proliferation of generalized paradigms without the necessary specifics in studying internal processes—thoughts, beliefs, motivations—of entrepreneurs and how these subjective processes translate into observable action. Researchers should be able to rely on the analog Sony CFDS70BLK CD/cassette as a backup tool to the digital system serving in the resarch activity. Technical hitches often impede data collection; and backup tools such as analog equipment would be of great assistance.

Reflections

The process of working on the doctoral study was demanding and gratifying. I achieved priceless knowledge in performing qualitative research that possibly will be an advantage in both my future professional and scholarly accomplishments. It was motivating to be a scholar and researcher in an entrepreneurial setting, discovering facets of a field in which I am especially interested. As a retired military professional, I was instrumental in developing young soldiers with knowledge and leadership abilities to further not only their military careers but to assist them in the civilian sector as well. This study provided me with the opportunity to explore the entrepreneurial strategies used by entrepreneurs in various business genres. Entrepreneurs in these organizations, specifically exploring *how* and *why* they engaged in specified strategies, and how they understood those strategies eventually influenced their business's bottom line.

I did not find any of the emerging themes particularly surprising. As for the themes that emerged from the data, the overall results had strong associations with the scholarly research findings in Section 1. In similarity, the study's conceptual framework represented a foundation for developments in the study of entrepreneurship describing entrepreneurship as a means of increasing an aspiring entrepreneur's personal freedom and designing the attendant lifestyle. SMEs constitute avenues for achieving such freedom. This framework is the emancipation theory (Rindova et al., 2009). Over a period of several decades, the strategies that entrepreneurs used were still much generalized. However, in today's entrepreneurial environment, the general strategies are within the realm of entrepreneurship, freedom, change of perspectives, and other positives have emerged.

Summary and Study Conclusions

Business autonomy is the dream of corporations, many of which start small. To become autonomous, a business must belong to an owner who desires that autonomy. A strong desire to be independent of overpowering entities would serve an entrepreneur well, if the entrepreneur desires business autonomy for the business. Although this might appear given, scholars have reported that some company leaders are satisfied making a minimal profit to cover the monthly salaries such leaders receive. Starting a business as a small retail operator, and growing the business to the point of business autonomy involves strenuous tasks. A business owner who embarks on the above journey would face multiple challenges ranging from formation, inventory, stock replenishment, profit projections, and up to revenue management.

A study of business autonomy must be in alignment with knowledge and aggressiveness (Rindova, 2009). In other words, a knowledgeable business owner must be aggressive in pursuing the business agenda. Otherwise, attaining business autonomy would be an exercise in futility. Contextualizing business autonomy would require a direct application of the findings from this study to emerging business challenges among small retail business owners and small-scale entrepreneurs. Economic freedom should have meaning to a business owner for the zeal of business autonomy to beget the appropriate effort. Vision, knowledge, zeal, and strategy constitute the pathway to business autonomy that culminates in personal freedom.

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Appendix A: NIH Certificate

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Beverley Craft** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants".

Date of completion: 04/01/2016.

Certification Number: 2046399.

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

Interview process will follow the steps below:

On the day of the interview, confirm time and location with participation.

To Do

Meet on location
Exchange pleasantries

Introductions

Introduce the interview and set the stage.
Obtain permission to turn on the voice recorder.
Ask interviewee of any questions needing answers prior to commencing.

Question Phase

Begin asking questions.
Ask follow-up questions as the needs arise.
Toggle back and forth as the interviewee's comments lead.

• Watch for non-verbal queues • Paraphrase as needed • Ask follow-up probing questions to get more in-depth	1. Interview question 2. Interview question 3. Interview question 4. Interview question 5. Interview question 6. Interview question 7. Interview question 8. Interview question 9. Interview question 10. Interview question 12. Interview question 13. Last interview question should be a wrap up question such as: What additional experiences have you had…?

Wrap Up

Thank participant for providing answers to the interviews questions.

Follow-Up

Schedule follow-up member checking interview

Appendix C: Demographic Qualifier

Participation Eligibility Criteria

Instructions: If you agree to participate in this research study, please answer the following eligibility criteria questions by checking the mark next to the response that best describes you, or is most applicable to your current status.

1. Informed consent to participate: I have read and understood the informed consent document and hence agree to participate in this research study voluntarily.

    - Yes
    - No (If no, skip all other questions.)
2. Are you 18 years of age or older?
    - Yes
    - No (If no, skip all other questions.)
3. Are you a faculty member at college or university in United State?
    - Yes
    - No (If no, skip all other questions.)
4. Is your business a minority-owned business?
    - Yes
    - No (If no, skip all other questions.)

Appendix D: Observation Protocol

Observation will follow steps such as the following:

1. Arrive at participant's business location.
2. Exchange pleasantries.
3. Commence with a briefing sessions with participant.
4. Go to the spot the participant designates for me.
5. Make notes of identifiable details worthy of note.
6. Ask questions about any item I notice in the observation needing clarification.
7. Request the participant to draw my attention to anything worth observing
8. Conclude the observation session with a debriefing session with participant.

Appendix E: Sample of Invitation Email

Dear Sir/Madam,

Invitation for participation in a Case Study

You are invited to take part in a doctoral research study to explore the topic, “Economic Freedom through Entrepreneurship”.

I request you to kindly participate in this study because you are a Minority sole proprietorship entrepreneur operating in Cobb County of Georgia.

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study is to explore strategies some sole proprietors use to sustain their small business operations beyond 5 years and attain profitability levels necessary for freedom and autonomy.

Please indicate your interest to participate in the study if you are interested, and I will respond by sending you a consent form containing the participation eligibility. Please respond with the phrase “I consent”. Please note that if you do not respond within seven (7) calendar days, you will deemed uninterested.

Thank you,

Beverley Craft (DBA Student, Walden University)