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Copreneurs' Coping Strategies for Work-Family Conflict

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Walden University

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Eunice Peregrino-Dartey

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Walden University
2018

Abstract

Copreneurs' Coping Strategies for Work-Family Conflict

by

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MBA, Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration, 2006

BA, University of Ghana, 1997

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Business Administration

Walden University

August 2018

Abstract

Family businesses including copreneurships have a high failure rate. Copreneurs experience work–family conflict (WFC), which can have a negative effect on business sustainability. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that copreneurs used in managing WFC to achieve business sustainability for longer than 10 years. Three copreneurs from 3 copreneurial businesses located in the Greater Accra region of Ghana, who have employed effective strategies to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability longer than 10 years, participated in the study. The WFC model for business/marriage partners (copreneurs) and the reciprocal coping model served as the conceptual framework that grounded the study. Data were collected from semistructured interviews, company documents, and a reflective journal. The data were analyzed using the framework of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and making conclusions. Emerging themes included strategy themes of personal coping, family-friendly organizational supports, and integrated coping. The implications for positive social change include the potential to help copreneurs use strategies identified to manage WFC to improve business sustainability, which may contribute to wealth creation and poverty reduction in the local economy.

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Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to Almighty God who made this feat possible. To my dear parents whose dream it was for me to obtain a doctorate, I made it, even though you are not here to experience this awesome accomplishment with me. I also dedicate this study to Jesse my husband, whose support and unconditional love, and encouragement helped me to make this achievement possible, I say, God bless you. To my sons Inshira and Adom, your sacrifices have borne fruits. I thank you all for the love and inspiration.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Scholars recognize the importance of work-family conflict (WFC) resolution to the success of family-owned businesses. WFC has become an important topic in business research due to societal changes and contemporary demographic trends such as dual-income earning families, and the recognition of conflicts between workers' work and family responsibilities (Li, Bagger, & Cropanzano, 2016). WFC is an interrole conflict whereby the domains of work and family interact and are incompatible in some respect (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Ratnaprabha, Sindhu, Kumar, & Kengnal, 2017). WFC is prevalent in copreneurial businesses and tends to affect business success (Helmle, Botero, & Seibold, 2014). Copreneurships are a subset of family firms in which couples own and manage the business together (Machek, Kolouchová, & Hnilica, 2016). Copreneurs' ability to manage WFC effectively may result in business sustainability (Kurniawan & Sanjaya, 2016; Werbel & Danes, 2010). Family businesses (including copreneurships) are important drivers of gross domestic product (GDP) and contribute to nations' socio-economic development (Al-Dajani, Bika, Collins, & Swail, 2014; Vieira, 2018) and sustainability (Oudah, Jabeen, & Dixon, 2018). As such, the creation of family businesses, their growth, and sustainability are critical to the success of the global economy (Sarbah & Xiao, 2015). The survival rate of family firms is, however, low (Hiebl, 2015; Oudah et al., 2018). The purpose of this study was to explore how copreneurs in Ghana cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years.

Background of the Problem

Copreneurs mix their work and family lives. This interrelation of the dual roles of work and family in copreneurships tends to create WFC that can affect the business and family success more than in other organizations (White, 2013). WFC can result in negative individual and organizational outcomes (Putnik, Houkes, Jansen, Nijhuis, & Kant, 2018). Such adverse outcomes include poor performance, burnout, absenteeism, lack of organizational commitment, and turnover (Clark, Michel, Early, & Baltes, 2014; Schooreel & Verbruggen, 2016). Health risks resulting from WFC such as stress may affect indirect business costs through absenteeism and poor work performance (Akinbode, Folusho, & Israel, 2018; Barton, Futris, & Nielsen, 2015). Williams, Berdahl, and Vandello (2016) further noted that the cost of WFC to the organization include low employee job satisfaction and commitment, absenteeism, turnover intentions, and poor performance. Werbel and Danes (2010) surmised that WFC might hurt new business ventures due to increased stress, which can hamper business sustainability. Kurniawan and Sanjaya (2016) further concluded that copreneurs inability to manage WFC might have an adverse effect on business sustainability. Most WFC researchers focused on white middle-class employees in Europe and America (Sav, Harris, & Sebar, 2014) while ignoring countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Annor, 2016). By studying how copreneurs in Ghana cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability, I sought to address this scholarly oversight by identifying strategies that other copreneurs can learn from to improve business outcomes.

Problem Statement

Family businesses have a high failure rate (Oudah et al., 2018). Eighty percent of businesses worldwide are family businesses, with one-third of these being copreneurships (Amubode, Rauf-Lawal, & Owodiong-Idemeko, 2016); however, only 10-15% transition to the third generation (Oudah et al., 2018). Copreneurs' ability to manage WFC may enhance business sustainability (Kurniawan & Sanjaya, 2016). The general business problem is that WFC can have a negative effect on copreneurial sustainability. The specific business problem is that some copreneurs lack strategies to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that copreneurs use to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. The target population for the study comprised copreneurs from three copreneurial businesses located in the Greater Accra region of Ghana who employed effective strategies to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. The findings from this study may contribute to social change by presenting copreneurs with usable strategies to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability. The findings may also provide knowledge to policymakers and business consultants working to develop and implement policies and interventions respectively to support copreneurs to improve business outcomes. Improved business outcomes may contribute to wealth creation for copreneurs and thus reduced poverty and improved standards of living for Ghanaians.

Nature of the Study

In this study, I employed the qualitative research method and a multiple case study design. Qualitative research is a human-centered inquiry that researchers use to understand the unique experiences of individuals by exploring the meaning of a given phenomenon (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Petty, Thomson, & Stew, 2012). A quantitative method of statistics and hypothesis testing is not appropriate for assessing human experience (Rissman & Gillon, 2017). With the mixed method, the researcher uses the qualitative and quantitative methods to collect data (Green et al., 2014). Exploring the strategies that copreneurs use to cope with WFC for business sustainability requires a deeper understanding of the phenomenon that is typical of the qualitative method.

I employed a qualitative multiple case study design to elicit rich data for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. Research designs for the qualitative method include case study, phenomenology, ethnography, and narrative (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018). A case study is appropriate for investigating real-life situations and contemporary phenomena (Cronin, 2014), and when the difference between the phenomenon and context lacks clarity (Yin, 2014). Researchers employ phenomenology to comprehensively explore the lived experiences of participants (Schwarz & Lindqvist, 2018). Ethnography is appropriate when studying ethnic groups over time (Hammersley, 2018). The narrative design is applicable when narrating the story of an individual or individuals chronologically (Yin, 2016). Yin (2016) recommended the descriptive case study for exploring experiences in a particular group or industry. According to Yin

(2014), using descriptive case studies enable researchers to describe events and their background. I employed the descriptive case study to understand how copreneurs cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years.

Research Question

The central research question guiding this study was: What strategies do copreneurs use to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years?

Interview Questions

1. What strategies do you use to share responsibilities for the copreneurship to achieve business sustainability?
2. What strategies do you employ to cope when you and your partner disagree over the allocation of time that each of you gives to work and family?
3. What strategies do you employ individually to cope with work interfering with family?
4. What strategies do you employ as a couple to cope with work interfering with family?
5. What strategies do you employ individually to cope with family interfering with work?
6. What strategies do you employ as a couple to cope with family interfering with work?
7. What strategies do you use to support each other to cope with work-family conflict to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years?

8. What support is available in your organization to help you to cope with work-family conflict?
9. Would you like to share any other information to help copreneurs cope with work-family conflict to help them sustain their businesses?

Conceptual Framework

I employed the WFC model for business/marriage partners and the reciprocal coping model as the framework for this study. Foley and Powell (1997) developed the WFC model for business/marriage partners (copreneurs) to address how couples who live and work together experience WFC. Foley and Powell defined WFC for copreneurs as a conflict that results when the individuals of the copreneurship disagree over the allocation of time that each gives to work and family. The fundamental concept of this model is that WFC experienced by copreneurs results from the personal characteristics of each partner, as well as the couple as a unit (Foley & Powell, 1997). It further presupposes that WFC experienced by copreneurs affects the quality of their marriage relationship and their business success (Foley & Powell, 1997). This model was suitable for this study because it provided a basis for exploring the experiences of copreneurs, not only from their individual perspectives but also as a dyad. Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2012) developed the reciprocal coping model to indicate how individuals cope with WFC. The main concept of this model is that individuals cope with WFC by aligning their personal coping resources (internal resources) with those offered at the organizational level (external resources). Unlike other models that only focus on internal coping strategies, this model afforded me the opportunity to explore both internal and external coping

strategies that copreneurs employ in managing WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years.

Operational Definitions

The purpose of this section is to explain the terms used in this study to prevent misunderstanding by readers. The terms defined are from scholarly sources.

Copreneurial businesses: A copreneurial business is a form of family business in which couples own, manage, operate, and commit themselves to the business together (Othman, Mohammed, & Suradi, 2016).

Copreneurs: Copreneurs are couples who jointly own, are responsible for, and commit themselves to the business (Hirigoyen & Villeger, 2017; Machek et al., 2016).

Copreneurship: A copreneurship is business owned and managed by a couple (Othman et al., 2016).

Work-family conflict: Work-family conflict is the simultaneous stress from both work and family, which may not be compatible, such that participating in one domain becomes more difficult due to participation in the other domain (Akinbode et al., 2018; Haun & Dormann, 2016; Ratnaprabha et al., 2017).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Assumptions

Assumptions are the unsubstantiated facts that a researcher assumes to be the truth (Foss & Hallberg, 2014). In this study, I assumed that participants would be truthful about their copreneurial experiences and provide coping strategies they used to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. Additionally, I assumed that

copreneurs would agree to participate in the study and respond quickly, providing detailed responses to the questions to prompt follow-up questions.

Limitations

Limitations are the elements of the study that researchers cannot control (Soilkki, Cassim, & Anis, 2014). The participants in the study experience the phenomenon and may have personal biases. The target population for the study was copreneurs in Accra, Ghana who may not provide a representative sample to reflect the phenomenon confronting copreneurs in the region. The sample size may have limited the diversity of the experiences and perceptions of copreneurs regarding the phenomenon. I also have personal biases because I experience the phenomenon under study.

Delimitations

Delimitations are the restrictions that a researcher imposes on a study (Sampson et al., 2014). In this study, I explored how copreneurs in Accra cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. The delimitations of the study included the geographical location and the number of years the copreneurship has been in existence.

Significance of the Study

Contribution to Business Practice

The findings from this study may be valuable to businesses in Ghana because they show how copreneurs cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. WFC can have adverse effects on copreneurial success (Helmle et al., 2014; White, 2013). Therefore, this study may contribute to effective business practice by showing how copreneurs cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years.

Consultants may also use the study to obtain knowledge on effective coping strategies for WFC to create a new stream of business by providing advisory and support services to copreneurs to improve business outcomes.

Implications for Social Change

Findings from this study have implications for social change. Family firms such as copreneurships contribute substantially to the economic growth and poverty reduction in many developing countries such as Ghana (Al-Dajani et al., 2014; Oudah et al., 2018). This trait makes business survival and sustainability key to national development. Family businesses and copreneurial firms constitute a sizeable proportion of small businesses. In Ghana, small businesses constitute approximately 92% of registered enterprises and contribute about 70% of the GDP (Acquah & Agyapong, 2015; Sarbah & Xiao, 2015). This addition to the rather limited literature and knowledge on how copreneurs manage WFC to attain business sustainability may help drive attention to copreneurial businesses. The findings may enable policymakers to provide business environments that support copreneurs in Ghana in dealing with WFC to achieve business sustainability. Copreneurs could use strategies identified in this study to address WFC to improve business sustainability, which may contribute to wealth creation and poverty reduction.

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

In this study, I explored strategies that copreneurs use to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. The purpose of this literature review was to provide a critical analysis and synthesis of existing literature on the conceptual models for the study and emerging themes related to the study. I used the WFC model for

business/marriage partners (Foley & Powell, 1997) and the reciprocal coping model (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012) as the study's conceptual models. I organized the literature by topic and provided a comprehensive update on the topic under study.

Search Strategy

I obtained most of the literature via Walden University Library by searching through databases such as Emerald Management Journals, Science Direct, SAGE Premiere, ABI/INFORM Complete, Business Source Complete, and PsycARTICLES, with additional searches in ResearchGate and Google Scholar. To facilitate the retrieval of peer-reviewed articles and other relevant sources for the topic, I linked Google Scholar to the Walden Library and ResearchGate to make identified articles more accessible. Key terms used in searching for the literature included *coping strategies for work-family conflict*, *copreneur*, *copreneurship*, *family business*, *family interfering with work*, *work interfering with family*, *marriage business partners*, *work-family conflict*, and *business sustainability*. I applied the search strategy to identify literature pertinent to the research question, which was as follows: What strategies do copreneurs use to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years? I searched for literature published from 2014 to 2018. I used 244 sources comprising 230 peer-reviewed articles, 11 seminal books, a dissertation, a report, and one law. Of the 244 sources used, 217 (89%) of them were published within 5 years of the anticipated completion date of the study (see Table 1).

Table 1

Frequencies of Sources by Publication Date

Sources	Before 2014	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total
Peer-reviewed articles	19	53	41	46	32	39	230
Seminal books	5	1	1	2	1	1	11
Dissertation	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Others	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total	27	54	42	48	33	40	244

Overview

The intermingling of the romantic and business lives of copreneurs may result in business failure. According to Kurniawan and Sanjaya (2016), copreneurs' inability to cope with WFC could hamper the sustainability of their businesses. Scholars have focused most of the previous WFC studies on dual-career couples and the self-employed and employees with scant research on copreneurs (White, 2013; Wu, Chang, & Zhuang, 2010). Additionally, most WFC researchers have targeted white middle-class employees (Sav et al., 2014) with no studies targeting copreneurs from Africa (Annor, 2016; Annor & Amponsah-Tawiah, 2017). Researchers have targeted copreneurs only as individuals and not as a dyad. For example, copreneurial couples experienced WFC simultaneously as individuals and at as a couple, which might create stress both at home and at work (Foley & Powell, 1997; Helmle et al., 2014). White (2013) recommended the study of both work interfering with family (WIF) and family interfering with work (FIW) when

exploring WFC for copreneurial relationships for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. It is important to distinguish and assess bidirectional WFC (WIF and FIW) separately because each one may have a distinct set of consequences (Aazami, Shamsuddin, & Akmal, 2015; Ahmed, Eatough, & Ford, 2018; Bodolica, Spraggon, & Zaidi, 2014). Thus, I conducted this study with a bidirectional lens.

I adopted the bidirectional concept by addressing both WIF and FIW and explored copreneurs' coping strategies for WFC both at the individual level and at that of the dyad using the qualitative research method. Considering that most of the existing research used samples from other national settings, conducting this current research in Accra, Ghana may add value to scholarship and business practice on the strategies that copreneurs use to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years.

Conceptual Model for the Study

WFC model for business/marriage partners. WFC is a common trait of family business and copreneurship. Foley and Powell (1997) developed the WFC model for business/marriage partners to explain how WFC affected the marital relationship of copreneurs and the business success. WFC is an interrole conflict in which the interaction of the domains of work and family become discordant due to the intermingling of roles in both domains (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Haun & Dormann, 2016; Ratnaprabha et al., 2017). Foley and Powell sought to address the limited theories on copreneurs, which created a gap in the WFC literature. Copreneurs experience WFC and employ coping strategies to manage WFC as individuals and as a couple living and working together (Dai, 2016; Foley & Powell, 1997; Mathur & Swami, 2015). Foley and Powell identified

individual-level constructs and couple-level constructs that contributed to WFC. The individual level constructs relate to the individual partner input and a corresponding output. Foley and Powell used the individual-level constructs to explore (a) relationships among and between the individual's inputs, (b) his or her perception of existing WFC, (c) the individual's outcome variables, and (d) the outcome variables of the couples. They found that WFC resulted in individual-level and couple-level outputs. These types of conflicts are bidirectional because they affect both work and family domains (Aazami et al., 2015; Allen, Cho, & Meier, 2014a; Bodolica et al., 2014). Thus, I conducted the study with a bidirectional focus.

WFC experienced by copreneurs involves the interaction of the professional and emotional lives of each partner, and also those of the couple. Researchers have found that WFC has a negative effect on the success and the sustainability of the copreneurial business (Foley & Powell, 1997; Helmle et al., 2014; Kurniawan & Sanjaya, 2016). The dynamics of the copreneurial business (mixing work with family) could have dire consequences on the success of the business (Foley & Powell, 1997). Dual-career couples who do not work together experience a different kind of WFC, which may pertain to their individual roles at work or home (family) because the domains of work and home are physically separate. With copreneurs, however, the domains are not separate. The domains of work and family interact. The individual at the center of the conflict in both domains is the same (Foley & Powell, 1997). The underlying principle is that the individuals within the copreneurship experience WFC due to the disagreement over the

allocation of the time that each partner assigns to his or her roles at work and the family (home).

Individual partner inputs are the personal attributes that each person brings to the partnership. These include attitudes on traditional sex roles, skills, role in starting the business, and preference for the allocation of work-family roles (Foley & Powell, 1997). According to Foley and Powell (1997), the compatibility or otherwise of this input influenced how copreneurs allocated time to work and family roles. Additionally, Foley and Powell noted that high WFC occurred when there was disagreement over the allocation of time to each of the domains. Low WFC resulted if the individual perceived that his or her role aligned with that of the other partner. Thus, couple inputs were the difference in perception between the individual inputs (Foley & Powell, 1997), as in when the couple disagreed on the competencies that one partner brought to the business. If a partner feels capable of performing a particular role at work, but the other perceives otherwise, then the differences in perception may lead to WFC. Each partner entered the copreneurship with their particular characteristics such as their attitudes to traditional sex roles, competencies, role in starting the business, and their preferences for work and family roles (Foley & Powell, 1997). Therefore, disagreements relating to their allocation of time to each of the roles/domains might lead to disagreement, which results in WFC (Foley & Powell, 1997). Helmle et al. (2014) explored the elements that influenced perceptions of work-life balance among owners of copreneurial firms and found that the flexibility of the copreneurial business influenced WIF. As such, Helmle et al. argued that

understanding how the couple manages the interface between work and family was essential to enhance WFC scholarship and business practice.

At the level of the dyad, couple inputs and outputs affect the copreneurship. Couple inputs include a gap in perceptions of the equity in the decision-making process, parental responsibilities, mutuality of support, and role overload (Foley & Powell, 1997), with separate outputs over outcomes for each copreneur. Partner outputs include the satisfaction that each copreneur obtains from the relationship, the support offered by the partner, and life satisfaction in general (Foley & Powell, 1997). Helmle et al. (2014) established that couple support does not affect perceptions of FIW. According to Foley and Powell (1997), the quality of the marriage relationship was the couple's output resulting from the satisfaction that each partner experienced, which might have a positive effect on the business.

Partner input affects the process that takes place when partners jointly allocate the time that each gives to work and family roles. According to Barton et al. (2015), stress resulting from WFC might affect indirect business costs through absenteeism and poor work performance. Kurniawan and Sanjaya (2016) studied how marital relations strategies affected business efficacy through the involvement of the spouse and emotional, social support. They noted that being able to cope with WFC might enable married couples to sustain their businesses. Wu et al. (2010) investigated the relationships of WFC with business and marriage outcomes in copreneurial women and established that WFC negatively affected business success and marriage satisfaction. According to Wu et al., WIF predicted marriage satisfaction, while FIW predicted perceived business

success. White (2013) examined how copreneurs' WFC affected perceptions of family and business success and found a relationship between bidirectional WFC and business and family success. By underpinning this study with the WFC model for business/marriage partners, I was able to ascertain how copreneurs manage WFC as individuals and as a couple.

The reciprocal coping model. I also employed the reciprocal coping model to underpin this study. Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2012) developed the reciprocal coping model from equity theory. According to Somech and Drach-Zahavy, individuals required the same proportions of personal coping resources and organizational supports to reduce WIF and FIW. The assumption is that individuals covertly or overtly gauge the investments they make against the benefits they receive in their interpersonal relationships through three exchange models: reciprocal, over-reciprocal, and under-reciprocal (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). With the reciprocal model, individuals invest and gain equal resources, thereby evoking fairness and equality. As such, personal coping resources invested or gained equate to those provided at the organizational level, which might reduce WIF and FIW (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). Mauno and Rantanen (2013) examined support/control at work/home, personal coping strategies, and their effect on WFC. They found that high personal coping and high organizational coping support resulted in low WFC. As such, a combination of personal coping strategies and those provided at the organizational level may lead to low WFC, which can help copreneurs achieve business sustainability.

With the over-reciprocal model, individuals gain more resources than the amount they invest, which makes them feel guilty and engage in self-blame (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). Such individuals employ organizational supports more than they invest in personal coping, resulting in high WFC (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). Under-reciprocation occurs when individuals invest more resources than what they gain, causing feelings of injustice and high levels of WIF (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2012) concluded from their findings that the reciprocal model appeared to be the ideal model for coping with WFC, as both WIF and FIW decreased with the alignment of personal coping and organizational supports. Based on this evidence, I employed the reciprocal coping model to ascertain how copreneurs use personal and organizational coping strategies to achieve business sustainability.

There is evidence that the provision of organizational supports results in low WFC and positive business outcomes. In their study of the effect of perceived organizational support on work to family conflict, Kahya and Kesen (2014) observed that employees with high-perceived organizational supports increased their commitment to the organization, which resulted in high performance and low turnover. The employees felt indebted to the organization as the organization provided support in their interest. According to Kahya and Kesen, perceived organizational support resulted in lower WFC. Hao, Wang, Liu, Wu, and Wu (2016) examined the relationships between WIF and FIW and organizational support, with depressive symptoms among Chinese doctors. Hao et al. observed that the provision of organizational supports had an adverse effect on WIF and FIW. Matias et al. (2017) observed that employers used family-friendly organizational

support to reduce WFC and alleviate the negative effects of WFC on employee productivity. Similarly, Zheng and Wu (2018) examined the effects of WFC on the professional commitment of Chinese project experts and concluded that perceived organizational support resulted in low WFC and improved professional commitment. Thus, when employers provide employees with organizational support, their WFC level reduces, resulting in positive business outcomes.

Both personal and organizational factors influence WFC. Kaur (2012) found that dual-career couples who employed integrated coping strategies (a combination of personal coping and organizational supports) had lower levels of WFC. Similarly, Mache et al. (2015) found that employing both personal resources and organizational supports reduced WFC. After examining the challenges of work and coping strategies of professional dual-career couples, Rahman, Mustaffa, Rhouse, and Ab Wahid (2016) established that their study participants used integrated coping strategies to reduce WFC, especially FIW. Thus, adopting both personal and organizational supports may reduce the WFC of copreneurs and influence the attainment of business sustainability. By underpinning the study with the two models, I elicited information from participants as individuals and as a dyad to determine individual and organizational efforts employed in coping with WFC to achieve business sustainability.

Family Business

Family businesses constitute a vital business structure globally. Family businesses are the most prevalent forms of businesses in the world (Lien, Teng, & Li, 2016; Oudah et al., 2018) with significant contributions to the entrepreneurship and socioeconomic

development of many countries (Pérez-López, Gómez-Miranda, Argente-Linares, & López-Sánchez, 2018; Vieira, 2018). Eighty percent of businesses worldwide are family-owned with one-third of these being copreneurships (Amubode et al., 2016). According to Pieper, Astrachan, and Manners (2013), family firms accounted for more than half of GDP, 60% of new employment, and 65% of wages paid. Meroño-Cerdán, López-Nicolás, and MolinaCastillo (2018) further observed that family businesses contributed significantly to the U.S. economy, generating 89% of total tax returns, 64% to GDP, and 62% to employment. Thus, family firms including copreneurships are important in developing local economies.

There are various definitions for family businesses. A family business is a firm or organization in which one or more families control the strategic direction of the business (Miralles-Marcelo, Miralles-Quiros, & Lisboa, 2014). It is a firm in which a family or several families has/have effective control, contributing to family well-being and identity (Pieper et al., 2013; Woodfield & Husted, 2017). There is family involvement in the management and ownership of the firm (Dawson & Mussolino, 2014). In their study of family businesses and community development, Fitzgerald and Muske (2016) established that family firms contributed to the sustainability of the economy and the social environment of their communities. Thus, the importance of family business at the global, national, and individual levels makes it a worthy construct to understudy.

Family businesses differ from nonfamily businesses in significant ways. In a family business (such as copreneurship), there is the interaction of work (business) and family domains (Ruizalba, Soares, Arán, & Porras, 2016). Family businesses are the most

common, dominant, and oldest type of businesses worldwide (Roberts & Gnan, 2017). The unique nature of family business is that they have distinct and partially overlapping family and business systems, which distinguishes them from other types of businesses. Positive outcomes for family businesses included family health and prosperity, good firm performance, greater employee retention, corporate social responsibility, and environmental responsiveness (Pieper et al., 2013). The positive outcomes notwithstanding, the intermingling of family and business can also result in negative outcomes.

Combining business with family may lead to conflicts and poor firm performance. Nepotism and conflicts within the family might result in low performance even though family members might provide skilled and loyal labor to the business (Pieper et al., 2013). The firm's requirement for human and financial resources, as well as time, might cause conflicts with the family's needs for personal accomplishment, work, and income (Pieper et al., 2013). Pounder (2015) established that the major challenge involved in managing a family business was the ability to manage the interrelationship between work and family domains. The interaction between the domains of family and work may result in WFC.

The primary distinction between family businesses and nonfamily businesses is socioemotional wealth. Socioemotional wealth is one of the key elements that differentiated family businesses from nonfamily businesses (Dawson & Mussolino, 2014; Hasenzagl, Hatak, & Frank, 2018; Ismael Barros, Hernangómez, & Martin-Cruz, 2017; Memilia, Fang, Koc, Yildirim-Oktem, & Sonmeze, 2018). In making decisions, family

business owners prioritized socioemotional wealth to determine profit and loss (Gomez-Mejia, Cruz, & Imperatore, 2014; Morgan & Gomez-Mejia, 2014). Additionally, family firm owners underpinned management decisions on socioemotional wealth (Morgan & Gomez-Mejia, 2014). Family business owners might minimize negative emotions and maximize positive emotions to preserve socioemotional wealth (Gomez-Mejia et al., 2014; Morgan & Gomez-Mejia, 2014). Family business owners preferred to experience negative emotions in the short-term for the advancement of the family in the long-run (Morgan & Gomez-Mejia, 2014). Family business owners place value on socioemotional wealth, which differentiates them from their nonfamily counterparts.

A functional governance system and organizational structure can contribute to the effective management of the family firm. Forkuoh, Appienti, and Osei (2012) studied the relationship between family business structure, lines of authority, and chain of command in a traditional family structure in Ghana. They recommended effective planning, clearly stated roles, delegation of responsibility and authority, and a well-constituted board in the family business to facilitate the attainment of business goals. Thus, having an efficient governance system in a family business may contribute to business sustainability.

Copreneurship

Copreneurship is a unique form of family business. Approximately one-third of family businesses are copreneurships (Amubode et al., 2016; Minarcine & Shaw, 2016). Copreneurs are couples who jointly own, share responsibility for, and are loyal to the business (Hirigoyen & Villeger, 2017; Machek et al., 2016). Helmle et al. (2014) indicated that a copreneurial firm was a type of family business in which a couple shared

both a personal and professional relationship in a jointly owned business, which they also managed together. Inherent in these definitions is the notion of equality or equity between the couple that shares responsibility for the business. Although copreneurship implies equality of roles, effort, and rewards that cut across work and home domains, role conflicts emanated from unequal sharing of work and rewards as the traditional husband and wife roles dominated (Deacon, Harris, & Worth, 2014). For this study, I defined copreneurship as a form of business in which married couples or couples living together jointly share the ownership and management of the firm.

Scholars found a positive relationship between copreneurship and a variety of indicators. McDonald, Marshall, and Delgado (2017) noted that in copreneurships where the copreneurial couple had a good relationship, they were more likely to be profitable than noncopreneurial businesses. Hnilica and Machek (2015) explored the differences between copreneurships and noncopreneurial businesses regarding their productivity, debt level, liquidity, and asset management and found that copreneurial firms were more operationally efficient than noncopreneurs. Machek et al. (2016) examined the performance gaps between copreneurial firms and professionally managed companies in the Czech Republic and found a positive outcome on return on equity and copreneurial earnings. In copreneurial businesses, the domains of work and family intertwine as couples deal with pressures from work and home as individuals and also as a couple.

In copreneurial firms, the professional and personal lives of the couples interact. There is greater integration between work and life domains of copreneurial businesses

than other forms of family businesses (Helmle et al., 2014). This integration is as a result of the couple sharing their work and love lives together. Smith (2000) found that copreneurship promoted a family-friendly environment for copreneurs and employees. Copreneurial firms, entrepreneurial identity, roles, and responsibilities depended on the unique capacities and capitals of the individual partners (Deacon et al., 2014). Statistics related to the number of copreneurial firms in an economy is difficult to ascertain due to lack of data disaggregation by types of family businesses (Deacon et al., 2014). In spite of the difficulty to find statistics that show the prevalence of copreneurial firms, it is evident from the extant literature that copreneurial businesses account for many new ventures globally. Helmle et al. (2014) surmised that copreneurial businesses constituted 3.7 million businesses in America, representing a critical source of economic development not just in the United States, but also globally. Amubode et al. (2016) noted that about 80 percent of businesses worldwide are family-owned with one-third of these being copreneurships. Despite their noted importance, scholarly research on copreneurship is scanty due in part to the difficulty in identifying copreneurs as study participants (Helmle et al., 2014). Couples who live and work together experience WFC (Dai, 2016). Working couples (such as copreneurs) used coping strategies to manage their individual WFC (Mathur & Swami, 2015). Studying copreneurship provides a clearer understanding of how couples interrelate at work and home, and how their relationship affects the business.

Copreneurs decide to start businesses together for various reasons. Smith (2000) cited redundancy, corporate downsizing, and the glass ceiling while Minarcine and Shaw

(2016) and Dahl, Van Praag, and Thompson (2015) indicated low employment opportunities. Other reasons involved the need to establish value for their business and emotional relationship, as well as transforming their relationship into a thriving lifestyle and business (Deacon et al., 2014). In this study, I explored how copreneurs cope with WFC to attain business sustainability beyond 10 years.

Drivers of copreneurial business sustainability. Businesses must succeed to survive. For a copreneurial business to be successful, there must be role clarity between the copreneurs (Campopiano, De Massis, Rinaldi, & Sciascia, 2017). Existing knowledge of the factors that contribute to business sustainability vary. Marriage could be a critical resource in sustaining a new business (Craft, Seal, Juyoung, & Danes, 2015).

Entrepreneurial resourcefulness was one of the critical factors for business survival and sustainability (Ayala & Manzano, 2014). Succession planning might result in family business sustainability (Adedayo & Ojo, 2016; Adedayo, Olanipekun, & Ojo, 2016). Oudah et al. (2018) recommended that for family businesses to be sustainable, they must place importance on strategic planning, succession planning, and corporate governance. Financial management practices are important to the growth, sustainability, and successful succession of the family business (Dello Sbarba & Marelli, 2018). Despite the high rate of family businesses and their contribution towards economic development, their survival rate including that of copreneurship is low (Hiebl, 2015). Van der Merwe, Venter, and Farrington (2012) noted that the perception of fair treatment by family members resulted in harmonious family relationships and business sustainability. Ruizalba et al. (2016) noted that successful family businesses had a positive relationship

between the family and the business while Kurniawan and Sanjaya (2016) surmised that copreneurs' ability to cope with WFC could result in the sustainability of the copreneurial business. The linkage between harmonious work (business) and family relationship and business success and sustainability is evident.

Additionally, the perception of trust, commitment, and effective communication had a positive effect on family harmony and business sustainability. Family conflict affected family business sustainability (Adedayo & Ojo, 2016), while family harmony influenced the perceived future continuity of family businesses (Venter, van der Merwe, & Farrington, 2012). Machek et al. (2016) surmised that the lack of physical boundaries between work and family of copreneurs might affect business survival. Kengatharan (2015) observed a negative relationship between WFC and organizational sustainability. This negative relationship implies that when WFC is low, it enhances business sustainability. While the family can constitute a competitive advantage for the family firm, family business success depends on how the family organizes itself and its relationship with the business (Suess, 2014). Thus, skills, experience, networking capabilities, and harmony between family and business interests might have a positive effect on the family firm (Suess, 2014). As such, adopting effective coping strategies to manage WFC may result in business sustainability.

Critical to the sustainability of copreneurial firms is the challenge of balancing work and family domains. WFC emanated from the inability of copreneurs to balance the boundary between family and work (Venter et al., 2012). Owusu-Bempah, Djirackor, and Gadegbeku (2016) found in their study on the dual-earner couples and family spillovers

in Ghana that the family lives of couples had a positive effect on their work lives. In effect, low FIW may have a positive effect on the work (business) outcomes of the copreneurs. Stafford, Danes, and Haynes (2013) established that when family business owners experienced low FIW, they were more likely to sustain their businesses for 10 years. Using their model for managing WFC between copreneurs, Foley and Powell (1997) surmised that the quality of a marriage relationship might affect family business success. Likewise, Venter et al. (2012) suggested that a healthy and robust marriage could result in a successful copreneurship. According to Venter et al., the most significant threats to the growth, success, and survival of family businesses were issues involving family relationships. Thus, copreneurs must utilize effective coping strategies to manage WFC to avoid negative effects on business growth and sustainability. Copreneurial sustainability depended on the ability of copreneurs to maintain a right balance between their work and family domains (Venter et al., 2012). Therefore, a harmonious family relationship resulting in low FIW can lead to positive business outcomes for the copreneurship. It is evident from the extant literature that copreneurs' ability to effectively balance work and family demands by reducing WFC may contribute to business sustainability.

Advantages and disadvantages of copreneurship. There are advantages and disadvantages of working with one's spouse. There are advantages and disadvantages of copreneurship (Machek, Hnilica, Kolouchova, & Machek, 2015). On a positive note, a couple's closeness and access to each other might improve communication behaviors that facilitate the business relationship (Helmle et al., 2014). Sharing home and work

provided copreneurs the flexibility to have more control over decision-making, which resulted in satisfaction in both domains (Randerson, Bettinelli, Fayolle, & Anderson, 2015). The resultant effect was better understanding and greater commitment to the business (Helmle et al., 2014). Copreneurs who committed to their business goals might achieve high business performance (Machek et al., 2015). While noncopreneurial businesses might be prone to agency costs, this challenge might not be the case in copreneurial businesses (Machek et al., 2016). Despite the advantages, working and living together can be disadvantageous to copreneurial couples.

The copreneurial life can be problematic. Copreneurs might experience problems from different work and management styles, disagreement over money and decision-making, inadequate couple/family time, or spending too much time together without listening to each other (Helmle et al., 2014). These adverse situations could cause tensions and conflicts that harm the copreneurial business (Helmle et al., 2014). Adverse effects of copreneurship might include low performance due to conflict between copreneurs, WFC which may affect business survival, possible competition between the couple, and lack of personal time. The opportunities associated with copreneurship outweigh the disadvantages (Smith, 2000). Copreneurship provided couples independence, personal control, and helped them to maximize their strengths and values (Smith, 2000). Despite the positive attributes of copreneurship, the peculiar nature of mixing business and family lives may cause WFC, necessitating the use of coping strategies to ensure harmony at work and home to improve business outcomes.

Conflict management in copreneurship. Conflict is a prominent feature of family firms, and it can be negative or positive. Negative conflicts are those negative emotions in relationship conflicts (Morgan & Gomez-Mejia, 2014) such as those experienced by copreneurs. Conflict was a major destructive factor affecting family harmony and the cause of failure in family businesses (van der Merwe et al., 2012). According to Adedayo and Ojo (2016), conflict was one of the critical issues that affected the sustainability of the family business. Conflicts were likely to result when the spheres of business interacted with family due to the egalitarian system of family against that of meritocracy in business (Pieper et al., 2013). Relationship conflicts resulting from internal conflicts of family members are negative emotions that can prevent productivity by redirecting work-related efforts to threats (Morgan & Gomez-Mejia, 2014). The interaction of work and family in copreneurship can cause conflicts, which may be negative or positive.

Conflicts in the family business are not entirely negative. They could be beneficial when it results in new ideas, alternatives, and involvement (Morgan & Gomez-Mejia, 2014). Conflicts might have a good effect on the performance of the family firm through pressure from external stakeholders (Morgan & Gomez-Mejia, 2014). Although it might be healthy for a family business, it is better to find solutions to conflict before it affects family harmony than to avoid them (van der Merwe et al., 2012). Conflict management is the ability to manage conflicts promptly to prevent its adverse effect on family harmony and the sustainability of the family business (van der Merwe et al., 2012). According to Pieper et al. (2013), the timely identification and resolution of family

business conflicts resulted in improved family and business sustainability. Family governance provided mechanisms to manage family business disputes, especially as the sustainability of the firm depends on its ability to manage family conflicts (Suess, 2014). Adopting effective conflict management strategies in copreneurial firms can resolve challenges that are inimical to the success and sustainability of the business.

Work-Family Conflict

WFC is an important concept. WFC resulting from the interface of work and family affected the individual, the family, the organization, and to a considerable extent, the society (Aazami et al., 2015). WFC refers to simultaneous stress from both work and family, which may be incompatible, such that participating in one domain becomes more difficult due to participation in the other domain (Akinbode et al., 2018; Haun & Dormann, 2016; Ratnaprabha et al., 2017; Teoh, Chong, Chong, & Ismail, 2016). WFC is a stress that can negatively affect the mental health status of employees (Aazami et al., 2015). Malik and Awan (2015) studied the relationship between WFC and organizational commitment and effectiveness and found that when WFC was low, organizational effectiveness increased and when WFC was high, organizational effectiveness decreased. The interface of work-family is a complicated issue, which might affect copreneurial business sustainability (Kurniawan & Sanjaya, 2016). WFC can result in negative individual and organizational outcomes (Putnik et al., 2018). Nimitha and Manoj (2017) noted that the upsurge of WFC in business resulted in negative consequences. Chief executive officers who experienced FIW were unable to make accurate decisions, which had negative consequences on business performance (Reina, Peterson, & Zhang, 2017).

Individuals' inability to balance work and family tended to increase WFC (Kumar & Arain, 2018; Teoh et al., 2016; Versey, 2015). The intermingling of the work and family domains of copreneurs may cause stress in either or both domains, which can affect the sustainability of the copreneurship.

Researchers distinguish between time-based WFC, strain-based WFC, and behavior-based WFC. Time-based WFC is a situation where there is less time available in one domain due to experiences in the other. With strain-based WFC, there is more strain in one domain because of experiences in the other. With behavior-based WFC one displays the behavior in one domain because of activities in the other (Akinbode et al., 2018; Clark et al., 2014; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Ratnaprabha et al., 2017). WFC is bidirectional, causing work to interfere with family and family to interfere with work (Akinbode et al., 2018; Li et al., 2016). Fundamentally, WIF differed from FIW with each having distinctive antecedents and consequences (Allen & Finkelstein, 2014). This bidirectional relationship between work and family domains caused disagreement because work conflicted with the family environment, and family conflicted with the work environment (Aazami et al., 2015; Akinbode et al., 2018). WFC might affect the copreneurial business negatively (Helmle et al., 2014). As such, adopting effective coping strategies may result in positive business outcomes and sustainability. The effective management of WFC depends on the direction of the conflict. For this reason, I explored the strategies copreneurs use in addressing both WIF and FIW to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years.

Work-family conflict and copreneurship. WFC can affect copreneurship in different ways. Copreneurs must negotiate the borders between work and family domains to manage WFC effectively (Li, Miao, Zhao, & Lehto, 2013). Li et al. posited that borders are those psychological and physical lines that demarcate work and family domains. The characteristics of the border might affect how individuals managed work and family and its effect on work-life balance (Clark, 2000; Li et al., 2013; Saarenpää, 2018). Thus, the borders copreneurs employ are the coping strategies for mitigating WFC. There appeared to be an increase in the number of small business closures each year due to WFC (White, 2013). Extant literature on WFC and copreneurship is scant. Available empirical evidence of the few WFC studies targeting copreneurs focused on the consequences of WFC. For example, Werbel and Danes (2010) noted that copreneurs of new businesses experienced stress from WFC than individuals from other types of employment while White (2013) established that bidirectional WFC had a negative effect on copreneurial business success. Wu et al. (2010) investigated the relationships of WFC with business and marriage outcomes in copreneurial women. They found that family domains were more permeable than work domains and that WFC related negatively to perceived business success. According to Carr and Hmieleski (2015), family businesses experienced more stress from FIW than nonfamily businesses. There is also evidence of how individuals cope with WFC (Aazami et al., 2015; Carr & Hmieleski, 2015; Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). Literature on how couples cope with WFC both as individuals and as a dyad is lacking. Therefore, ascertaining how copreneurs cope with WFC may elicit insights on effective strategies to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability.

Causes of work-family conflict. The causes of WFC depends on its direction.

Researchers categorized the causes of WFC as either work stressors or family stressors (Clark et al., 2014). One of the causes of WFC is the lack of adequate time for individuals to dedicate to work and family domains (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). As such, the more time an individual spent on one domain, the more likely it was for the person to experience WFC. Other causes of WFC included the extent of organizational supports provided, job stress, sex, and coping style (Gurbuz, Turunc, & Celik, 2013). Thus, with the provision of organizational supports, spending time on family activities reduces WIF.

WFC may result in stress that can affect business sustainability. Work stressors caused by WIF might include the duration and difficulty for an individual to commute to and from work, workload, working hours, poor self-reliance, difficulty in undertaking tasks, and lack of support from supervisor (Clark et al., 2014). Family stressors associated with FIW consisted of the work capacity of parents, number and age of children, the extent of spousal support, and tension in the marriage (Clark et al., 2014). Adisa, Osabutey, and Gbadamosi (2016) ascertained that the causes of WFC in Nigeria included stress from work, poor infrastructure, and lack of family-friendly organizational policies. Individuals used different coping mechanisms to manage work and family conflicts (Clark et al., 2014). Where work/family related activities interfere with the family/work activities, it brings strain to the copreneurship as a dyad and the copreneurs as individuals. Thus, employing coping strategies at the individual and organizational levels may lower WFC.

Impact of work-family conflict. There is evidence from extant literature on the impact of WFC. Experiencing WFC might have a negative effect on the individual, family, and the organization (Dartey-Baah, 2015). The context of negotiating roles, work, duties, and responsibilities, including managing home and personal lives might cause WFC (Helmle et al., 2014). As such, for copreneurs to minimize WFC, the couples must negotiate roles, duties, responsibilities, as well as manage their homes and family lives. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) surmised that individuals might experience work and family stressors due to exhaustion, anxiety, and stress. The impact of WFC on both work and family included burnout, low work performance, absenteeism, low work and life satisfaction, as well as poor emotional well-being (Gurbuz et al., 2013; Schooreel & Verbruggen, 2016). According to Aboobaker, Edward, and Pramatha (2017), employee FIW was more likely to result in turnover intention than WIF. Other effects of WFC included depression, lack of life and marital satisfaction, lack of organizational commitment, and turnover (Fiksenbaum, 2014; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Therefore, it is essential to ascertain how copreneurs as individuals, a couple, and a business unit cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability.

Scholars have noted the effects of WFC on copreneurship in different ways. Werbel and Danes (2010) found family role pressures stressful for entrepreneurial firms, as family involvement with work intensified conflicts and strain. According to Werbel and Danes, copreneurs of new business ventures were likely to experience stress from WFC than individuals from other types of employment. White (2013) examined the dyadic construct of couple-level WFC effects on couple-level perceptions of family and

business success. White found a relationship between bidirectional WFC and business and family success of copreneurs. WIF and FIW affect the emotional health of family business owners, their satisfaction levels toward work, and family business performance (Helmle et al., 2014). Carr and Hmieleski (2015) examined the effects of WFC on work tension for founders of family versus nonfamily businesses and found that founders of family businesses experienced more stress from FIW than nonfamily business. Dartey-Baah (2015) found that WIF and FIW had an adverse effect on job satisfaction. As such, Ghanaian business leaders who experienced greater WFC (WIF and FIW) had less job satisfaction. Exploring how copreneurs in Ghana cope with WFC may provide valuable strategies to help them to achieve business sustainability.

Gender dimensions of work-family conflict. Gender is an important element in WFC. Research so far is inconclusive regarding gender differences in WFC (Fellows, Chiu, Hill, & Hawkins, 2016). Shockley, Shen, DeNunzio, Arvan, and Knudsen (2017) found that men and women had similar experiences with WFC and therefore did not find gender as a significant factor in determining WFC. However, some researchers reported that women experienced more WFC than men. Despite changing modern times, women still performed their traditional roles, juggling between home and work and experiencing high WFC (Helmle et al., 2014). Grönlund and Öun (2018) examined whether women in a dual-earner situation obtained family-friendly jobs as a strategy to reduce WFC and found that women had a higher level of WFC than men in the same occupation did. Nkulenu (2015) examined the relationship between WFC and quality of work-life and sex differences in WFC in Ghana and observed that female employees experienced WFC

more than males. Women were disproportionately responsible for housework and childcare, thereby experiencing increased family demands than men, with women more likely to reduce working hours to care for family and therefore report more FIW compared to men (Ruppaner & Huffman, 2014). Similarly, Akoensi (2017) ascertained that female Police officers in Ghana had higher WFC than their male counterparts due to the additional burden of their traditional role in the household. As such, the peculiar role of the woman in the household predisposes her to WFC.

There is evidence that although women experience more WFC than men, the direction of WFC may vary according to gender. Allen and Finkelstein (2014) investigated the relationships between gender, age, and WFC and found that women experienced more FIW than men, while men experienced more WIF than women. Women with young children were more likely to reduce work demands because of WFC than males (Young & Schieman, 2018). According to Ruppaner and Huffman (2014), women's empowerment had significant effects on FIW while gender empowerment equally structured WIF for women. Zhao, Zhang, and Foley (2017) established a positive relationship between WFC and work success among male managers. Men experienced more WIF compared to women when a teenager was the youngest child at home (Ruppaner & Huffman, 2014). While some researchers found relationships between gender and WFC, others did not.

While individuals experience WFC, there may be no gender variations when it comes to the direction of the conflict. Nimitha and Manoj (2017) examined WIF and FIW among employees in India and observed no gender variations regarding WFC. Likewise,

Dartey-Baah (2015) did not find any significant difference between Ghanaian men and women corporate leaders with either WIF or FIW. WFC is a demand-interrelated concept, as additional resources are necessary (from each copreneur) to resolve WFC. Stress created in either work or family domain may affect the copreneurial business sustainability.

Coping Strategies for Work-Family Conflict

Coping involves actions that individuals take to manage the challenges they experience. Coping with WFC is the rational and behavioral efforts that individuals make to manage stressors resulting from the conflicting demands of work and family (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2017). According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), coping is the persistent altering of mental and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and internal stresses deemed difficult or beyond the person's capacity. They further surmised that people employed cognitive appraisal to determine how to cope with life stresses. Consequently, individuals coped by first appraising a particular context as threatening, challenging, or irrelevant. Then, if they perceived the context as threatening or challenging, they reappraised the context and activated coping strategies to manage them. Individuals employed coping strategies to minimize the harm from life's stresses (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012, 2017). Coping is the cognitive and behavioral efforts individuals engage in to deal with stressful situations by reducing the disequilibrium they experience (Clark et al., 2014; Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2017). Therefore, individuals may use different coping strategies to manage WFC stressors depending on the domain where they experience the stressor.

Coping strategies linked to more positive work-family outcomes are available in the literature. Such positive outcomes include reorganizing the mind, separating work from family life, and having fun (Clark et al., 2014). Other coping strategies that resulted in positive work-family outcomes included requesting for support, altering attitudes and expressing oneself, and spending more time with family (Clark et al., 2014). According to Clark et al. (2014), constantly rearranging one's schedule might result in increased WFC in the short-run. Coping strategies for FIW other than WIF might result in positive work-family outcomes (Clark et al., 2014). Help-seeking behaviors, proper planning and communication, and skills enhancement resulted in lower WFC (Clark et al., 2014). Thus, employing effective coping strategies to address WFC may have a positive effect on the sustainability of the copreneurship.

There is evidence of cross-domain coping strategies. Clark et al. (2014) noted work planning and efficient management of the marriage as the cross-domain strategies that individuals used to lower both WIF and FIW. They found spending more time with family, being responsive to marital needs, and improving income as effective strategies for coping with family stressors. They also noted that spending more time with family resulted in lower WIF. The explanation for this finding could be that spending more quality time with the family reduces the effect of work demands on family needs.

Contrasting coping strategy models. I discussed other coping strategy models in this sub-section. Individuals might deploy personal coping strategies or organizational support, or both (integrated coping) to deal with WFC (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012).

The integrated coping model is a combination of personal coping and organizational supports which when used together and in the right proportions may result in lower WFC.

Personal coping strategy models. Some personal coping models identified in the literature that individuals use to manage WFC include role conflict coping behavior model, problem-focused coping (PFC), emotion-focused coping (EFC), avoidance-focused coping (AFC), and work-family border theory. I present evidence of the effectiveness or otherwise of each of these strategies in detail in the following subsections.

Role conflict coping behavior model. The role conflict coping behavior model is a WFC conceptual framework developed by Hall (1972). The model consisted of three levels in the role process with 16 coping strategies. Type I coping was structural role redefinition by changing external structurally imposed expectation about a person's position (Hall, 1972). Type II coping was personal role redefinition, which is the defensive manner in which individuals deal with their expectations and perceptions of their behaviors in a given context (Hall, 1972). Type III coping was reactive role behavior, which involved an attempt to resolve all role expectations with the assumption that it is impossible to address the conflicts, and therefore, the individual must try to satisfy all demands (Hall, 1972). The role conflict coping behavior model indicated how individuals control their life, resulting in low FIW (Hall, 1972). This model fails to address how individual coping differences may affect WFC. Thus, it is deficient in capturing options that individuals employ to cope with WFC.

Problem-focused and emotional-focused coping. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) developed the PFC and EFC models. PFC is an active means of coping and managing the stressor while EFC involves passively managing emotions to endure the stressor. PFC is behavioral coping that includes seeking help and taking direct action in a challenging situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In activating PFC, individuals concentrated on ascertaining the problem, planning, creating alternative solutions, evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of the alternatives, choosing an alternative, and taking action (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). According to Clark et al. (2014), PFC refers to efforts employed to identify a stressor and measures taken to avoid or eliminate the source of the stress. Individuals used PFC in an attempt to control and solve problems (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Paulson and Leuty (2016) investigated the relationship between personality traits, affective style, and coping strategies and WIF and FIW of Amazon's Mechanical Turk and established that positive affect related positively to PFC. Thus, PFC appears to be a more realistic strategy to employ to cope with WFC.

Individuals may control stressors emotionally. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), EFC is the cognitive process whereby individuals employ positive thinking and express their emotions to tolerate the stressful situation. Individuals used EFC as a stress-reducing strategy when they could not change the prevailing situation. With EFC, individuals engaged in selective attention such as purposely focusing on specific related or unrelated aspects of the issue, positive comparison, and distancing, or by reducing emotional discomfort (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). EFC refers to efforts to minimize or eliminate the emotional discomfort related to a stressful situation (Clark et al., 2014).

EFC involves the passive management of emotions to manage the stressor. EFC is effective when it is not possible to change the stressor (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Using EFC involves distancing oneself from the stressor to reduce the discomfort.

Avoidance-focused coping. According to Endler and Parker (1990), individual coping is more complex than PFC and EFC, so they developed the AFC model. AFC is the situation in which people try to avoid the stressor or hope that the problem will resolve with time (Endler & Parker, 1990). AFC coping is a subtype of EFC, which might be relatively effective in less controllable situations (Endler & Parker, 1990). Engaging in subtle tasks (distraction, e.g., watching TV) or seeking out other people (social diversion, e.g., phoning a friend) are examples of AFC (Endler & Parker, 1990). Employing AFC means that individuals try to avoid the problem by distraction or social diversion. Other researchers found AFC unsuitable in reducing stress. Paulson and Leuty (2016) established that employing AFC resulted in FIW. As such, AFC is not a realistic coping strategy that individuals can use in addressing WFC.

Work-family border theory. Work-family border theory is another contrasting theory. Borders are the physical or psychological lines that differentiate work domains from life domains (Clark, 2000). How people managed these domains could affect work-life balance significantly (Clark, 2000; Li et al., 2013). Clark (2000) developed the work-family border theory and proposed the use of physical, temporal, and psychological borders to determine where the appropriate domain behavior starts and ends. A physical border between work and family indicated a workplace that is far from home (Clark, 2000; Li et al., 2013). A workplace with a 9 to 5 working schedule showed a temporal

border between work and home while a psychological border is a self-created rule employed to differentiate work and family domains (Clark, 2000; Li et al., 2013). Using the work-family border theory, Clark (2000) investigated how individuals create balance between work and home domains, by sharing work issues with family and sharing family issues with work colleagues. Spouses who influenced the extent to which individuals managed domains could protect work and home domains (Clark, 2000). Li et al. (2013) used the work-family border theory as a basis for developing a conceptual framework to understand the effect of work-life border characteristics and entrepreneurial motivation on the work-life balance of bed and breakfast innkeepers. Some copreneurial couples might have difficulty in detaching work from family while at home (Helmle et al., 2014; Li et al., 2013). Using work-family border theory helps to address how individuals manage work and family domains, and the borders between them.

The boundaries of work and family can vary. The boundaries of work and family can be permeable or flexible (Clark, 2000; Saarenpää, 2018). Permeability and flexibility are two major features that determine the strength of the border (Clark, 2000; Saarenpää, 2018). Permeability occurs when an individual situated in one domain may be psychologically present in another domain (Clark, 2000; Helmle et al., 2014; Saarenpää, 2018). For example, a person may discuss home issues with colleagues at work, and discuss work issues with family members. When individuals have higher permeability, they are less likely to experience conflicts between the two domains. Permeability determined how one domain affected the other while flexibility measured how much a border changed in addressing the needs of the domains (Helmle et al., 2014; Li et al.,

2013; Saarenpää, 2018). Flexibility is the extent to which the boundaries of a role are flexible and changeable so that it may manifest itself in different places or at different times (Helmle et al., 2014; Li et al., 2013; Saarenpää, 2018). Weak borders relate to high permeability while strong borders relate to low permeability and flexibility (Li et al., 2013). This theory does not present a holistic means of addressing WFC by copreneurs as their lives intermingle with their work both as individuals and as a corporate entity. Additionally, it does not take into account organizational supports that may mitigate WFC.

Family-friendly organizational support. Formal and informal family-friendly organizational support can help manage WFC. Formal means by which organizations support employees to ease WFC include family leave, provision of child-care assistance, and having flexible working hours (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). Informal support provided at the organization level refers to the values inherent in the organizational culture (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). According to Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2012), family-friendly organizational support could be in the form of benefits, services, and policies including part-time work, flexible work arrangements, and paternal/maternal leave. Benefits include medical and vacation expenses payment while services include childcare, therapy, and sick leave (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). These interventions constitute family-friendly supports at the organizational level.

Evidence of the positive effect of organizational support on the individual and the organization is available. Tang, Siu, and Cheung (2014) found that the provision of family-friendly organizational support resulted in work satisfaction, improved

performance, and efficiency (reduced WFC). Abadi (2018) examined the relationship between perceived organizational support and reward on job performance of vocational teacher shipping in Jakarta and established that perceived organizational support had a positive effect on job performance. Likewise, Ke and Deng (2018) investigated how family-friendly human resource practice and workplace spirituality affected organizational commitment and job performance. They observed that family-friendly organizational support had a positive effect on employee commitment and job performance. Additionally, French, Dumani, Allen, and Shockley (2018) concluded that organizational support was the most important source of support in reducing WFC. Wattoo, Zhao, and Xi (2018) established a negative relationship between family-friendly organizational support and WFC. This relationship implies that when employees use organizational support, they are likely to reduce WFC.

WFC is a reflection of an individual's ability to balance work and life domains. Employees who benefitted from organizational supports were more likely to experience low WFC (Mihelic & Tekavcic, 2014). Madden, Mathias, and Madden (2015) found that employees' intent to turnover lowered when organizational supports were available. According to Fiksenbaum (2014), organizational supports such as on-site childcare, telecommuting, and flexitime promoted a supportive work environment and contributed to lower WFC. Therefore, employees who utilized organizational supports reported less conflict at work and home domains. Fiksenbaum (2014) further noted that employees who experienced WFC were less content with their work and life. Gurbuz et al. (2013) established that utilizing organizational supports resulted in low WIF and FIW of

employees. Thus, business owners including copreneurs can use organizational supports to help reduce WFC.

It is evident that individuals use both personal coping strategies and family-friendly organizational support to manage WFC. Accordingly, when employees have flexible working hours they may experience lower WFC while providing family-friendly supervisor supports may enable employees to manage the domains of work and family more effectively. Thus, it is important to explore copreneurs' WFC coping strategies more holistically at the personal and organizational level for a comprehensive understanding of how copreneurs cope with WFC to attain business sustainability beyond 10 years.

Integrated coping models. Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2012) developed the integrated coping models and examined how the use of additive, interactive, and reciprocal coping models mitigated WFC. They noted that using the additive model results in lower levels of WFC when employees use maximal levels of resources from personal investments (personal coping) and organizational supports. With the interactive model, Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2012) also found that using personal coping strategies alone reduce WFC better than using only organizational supports. Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2012) concluded from their findings that the reciprocal model appeared to be the ideal model because WFC reduces with the alignment of personal and organizational coping strategies. Therefore, I used the reciprocal model as one of the conceptual framework for this study.

The additive coping model. The additive model is about proactive coping, the process whereby an individual prepares him or herself to deal with potential future stressors (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). Being able to deploy proactive coping effectively implied having the capacity to manage a persistent stressor (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). Thus, accumulating resources through personal and organizational coping strategies might enable an individual to reduce WFC. Having more resources (personal coping strategies and organizational supports) meant lower WIF and FIW (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). Therefore, the responsibility for reducing WFC rests with both the employee (investing personal coping strategies) and the organization (providing policies, services, and benefits) to balance work and family demands. The additive model assumes the use of maximal level of coping resources. The setback for using the additive model is the waste of resources.

The interactive coping model. The interactive model is the use of either personal or organizational coping strategies. With the interactive model, organizational supports compensated for the absence of personal coping strategies while personal coping compensated for organizational supports to reduce WIF and FIW (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). With the interactive coping model, the reciprocal relationship that is typical of organizations and their employees is absent. With increased stress, individuals increased their resources to cope with rising stress level through personal coping, organizational support, or both (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). People expended resources by way of time and energy to cope with work and family challenges to meet their obligations in each domain (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). By so doing, they did

not only spend resources but also gained resources by building their problem-solving skills through the improvement of self-efficacy, self-esteem, and competence (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). Likewise, utilizing organizational supports decreased the need for the employee to expend resources on unnecessary personal coping (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). However, the employee might deem organizational supports as burdensome, making them feel helpless or incompetent and may, therefore, feel obliged to work harder (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). The models as discussed are inadequate to support the exploration of strategies that copreneurs use (personal and organizational supports) in managing WFC. As such, I employed the WFC model for business/marriage partners and the reciprocal coping model to underpin this study.

Concluding Summary

As discussed, the professional (work) and personal (family) lives of copreneurs intertwine. The integration of their work and family lives tends to cause WFC. Juggling the incompatible pressures from work and family domains cause conflicts that may adversely affect the survival and sustainability of the copreneurship. Thus, it is important to ascertain how copreneurs manage WFC to attain business sustainability. I employed the WFC model for business/marriage partners to ascertain how copreneurs as individuals and as a business unit cope with WFC. Additionally, I used the reciprocal coping model to explore how copreneurs cope with bidirectional WFC (WIF and FIW) at the personal and organizational levels to achieve business sustainability.

Transition

The purpose of this section was to summarize the key points discussed in Section 1. The intermingling of work and family among copreneurs tends to create WFC that can affect the sustainability of the copreneurial business (Clark, 2000). WFC can result in negative individual and organizational outcomes including poor performance, burnout, and absenteeism (Putnik et al., 2018; Schooreel & Verbruggen, 2016), poor job satisfaction (Dartey-Baah, 2015), and lack of organizational commitment and turnover (Fiksenbaum, 2014). WFC can result in increased stress and hamper the sustainability of a new business venture (Werbel & Danes, 2010). Copreneurs inability to cope with WFC may result in poor business efficacy and hinder the sustainability of the copreneurial business (Kurniawan & Sanjaya, 2016). The general business problem is that copreneurs experience WFC, which can have a negative effect on business sustainability. The specific business problem is that some copreneurs lack strategies to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. I employed the qualitative multiple case study to understand how copreneurs cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years.

I employed the WFC for business/marriage couples and the reciprocal coping model as the conceptual framework to underpin the study. Foley and Powell (1997) advanced the WFC model for copreneurs to address how copreneurs experience WFC. This conceptual framework is appropriate for this study because it provided the basis for exploring how copreneurs manage WFC both as individuals and as a couple. Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2012) developed the reciprocal coping model to show how individuals

effectively cope with WFC by aligning their personal coping resources with those of the organization. I adopted the reciprocal coping model to explore both internal and external coping strategies that copreneurs might be using to manage WFC.

The findings from this study may be valuable to copreneurships in Ghana by providing insight into how copreneurs cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. Consultants may also obtain knowledge on effective coping strategies for WFC to provide advisory and support services to copreneurs to improve business outcomes. Policy makers may also use the findings to provide the appropriate interventions and an enabling business environment for copreneurial businesses to thrive. Copreneurs could use strategies identified to address WFC to improve business sustainability, which may contribute to wealth creation and poverty reduction.

Copreneurship is a subset of family business. Copreneurship constitutes approximately one-third of family businesses (Amubode et al., 2016). Effective management of WFC might result in copreneurial business success (Helmle et al., 2014) and sustainability (Kurniawan & Sanjaya, 2016). The sustainability of copreneurial firms might further depend on the perception of trust, commitment, and effective communication (van der Merwe et al., 2012). WFC could be harmful to the survival of organizations while skills, experience, networking capabilities, and harmony between family and business interests might have a positive effect on the family firm (Kengatharan, 2015). A healthy marriage might result in a successful copreneurship (Venter et al., 2012). The most significant threats to the growth, success, and survival of family businesses are issues involving family relationships (Venter et al., 2012). Thus,

adopting effective coping strategies to address WFC among copreneurs may result in business sustainability.

The causes of WFC include inadequate time for individuals to dedicate to work and family domains (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), the extent of organizational supports provided, job stress, sex, and coping style (Gurbuz et al., 2013). The impact of WFC on work include burnout, low work performance, absenteeism (Putnik et al., 2018; Schooreel & Verbruggen, 2016), lack of organizational commitment and turnover (Fiksenbaum, 2014), poor business efficacy, and lack of business sustainability (Kurniawan & Sanjaya, 2016). Thus, employing effective coping strategies to address WFC may have a positive effect on the copreneurship and business outcomes. Coping strategies with positive work-family outcomes include cognitive restructuring, taking time off marriage, family-work segmentation, recreation and relaxation, chatting with people, seeking support, changing behaviors, spending more time with family, and emotional disclosure (Clark et al., 2014). The contrasting coping strategy models I discussed are personal coping, family-friendly organizational support, and interactive coping models.

In Section 2, I discuss the role of the researcher, participants, the research method and design, population and sampling, ethical considerations, and the techniques for data collection, organization, and analysis. I also provide details regarding the reliability and validity of the study. I present the findings of the study in Section 3, including its application to professional practice and implications for social change. I recommend actions based on the findings and provide suggestions for future research.

Section 2: The Project

Copreneurship is an important phenomenon. Copreneurs experience WFC, which makes their businesses prone to failure (Helmle et al., 2014). When family demands drain the resources required to meet work demands, it results in WFC (White, 2013).

Copreneurs' inability to manage WFC might hurt the sustainability of their businesses (Kurniawan & Sanjaya, 2016). WFC can result in negative business outcomes such as poor performance, absenteeism, lack of organizational commitment, turnover, and poor business efficacy (Barton et al., 2015; Clark et al., 2014; Kurniawan & Sanjaya, 2016; Schooreel & Verbruggen, 2016). Copreneurs may not be able to sustain their businesses if they fail to deploy effective coping strategies to manage WFC (Kurniawan & Sanjaya, 2016; Werbel & Danes, 2010). In this section, I present the purpose of this study, my role as the researcher, the participants of the study, the research method and design, population and sampling, ethical research, data collection, and the validity of this study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that copreneurs use to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. The target population for the study comprised copreneurs from three copreneurial businesses located in the Greater Accra region of Ghana who employed effective strategies to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. The findings from this study may contribute to social change by presenting copreneurs with usable strategies to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability. The study may also provide knowledge to policymakers and business consultants to develop and implement policies and

interventions respectively to support copreneurs to improve business outcomes.

Improved business outcomes may contribute to wealth creation for copreneurs and thus reduced poverty and improved standards of living for Ghanaians.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role is to collect, analyze, and interpret the data and results in an unbiased manner. In qualitative studies, the researcher is the data collection instrument (Yin, 2014). The qualitative researcher's role involves exploring participants' experiences and analyzing the results in an unbiased manner (Moustakas, 1994). The role of the researcher includes selecting the study participants, collecting data, and analyzing and interpreting the data in an unbiased manner to elucidate the results (Yin, 2014). As such, I collected the data and analyzed the emerging themes on how copreneurs cope with WFC to attain business sustainability beyond 10 years.

I felt motivated to conduct this research because of my experience with the phenomenon. As a copreneur experiencing WFC, I was interested in ascertaining how copreneurs cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. The findings from the study may benefit copreneurs in Ghana who are experiencing similar challenges. Recognizing personal beliefs before collecting data help to reduce bias. According to Cronin (2014), the researcher should avoid preconceived ideas including those derived from theory. Similarly, Moustakas (1994) recommended that researchers must avoid being judgmental by setting aside personal experiences and biases. Additionally, to reduce bias, researchers must employ member checking by presenting participants with summaries of the data they shared for validation (Andrasik et al., 2014;

Thomas, 2017), and to ensure that themes identified reflect their true experiences (Winter & Collins, 2015). I achieved this by documenting only the copreneurs' reports of their experiences rather than ascribing my interpretation to their narration. I used thick descriptions to capture their experiences.

Depending on the type of qualitative data researchers want to collect, they may use structured, semistructured, or unstructured interviews. Employing structured interviews involves asking the same questions in the same order without deviating (Petty et al., 2012). Structured interviews may reduce research bias, but are not flexible enough to help elicit rich and thick descriptions (Petty et al., 2012). Unstructured interviews are more flexible but may result in long interview sessions and changes in the data over time (Petty et al., 2012). Researchers use semistructured interviews with predefined questions, probing further as participants respond to elicit rich data that depicts the perceptions and experiences of the participants (Bullock, 2016; Peters & Halcomb, 2015; Ratten & Tajeddini, 2017). Thus, I employed semistructured interviews for this study. I used an interview protocol to guide the conduct of the interviews (see Appendix A). The interview protocol is a useful tool that researchers use in qualitative multiple case studies to help them improve the reliability of the study by focusing on the research questions (Yin, 2014).

In conducting the study, I employed the three basic ethical principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. I employed these ethical principles developed by the National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and

Behavioral Research (1979). I redacted the names of the participants and their businesses to ensure their confidentiality and to comply with ethical research principles.

Participants

The participants were copreneurs from copreneurial businesses in Accra who employed effective strategies to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. My strategy for gaining access to participants included requesting the assistance of the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI) and by inviting them to participate in the study. The AGI, an umbrella organization of the majority of businesses in various sectors of the economy, facilitated access to participants for the study. From their database, the AGI identified copreneurs who have been in existence for at least 10 years and obtained their permission for me to contact them for the study. I then secured participants' permission to be part of the study through an email invitation or by telephone. Engaging the assistance of the AGI and soliciting the help of participants to help in recruiting other participants was my strategy for accessing to participants.

After gaining access to the participants, I cultivated a professional working relationship with them to engender trust. Disclosing personal information may reduce uncertainty and facilitate relationship building, while establishing a working relationship with participants may enhance the credibility of the study (Lundy & Drouin, 2016; Yin, 2014). I used an informed consent form and an interview protocol to build trust and facilitate open discussion and data collection. It is vital for researchers to obtain the consent of participants before conducting the study (Check, Wolf, Dame, & Beskow, 2014; Dekking, van der Graaf, & van Delden, 2014; Yin, 2014). I shared the consent

form with them, which included the purpose and nature of the study and how their participation could affect business practice. Formalizing the relationship using the consent form helped to reassure them of the confidentiality of their involvement to sustain the relationship and ensure trust.

Using the interview protocol further enhanced the working relationship. Researchers must establish a working relationship with participants to enable open discourse via an interview protocol (Yin, 2014). An interview protocol includes the interview questions and contains the general rules and procedures for conducting the interviews (Yin, 2014, 2016). Establishing such a relationship with participants before collecting the data engendered a good working relationship that provided the foundation on which they volunteered to participate in the study.

Research Method and Design

Research Method

I considered using qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods for this study. The qualitative method was the most appropriate in addressing the research question. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore strategies that copreneurs use to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. Employing qualitative research enables the exploration of the real-life experiences of people (Marshall & Rossman, 2016), making its use appropriate for the nature of this study. Additionally, qualitative research usually results in rich data (Ganong & Coleman, 2014). Other researchers studying WFC have used qualitative methods. Ganong and Coleman (2014) used a qualitative method to explore family relationships. Zaman and Riyadh (2014)

employed a qualitative study to ascertain the causes of WFC in Dhaka, while Smith (2000) used a qualitative study to explore the management of work and family responsibilities in copreneurial businesses. The qualitative method provided me a means of exploring strategies that copreneurs use to cope with WFC to attain business sustainability.

Even though the quantitative method is equally relevant in conducting family business research, it does not provide a detailed description of the phenomenon under study. In quantitative research, the researcher uses definite variables, examines relationships, and tests hypotheses regarding a phenomenon (Molina-Azorin, 2016; Parry, Mumford, Bower, & Watts, 2014). With the quantitative method, the researcher captures numerical data to compare and rank variables (Thamhain, 2014). As such, the findings do not reflect the lived experiences of the target population, which is the main feature of the qualitative method.

Researchers use the mixed method to examine and validate the qualitative and quantitative method more holistically. With the mixed method, the researcher exploits the advantages of each method while offsetting their disadvantages to understand the phenomenon thoroughly (Green et al., 2014). For such an inquiry to be of value, the findings from the two methods must be amenable to the synthesis of the evidence from both approaches (Molina-Azorin, 2016; Lindorff & Sammons, 2018). Although using the mixed method makes up for the strengths and weaknesses of the qualitative and quantitative methods, the period for conducting this doctoral study was too short for such an elaborate method.

Research Design

I considered phenomenology, ethnography, and case study as possible research designs for this study. Qualitative researchers use phenomenology to make obvious the inherent structure and import of experience (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Researchers use phenomenology for the comprehensive exploration of participants' the lived experiences (Moustakas, 1994; Schwarz & Lindqvist, 2018). A researcher uses ethnography to explore a group's culture (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014; Pratt, 2015; Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018). Ultimately, I chose to use the qualitative multiple case study design for this study.

Case study research design is an empirical means of ascertaining the real context within which a contemporary phenomenon occurs (Yin, 2014). According to Yin (2014), this helps to bring clarity to improve understanding of the phenomenon when the boundaries of the case are not obvious. Researchers use case studies to explore the complexity of the phenomenon (Yin, 2014, 2016). Case studies are extensive and require the use of multiple sources of data such as personal interviews, secondary sources, and observations (Cronin, 2014; Harland, 2014; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Yin, 2014). I employed the qualitative multiple case study design to gather multiple sources of data to ascertain how copreneurs cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years using.

I used open-ended questions to interview copreneurs from three organizations. I kept interviewing participants from the three organizations until I achieved data saturation. Data saturation is the point at which collecting additional data provides minimal new information on the phenomenon under study (Morse, 2015; Morse, Lowery,

& Steury, 2014; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Thus, I stopped collecting the data only upon reaching data saturation. Concentrating on the richness of the data and emerging themes instead of the number of participants helps the researcher determine when data saturation occurs (Ezzedeen & Zikic, 2015; Reid & Mash, 2014). Collecting rich and thick data through multiple sources helps the researcher to achieve data saturation (Fusch & Ness, 2015). Exploring the coping strategies that copreneurs use in managing WFC to achieve business sustainability necessitated in-depth discussions with a few copreneurs who could divulge their experiences and contexts.

Population and Sampling

The population for the study was copreneurs in Accra, who employed effective WFC coping strategies to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. Copreneurs from three copreneurial businesses participated in the study with interviews continuing until data saturation occurred. The general concept of sample size in qualitative studies is saturation (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). Qualitative researchers use small sample sizes for detailed exploration of the phenomenon (Gurbuz, 2016). In qualitative studies, only a small sample is necessary, with as few as 3 to 16 participants being adequate to conduct the study (Robinson, 2014). The ideal sample size for qualitative studies is to interview participants sequentially until no new themes emerge and saturation occurs (Meneses, Coutinho, & Pinho, 2014; Sankar, Ramanathan, & Kutty, 2017). As such, interviewing should concentrate on depth and the value of the information instead of the number of participants (Iversen, Midtgaard, Ekelin, & Hegaard, 2017). In qualitative studies, the researcher's interest is in the richness of the

data hence the sample size is not significant (Thaichon, 2017). The copreneurs from the three businesses constituted the sample for the qualitative multiple case study.

I used purposeful and snowball sampling techniques for the study. Purposeful sampling is the careful selection of cases that serve the purpose and the research question of the study (Palinkas et al., 2015). Researchers employ purposeful sampling to recruit information-rich participants (Iversen et al., 2017). Using purposeful sampling is best for qualitative studies as it results in the selection of participants with rich experience of the phenomenon (Iversen et al., 2017; Kulyk et al., 2016). I used purposeful sampling to elicit information from copreneurs with rich experience on the phenomenon under study. Purposeful sampling is the use of relatively small sample sizes to enhance thorough understanding of the phenomenon because the knowledge and experience of participants is what is relevant (Etikan, Abubakar, & Alkassim, 2016). Employing purposeful sampling provides rich information and offers valuable indicators of the phenomenon (Iversen et al., 2017). Using purposeful sampling of copreneurs from the AGI database helped to identify information-rich participants for the study.

I also chose snowball sampling to enable me to have access to more copreneurs, as some felt uncomfortable to divulge information about their business and personal lives. Additionally, participants found it easier to recruit other copreneurs to take part in the study. Snowball sampling is a technique whereby the researcher contacts a sample of participants to recruit more participants among their acquaintances (Dusek, Yurova, & Ruppel, 2015; Waters, 2015). Snowball sampling is the best means of exploring the opinions of hard-to-reach populations (Ashraf, Shurjeel, & Baloch, 2018; Olivieri-Mui,

Devlin, Ochoa, Schenck, & Briesacher, 2017). The informants provide leads to other potential research participants (Olivieri-Mui et al., 2017; Piszczek, DeArmond, & Feinauer, 2018). Piszczek et al., (2018) employed snowball sampling to obtain participants for their study to explore work-to-family role boundary configurations of family and non-family employees in family businesses as it was difficult to identify and have access to participants. With no intentions to generalize the findings of this study, depth (thick and rich data) rather than breadth (number of participants) was the main consideration factor.

I targeted copreneurs from three copreneurial businesses and continued interviewing until I reached data saturation. Qualitative sample sizes are usually small because saturation occurs at some point (Christov, Marquard, Avrunin, & Clarke, 2017; Meneses et al., 2014). According to Morse (2015) and Onwuegbuzie and Byers (2014), data saturation occurs when the researcher notes no new relevant information, perspectives, and experiences from additional interviews. As such, subsequent observations and interviews stop generating new knowledge already depicted by the data available. Kotlar and De Massis (2013) used purposeful sampling in their qualitative study of goals and goal formulation where they identified goal diversity as a direct result of the connection between the family, ownership, and business systems. They collected data until reaching saturation, stopping further interviews when no new information or themes emerged from the data. Similarly, Lee and Danes (2012) recruited participants using both purposive and snowball sampling to ascertain the differences between consulting approaches of family therapists working with family businesses and those of

business consultants. They used these sampling methods to locate information-rich key informants who had consulting experience with family businesses for several years in three different disciplines. They reached saturation with the seventh participant while analyzing the responses.

I conducted in-depth face-to-face interviews with copreneurs at locations that were convenient for them. Face-to-face interviews take place at a location chosen by participants to ensure their comfort (Caykoğlu, 2016; Karim, 2016; Ruane-McAteer, O'Sullivan, Porter, Venderbos, & Prue, 2016). Allowing the participants to choose the location engendered trust and fostered a good working relationship.

Ethical Research

Conducting ethical research maintains the integrity of the study. Compliance with ethical research standards contributes to the body of evidence in an area of study (Patton, 2015; Stang, 2015). The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (1979) articulated the principles of respect of persons, beneficence, and justice in conducting human research. Therefore, I adhered to the three basic ethical principles in conducting the study. Participants were older than 18 years and not from a protected class. I contacted potential participants by phone or email and provided them with the consent form.

After contacting the participants, I discussed the objective and the social impact of the study and requested for their signatures for the consent form during the face-to-face interviews. The consent form included information on the rights of participants to withdraw from the study at any point in time by contacting me via email or phone.

Additionally, there were no adverse repercussions if they decided to withdraw from the study. Participation was voluntary, and there was no inducement by way of incentives to take part in the study. The researcher must safeguard the rights and privacy of participants during the process of collecting, storing, analyzing the data, and in reporting and displaying the findings (Bullock, 2016; Yin, 2014). Yin (2014) suggested the use of pseudonyms for reporting and displaying the results of the study to ensure confidentiality of the participants. I redacted participants' names and those of their businesses to ensure confidentiality by assigning the letter "P" for participant and a number as in P1, P2, P3, to protect their identity. I was the only person with knowledge of their identity and their responses.

To protect the participants, I stored the recorded interviews, transcripts, company information, and other related materials electronically on an external hard drive with a protected password at a safe location. I stored all hard copies of the data including signed consent forms in a locked safe. I will keep both electronic and hard copies of all the data securely for 5 years before deleting and destroying them respectively. I only started the data collection after receiving approval from the IRB. Walden University's approval number for this study is 11-03-17-0366009, and it expires on November 2, 2018.

Data Collection Instruments

To explore the strategies that copreneurs use in coping with WFC to achieve business sustainability, I was the primary research instrument. In qualitative studies, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Collins & Cooper, 2014; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Yin, 2016). The importance of interviewing in qualitative

studies is to enable participants to share their experiences regarding a phenomenon (Wahyuni, 2012). Researchers use interviews to capture participants' multiple realities and experiences in their real-life contexts (Johnstone, 2016). Additionally, researchers use the interview as the primary data source to explore the perceptions and experiences of the participants (Petty et al., 2012; Weller, 2017). I interviewed participants to elicit information on the coping strategies they use in managing WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. I used semistructured interviews, company documents, and reflective journaling to collect the data.

I used semistructured interviews for the data collection. Researchers employ semistructured interviews through open-ended questions to elicit information from participants for a holistic explanation of their experiences (Bullock, 2016; Ezzedeen & Zikic, 2015). Semistructured interview comprises predetermined questions with broad themes, interjected with probes to elicit elaborate responses (Bullock, 2016; Ratten & Tajeddini, 2017; Wethington & McDarby, 2016; Zaefarian, Eng, & Tasavori, 2016). I used semistructured interviews to elicit information from the copreneurs about the coping strategies they used in addressing WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. I used the interview protocol (see Appendix A) to facilitate the interviews and to focus on the topic to ensure reliability. An interview protocol includes the interview questions and contains the general rules and procedures for conducting the interviews (Yin, 2014, 2016). A researcher uses an interview protocol to focus on the topic for reliability (Baškarada, 2014; Yin, 2014, 2016). With the approval of participants, I audio-taped the interviews and recorded hand-written notes in a journal during the interview.

In addition to semistructured interviews, I obtained information from company documents from the copreneurial businesses. Company documents contain valuable information that may not be obtainable from other sources (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; Singh, 2014; Yin, 2014). Reflective journaling is the process of documenting the reflections of the researcher about the experiences of research participants instead of the researcher's personal beliefs and biases. (Goodell, Stage, & Cooke, 2016; Kunyk et al., 2016; Peyrovi, Nasrabadi, & Valiee, 2016). I documented my observations throughout the research continuum including my personal and theoretical biases to identify themes and patterns for further analysis.

I used member checking to enhance the quality of the study. Researchers use member checking to improve the reliability and validity of their research (Moustakas, 1994; Thomas, 2017; Winter & Collins, 2015). Member checking is the process whereby participants review summaries of their statements to ensure their accuracy (Harvey, 2015; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Member checking by sharing the study findings and responses with participants may improve the validity of the study (Frohman, Lin, & Chaboyer, 2016; Harvey, 2015; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). I used member checking to enable participants to review the summary of findings and amend as appropriate for an accurate reflection of their experiences.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection is an integral part of the research process. Researchers can obtain data for case studies through interviews, company documents, direct observations, participant observations, archival records, and physical artifacts (Yin, 2014, 2016). For

this study, I collected data through semistructured interviews with follow-up questions as appropriate. I reviewed company documents from the copreneurships such as balance sheets, mission statements, policy booklets, strategic plans, and action plans, and used a reflective journal to reflect on the data collected. I triangulated these data sources to identify themes and patterns for further analysis.

I collected primary data from in-depth semistructured interviews with three copreneurs at a location suitable for them to ascertain how they coped with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. I used the interview protocol (see Appendix A) to facilitate the interviews and to focus on the topic. The interview protocol included the interview questions and contained the general rules and procedures for conducting the interviews (Yin, 2014, 2016). In qualitative case studies, the primary method for data collection was through semistructured interviews to explore participants' perceptions and experiences of the phenomenon (Diehm & Lupton, 2014; Patton, Hong, Patel, & Kral, 2017; Petty et al., 2012). Advantages of interviews include (a) achievement of high response rate, (b) obtaining detailed information about participants' perceptions and feelings, and (c) the ability to ask follow-up questions for clarity (Milne, 2014). Interviews are advantageous in enabling researchers to explore participants' perceptions and experiences of the phenomenon (Diehm & Lupton, 2014; Gholami & Zeinolabedini, 2017; Simmer, Pfoser, Grabner, Schauer, & Putz, 2017). Disadvantages of interviews include (a) breach of privacy due to face-to-face contact, (b) the cost of traveling to conduct the interview, and (c) the potential for the participant to refrain from answering

questions because he or she is uncomfortable (Yin, 2014, 2016). Utilizing additional data sources helped to enhance the reliability of the study.

I reviewed company documents from the copreneurships to augment data from the interviews. Researchers obtain background information from company documents about issues that are not possible to observe and to confirm information from other sources (De Massis & Kotlar, 2014; Singh, 2014; Yin, 2014). Advantages of using company documentation include the ability to review them repeatedly, and it covers a broad spectrum of material (Yin, 2014, 2016). One main setback of using company documentation is that participants may prevent access to the documents by deliberately withholding such material from the researcher (Yin, 2014, 2016). Researchers use reflective journaling to find themes and patterns in the data collected (Patel, Tchanturia, & Harrison, 2016). Researchers also use journaling to reduce bias and ensure that the data reflects the experiences of the participants instead of their personal beliefs about the research question (Goodell et al., 2016; Kunyk et al., 2016; Peyrovi et al., 2016). The strategy for collecting the data involved the steps below.

I started each interview by thanking the participant for volunteering to participate in the study and explaining the consent form. I then discussed confidentiality, their participation, and informed them that I would record the interview. Each interview comprised of nine questions with follow-up questions as appropriate. The questions focused on how they cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. Asking follow-up or probe questions is critical to provide a better understanding of the responses by gleaning more data for richer and comprehensive account of the

phenomenon (Ratten & Tajeddini, 2017; Thamhain, 2014; Zaefarian et al., 2016).

Additionally, asking follow-up questions encourage participants to open up and share more details about their experiences (Wethington & McDarby, 2016; Zaefarian et al., 2016). I probed further for more explanations on participants' answers using follow-up questions for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. I wrote what I heard and observed during each interview in a reflective journal and later reflected on the information to identify themes and patterns to support the data. I requested for relevant company documents from the participants for further review and analysis to ascertain pertinent information that was useful for the study.

I conducted member checking to ensure that the details provided by participants were accurate. Member checking is the process of allowing participants to review summaries of their statements to ensure their accuracy (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016; Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Thomas, 2017). After conducting the interviews and interpreting what the participant shared, I printed and shared the summary of the meaning of the answer to each question with each participant for validation. I gave the participants the opportunity to review and approve the narrative to ensure its accuracy. I continued member checking until data saturation occurred.

Data Organization Technique

After transcribing the audio recording verbatim into Microsoft Word, I captured salient information from the documents reviewed and the emerging themes and patterns from my reflective journal. Using a reflective journal enables the researcher to document emerging themes and patterns identified during data collection (Patel et al., 2016).

Researchers also use journaling to reduce bias by ensuring that data collected reflect the experiences of the participants instead of their personal beliefs about the research question (Goodell et al., 2016; Kunyk et al., 2016; Peyrovi et al., 2016). I documented my observations and reflections on the experiences of the study participants without allowing my biases and theoretical dispositions from influencing the data. I analyzed the emerging themes and patterns as documented to inform the findings of the study.

I used Nvivo 11 Pro software to facilitate data organization and analysis.

Qualitative researchers can use NVivo software to organize their data (Edward-Jones, 2014; Sotiriadou, Brouwers, & Tuan-Anh, 2014; Yin, 2014). I organized the data by identifying themes that were common among the participants. I labeled files such as audio recordings, transcriptions, reflective journal, corporate documents, consent forms, and interview questions in folder labeled “Copreneurship Data.” I redacted their names and those of their businesses by assigning the letter “P” and a number as in P1, P2, P3, to protect their identity and ensure that each participant and their business had unique reference numbers. I have put all electronic data in a password-protected folder on my computer, with raw data and backup copies on an external drive in a locked filing cabinet. The data will be in a secured location for 5 years before destroying them to ensure the confidentiality of the participants in line with ethical principles.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the data collected to ascertain the coping strategies copreneurs employ to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability using methodological triangulation. Selecting data from multiple data sources ensured the reliability and validity of the study

(Bureau & Andersen, 2014; Yin, 2016). According to Fusch and Ness (2015), researchers achieved a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon with methodological triangulation than using one type of data alone. Researchers used methodological triangulation to compare the findings from diverse data sources for a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (Joslin & Müller, 2016). In their study of intergenerational management transfer of family businesses, Lefebvre and Lefebvre (2016) used methodological triangulation to explore future leadership projections and to ascertain the reliability and robustness of their findings. Collecting data from diverse sources facilitates the comprehensive compilation of relevant information for validation to enhance the robustness of the study findings (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Wahyuni, 2012). According to Yin (2014), using diverse sources of evidence for case study research enhances the accuracy and validity of the study. I used data from the interviews, company documents, and the reflective journal as data sources for triangulation.

I identified themes and patterns from the triangulated data to facilitate data analysis. In analyzing qualitative data, researchers must provide readers with concise findings emerging from identified themes that reflect the nature of the setting (Strandmark, 2015). It is important to identify and organize recurring and emerging themes or concepts from the data for further analysis (Germain et al., 2016; Ling, Payne, Connaire, & McCarron, 2016). I identified themes from all the data collected by querying the emerging concepts. After transcribing the interviews verbatim, I used NVivo 11 Pro software for data coding and sorting. Sotiriadou et al. (2014) noted Nvivo as a primary software package for qualitative management and business studies. Yin (2014) also

recommended NVivo for coding and organizing qualitative data. One of the benefits of using NVivo is the tools for visualizing data (Edward-Jones, 2014). Additionally, researchers use NVivo software for data organization and management, and for data analysis through theme identification to deduce conclusions (Sotiriadou et al., 2014). I used a systematic approach to analyze the recorded and transcribed interviews to identify key themes about how copreneurs cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years.

I used Nvivo to code the data for analysis. I analyzed the triangulated data using the framework of compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpretation, and conclusion recommended by Essary (2014), Ukwuoma (2015), and Yin (2016). I compiled all the data from the transcribed interviews and company documents, and those from my reflective journal in Microsoft Word. I then disassembled the data by prioritizing and organizing them, and then reassembled them by coding and synthesizing emerging patterns and themes using NVivo software. I employed methodological triangulation to analyze the data collected. Researchers use methodological triangulation to improve the accuracy of the data collected from multiple sources (Essary, 2014; Ukwuoma, 2015). Yin (2014) also suggested the use of triangulation to validate research data. I subsequently interpreted the results by comparing the emerging themes and aligning them with current literature and the conceptual framework underpinning the study to draw conclusions.

Reliability and Validity

Achieving reliability in qualitative research is the ability to duplicate all the components of the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) established dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability as the four criteria necessary to ascertain the rigor and trustworthiness of qualitative studies. Accordingly, it is imperative to detail out research outcomes by testing the dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability of qualitative studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mabuza, Govender, Ogunbanjo, & Mash, 2014; Wahyuni, 2012). I ensured the reliability of this study by using methodological triangulation for data collection and analysis and providing an audit trail using a detailed description of the research design, data collection, and analysis techniques. To ensure validity, I employed triangulation, member checking, data saturation, and provided thick and rich descriptions of the findings from the data.

Reliability

Achieving reliability in qualitative studies is the ability to duplicate the processes involved in conducting the research. Noble and Smith (2015) surmised that reliability in qualitative research constitutes the dependability of the study. According to Webster, Bowron, Matthew-Maich, and Patterson (2016), providing an audit trail by describing the research processes and design to enable future researchers to utilize the same framework ensures dependability. Dependability entails reporting the processes of the research in detail to enable another researcher to replicate the study in another context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maree & Potgieter, 2018). Dependability is also achievable through member checking to reduce inconsistencies for clarity and logical documentation (Frohman et

al., 2016; Harvey, 2015). Member checking of data interpretation results in data saturation, which occurs when no new information emerges from new data (Morse et al., 2014; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014; Winter & Collins, 2015). I reviewed the emerging themes until data saturation occurred.

Having an audit trail of the research processes contributed to the reliability of the study. A systematic and detailed description of the research design and processes that follow an audit trajectory is critical for future replication of the research design to attain reliability (Kotlar & De Massis, 2013; Petty et al., 2012). In their study on goal formulation processes in family businesses, Kotlar and De Massis (2013) established a chain of evidence by keeping an audit trail of the sequence of the activities undertaken. Ensuring research reliability by detailing a chronology of the research activities and processes provides a chain of evidence to determine if the findings are consistent and possible to replicate in another context.

To ensure the reliability of this study, I used an interview protocol, undertook member checking, and interviewed participants until data saturation occurred. I used an interview protocol (Appendix A) to guide the discussions with participants for consistency. Researchers use the interview protocol in case studies to improve the reliability of the study by focusing on the research questions (Baškarada, 2014; Yin, 2014, 2016). Researchers use member checking to ensure the accuracy of the data collected by asking participants to verify the accuracy of the information provided (Birt et al., 2016). Member checking helps to reduce discrepancies and achieve rich and logical documentation to ensure accuracy and credibility of the study (Birt et al., 2016; Marshall

& Rossman, 2016). I only stopped re-interviewing participants on reaching data saturation. Data saturation is the point at which collecting additional data provides minimal new information on the phenomenon under study (Massey, Chaboyer, & Aitken, 2014; Morse et al., 2014; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Using member checking, the interview protocol, and ensuring data saturation helped to enhance the reliability of the study.

Validity

Viability of qualitative research requires trustworthiness and academic rigor. The equivalent of internal validity in quantitative studies is credibility in qualitative studies while external validity refers to transferability (Garside, 2014). Internal validity is the production of an accurate account of an experience that is familiar to others experiencing the same phenomenon while external validity or generalizability is the ability to replicate the study in other contexts (Petty et al., 2012; Yin, 2014). According to Garside (2014), demonstrating the credibility of the study is to show the researcher's engagement within the field of study. Confirming the findings of the study through member checking, triangulation, or peer-review could enhance credibility (Garside, 2014). Researchers must establish a working relationship with participants to enhance credibility (Yin, 2014). Building a relationship with the participants through engagement, in addition to using different sources of data for triangulation, member checking, and ensuring data saturation ensures credibility (Lundy & Drouin, 2016). To enhance credibility I employed member checking by allowing participants to review summaries of their statements to ensure their accuracy. I also triangulated the data using interview data and a reflexive journal, and I

cultivated a professional working relationship with participants to engender trust. I used an informed consent form and an interview protocol to build trust to facilitate open discussion and data collection. I used the consent form to formalize my relationship with participants and reassure them of the confidentiality of their involvement to sustain the relationship and ensure trust. Using the interview protocol further enhanced the working relationship. Establishing such a relationship with participants before collecting the data engendered a good working relationship based on which they volunteered to participate in the study.

For transferability, the findings of the study must be applicable in other contexts. Transferability relies on detailed descriptions of the context of the study, and the ability to transfer it into another context for evaluation (Maree & Potgieter, 2018).

Transferability is achievable when another researcher can determine its applicability in his or her context (Elo et al., 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Noble & Smith, 2015). To ensure the validity of this study, I actively engaged the participants to win their confidence to enable them to provide the necessary answers to the questions by having initial discussions with them about the objective, scope, and significance of the study. I also triangulated the data, used member checking, and continued re-interviewing participants until reaching data saturation.

The participants reviewed the summary of the findings to ensure that they were a truthful representation of their responses. Undertaking member checking through follow-up interviews to ensure that the transcript is an accurate reflection of participants' experiences and perceptions enhances validity (Andrasik et al., 2014; Jennings, Edwards,

Jennings, & Delbridge, 2015; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). All copreneurs answered the same open-ended questions in the same order repeatedly until no new themes or data occurred. I checked the data for similar responses and used NVivo 11 Pro to identify themes to establish internal validity. Other strategies for ensuring the validity of data in qualitative studies include using rich, thick descriptions, and member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stewart & Harwood, 2017). Additionally, academic scholars of high repute assessed the interview questions before IRB approval, and I will make transcripts available upon request.

Confirmability is the same as dependability. Confirmability is objectivity as relates to quantitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Symon, Cassell, & Johnson, 2018). Confirmability requires an examination of the study to ascertain the extent to which the interpretation and recommendations support the data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The confirmability of the study is the extent to which participants determine the findings of the study instead of the biases of the researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). An audit trail involving a systematic approach to the research processes helps to achieve confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maree & Potgieter, 2018). According to Garside (2014), confirmability is using an audit trail to demonstrate the credibility of the study to enhance the accuracy of both the analysis and findings. I have provided a rich and detailed description of the data collection and analysis process to provide an audit trail and used multiple data sources to enhance the credibility of the study.

Transition and Summary

In this study, I explored how copreneurs cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years using the qualitative method and the multiple case study design. I used purposive and snowball sampling to enable me to have access to more copreneurs as some did not want to divulge details of their work and family lives. I collected and analyzed data from copreneurs from three copreneurial businesses in Accra and continued re-interviewing them until reaching data saturation. I collected the data using semistructured interviews, company documents, and a reflective journal. I analyzed the data by triangulating the data from the three data sources and aligned the findings with the conceptual framework to draw conclusions. I employed the five steps recommended by Yin (2016) to facilitate data analysis using NVivo. I conducted the study using ethical practices as recommended in the Belmont Report and redacted the names of the copreneurs and those of their businesses to ensure confidentiality. I will keep all the data securely for 5 years before destroying them. I ensured the reliability of the study by using member checking, an interview protocol, and data saturation. To ensure validity, I employed methodological triangulation, member checking, interview protocol, data saturation, an audit trail of the research process, and provided thick and rich descriptions of the findings from the data.

In Section 3, I identify and analyze the emerging themes and discuss the findings according to the themes identified. I compare the findings to other peer-reviewed studies and the conceptual framework and indicate how the findings affect business and professional practice. I indicate how the findings could benefit society and make

recommendations for future research. I also recommend how to disseminate the findings.

I provide my reflections on the doctoral study process and make a concluding statement on the study.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore the strategies that copreneurs use to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. Findings from the study showed that copreneurs employed integrated coping strategies to manage WFC. Integrated coping strategies constitute a combination of personal coping strategies and family-friendly organizational support (Kaur, 2012; Mache et al., 2015). The alignment of integrated coping results in reciprocal coping by couples (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012), which is the focus of one of the models I used for this study. Findings from the data analysis showed that the primary themes I identified in the data aligned well with elements of the conceptual framework. Foley and Powell (1997) developed the WFC model for business/marriage partners to address how copreneurs experience WFC as individuals and as couples. Copreneurs in this study employed coping strategies both as individuals and as couples to reduce WFC. Additionally, they aligned personal coping strategies with family-friendly organizational support to manage WFC (thereby reducing WIF and FIW) to attain business sustainability beyond 10 years. By aligning their coping strategies, copreneurs were able to manage couple-level WIF and couple-level FIW. The emerging themes from the data analysis were: (a) personal coping, (b) family-friendly organizational supports, and (c) integrated coping.

Presentation of the Findings

The central research question guiding this study was: What strategies do copreneurs use to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years? Findings from the study showed that copreneurs aligned personal coping and family-friendly organizational support in managing WFC to sustain their businesses, which aligns with the reciprocal coping model of Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2012). In the following subsections, I discuss the three key themes that emerged from the data analysis (see Table 2) and the associated subthemes that emerged under personal coping and family-friendly organizational support. The subthemes for personal coping strategies were: (a) planning, (b) effective communication, (c) delegating, (d) asking others for help, (e) negotiating, (f) compromising, (g) taking care of marriage, and (h) spending time with family. The subthemes for family-friendly organizational support strategies were: (a) flexible work arrangements, (b) maternity/paternity leave/leave of absence, and (c) childcare. Integrated coping constitutes a combination of personal coping and family-friendly organizational supports that the copreneurs use in managing WFC to attain business sustainability.

Table 2

Emerging Themes and Subthemes

Emerging themes	Subthemes	Interview questions					
		Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7
Personal coping			I	C	I	C	
	Planning	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Effective communication	√	√	√		√	√
	Delegating	√	√		√	√	√
	Negotiating	√	√	√			√
	Asking others for help	√	√			√	√
	Spending time with family				√	√	
	Taking care of marriage			√	√		
Family-friendly organizational support							
	Flexible work arrangements	√		√		√	√
	Maternity/ Paternity leave			√		√	
	Leave of absence					√	
	Childcare			√			
Integrated coping		√		√		√	√
Reciprocal coping (alignment of integrated coping)				√		√	

Note. I = individual; C = couple.

Emergent Theme 1: Personal Coping

Personal coping involves the personal resources that individuals use to manage WFC. Somech and Drach-Zahavy, (2017) established that there were no universally appropriate coping strategies because individual coping styles depend on the particular type of conflict in specific situations. Kumar and Arain (2018) established that with low social support, an increase in personal coping decreased WFC. The following subthemes were the personal coping strategies used by copreneurs in the study to manage disagreement over the allocation of time, to manage WIF and FIW, and to support each other to cope with WFC.

Planning. Participants mentioned planning more than any other coping strategy (see Table 3). Lack of proper planning might result in business failure (Oudah et al., 2018). According to Donkor, Donkor, and Kankam-Kwarteng (2017), most family businesses do not incorporate strategic planning into their management activities due to lack of a long-term vision. It is important for every family business owner (including copreneurs) to have a plan to sustain the firm (Oudah et al., 2018). Findings from the study showed that all the copreneurial businesses had strategic plans to guide their operations in addition to operational plans. Strategic plans reviewed showed that, while P1 and P2 have 5-year plans for their businesses (2015-2019 and 2013-2017 respectively), P3 has a 3-year plan (2015-2017). P2 and partner have a succession plan as well. Succession planning might result in family business sustainability (Adedayo & Ojo, 2016; Adedayo et al., 2016). All the businesses of the copreneurs interviewed had vision and mission statements in their strategic plans and strategies in place for how they will attain those overarching ideals.

Participants underpin their businesses by planning adequately for their operations. According to participants, implementing their strategic plans contributed to the sustainability of the businesses. Table 3 shows the study findings regarding how participants use planning to cope with WFC. P1 indicated planning as one of the coping strategies he uses to manage WFC when he disagrees with his partner over the allocation of time each of them gives to work and family domains (Q1). P1 further indicated that he plans to tackle any issue that may arise from individual-level WIF (Q3). He also indicated that he plans well in advance to be able to support his partner to manage WFC

(Q7). For P2, she and her partner learned quickly to plan adequately for work and family when they experienced challenges in managing work and family domains.

To manage individual FIW, P2 plans family needs and executes them with the help of her partner. In her response to the question on how she and her partner support each other to manage WFC (Q7), P2 said that their business has survived for over 17 years because they took a deliberate action to develop a strategic plan to guide the strategic direction of their business as well as a succession plan. To cope with disagreements over the allocation of time that she and her partner give to work and family (Q1), P3 indicated, among other things, that they use planning. P3 said that they underpin everything they do with planning, both at home and at work. P3 uses planning to manage individual-level WIF and individual- and couple-level FIW. P3 said, "I usually plan adequately to avoid family situations interfering with work. More often than not, I plan ahead and organize everything in advance." In response to a question on how they support each other to cope with WFC, P3 said, "We plan adequately for home and work and use a combination of our own strategies and some deliberate ones we have developed at work based on our specific needs." Table 3 indicates the frequency with which copreneurs mentioned planning throughout the interview as a strategy used to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability. P1 indicated in response to three questions that he uses planning to manage disagreement over the allocation of time (Q2), to manage individual-level WIF (Q3), and to support each other to manage WFC (Q7). %

Table 3

Number of Times Participants Mentioned Planning

Questions where participants mentioned planning	Frequency	% of occurrence
P1, Interview Questions 2, 3 &7	3	33.3%
P2, Interview Questions 2, 5, &7	3	33.3%
P3, Interview Questions 2, 4, 5, 6, &7	5	56.0%

Subtheme and past literature. Evidence from the study supported findings in previous studies on the importance of planning to the sustainability of the family business (including copreneurship). Oudah et al. (2018) recommended that for family businesses (and copreneurship) to be sustainable, the owners must place importance on strategic planning, succession planning, and corporate governance. Thus, planning as a subtheme resonates with findings in existing literature on strategies that copreneurs use in managing WFC.

Copreneurs in the study used planning both as individuals and as a dyad in managing WFC to achieve business sustainability. Clark et al. (2014) noted that work planning resulted in both lower WIF and FIW. Findings from the study support this assertion. Study participants used planning as a coping mechanism to manage disagreements over the allocation of time that each of them gives to work and family, to manage individual-and couple-level WIF and individual- and couple-level FIW, and to support each other to manage WFC (as depicted in Table 3). Foley and Powell (1997) developed the WFC model for business/marriage partners to address how couples who

live and work together experience WFC. They defined WFC for copreneurs as conflict that results when the individuals of the copreneurship disagree over the allocation of time that each gives to work and family. All three copreneurs indicated that they use planning to manage disagreement over the allocation of time. P1 uses planning to manage individual WIF, while P2 uses planning for individual FIW. P3 said, “As a team, we underpin everything we do with planning. We have our schedules at work and a work plan for the whole year, which we revise monthly and weekly based on what is happening. In the same light, we plan our home life as well.” P2 also said, “We plan adequately for work and family,” and that “Our business has survived for over 17 years now because we took a deliberate action to plan and make it work.” On the individual level, P1 uses planning to avoid WIF. P3 uses planning to manage individual- and couple-level FIW, and couple-level WIF (see Table 3). All three copreneurs use planning to support each other to cope with WFC (see Table 3). Overall, copreneurs indicated that planning formed an integral part of their work and family lives, which they used to address WFC effectively to contribute to the survival of their businesses.

Effective communication. Effective communication is essential in copreneurial businesses. Communication is the process of talking to others to provide support to relieve strain in a particular context (Bhangoo, 2015). Open communication is indispensable to the copreneurial business (Kim & Kim, 2018). Van der Merwe et al. (2012) surmised that the sustainability of a copreneurial firm might depend on effective communication. All study participants used effective communication to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. Findings from the study showed that

copreneurs used effective communication in managing disagreements over the allocation of time that each of them gives to work and family (Q2), in managing couple-level WIF (Q4), and in supporting each other to manage WFC (Q7). Whereas all the three participants use effective communication to manage disagreements over the allocation of time and to support each other to cope with WFC, P3 also communicates effectively to manage individual- and couple-level WIF (Q3 and 4) and couple-level FIW (Q6; see Table 4). Company documents I reviewed showed that in addition to face-to-face communication, study participants also use memos, emails, and telephone calls for communication. P1 said, “We communicate well. We discuss work and family problems all the time.” P2 and partner communicate effectively by discussing issues to find solutions to prevent FIW. P3 believes that effective communication even in the bedroom can help to address boardroom issues. Table 4 shows the frequency of themes related to effective communication.

Table 4

Number of Times Participants Mentioned Effective Communication

Questions where participant mentioned effective communication	Frequency	% of occurrence
P1, Interview Questions 2 & 7	2	22.2%
P2, Interview Questions 2, 6, & 7	3	33.3%
P3, Interview Questions 2, 3, 4, 6, & 7	5	55.6%

Subtheme and past literature. Business leaders’ use of effective communication as a coping strategy to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability is evident in the

existing literature. Van der Merwe et al. (2012) surmised that the sustainability of a copreneurial firm might depend on effective communication. Other researchers have found that effective communication between copreneurs resulted in improved business outcomes and low WFC (Clark et al., 2014; Helmle et al., 2014). Effective communication is one of the main factors that helped family businesses to manage conflicts (Leiß & Zehrer, 2018). Graham and Dixon (2017) found that effective communication is a personal strategy that coaches used for coping with work and family demands. Thus, copreneurs may use effective communication to cope with WFC to attain business sustainability.

Delegating. The findings of the study showed that delegating was one of the strategies copreneurs used in managing WFC. A critical aspect of managing people is the ability to delegate (Hutchinson, 2018; Terblanche, Albertyn, & Van Coller-Peter, 2018). Kumar and Arain (2018) recommended that employers should empower employees to delegate work responsibilities as a personal coping strategy. Individuals maintained their productivity and reduced WFC by delegating to others (Baltes & Clark, 2015). Table 5 shows the frequency of occurrence of delegation in the responses of copreneurs.

Table 5

Number of Times Participants Mentioned Delegating

Questions where participants mentioned delegating	Frequency	% of occurrence
P1, Interview Questions 2, 3 & 7	3	33.3%
P2, Interview Questions 2, 3, & 5	3	33.3%
P3, Interview Questions 5 & 6	2	22.2%

Copreneurs from the study delegate responsibilities to others to reduce WFC.

Copreneurs use delegation as a coping strategy to support each other to cope with WFC and in managing disagreements over the allocation of time that each of them gives to work and family. Participants further use delegation to manage both WIF and FIW at the individual level and to manage FIW at the level of the dyad. P1 indicated that he and his partner delegate work to other staff members to reduce stress and WFC. Additionally, P1 and P2 use delegation to manage WIF. P2 said, “Delegation of some aspects of our work and family lives helps us to cope with the associated conflicts.” As an individual, P1 delegates to others to manage WIF. P1 said, “If push comes to shove, I delegate to others if appropriate.” P2 delegates responsibilities to other people to manage WIF. P2 uses delegation to manage individual- level FIW, while P3 uses delegation to manage individual- and couple-level FIW (see Table 5). To manage FIW, P3 said, “I delegate for other people to support me where applicable. I have support at home and at work, and it is pretty easy to delegate to others.” To manage FIW, P2 said, “I usually delegate to my staff.” Evidence from the third-quarter progress report for 2017 strategic plan for P2’s company showed that P2 and partner delegated responsibilities to other staff members.

Subtheme and past literature. The relationship between delegation and WFC is evident in the existing literature. Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2017) found a negative relationship between delegation at home and work and WIF, but not with FIW. Findings from the study however showed that copreneurs use delegation for managing disagreement over the allocation of time, for managing Individual-level WIF, and for managing individual- and couple-level FIW. The evidence from the findings further

confirms that copreneurs use delegation as a personal coping mechanism to manage WFC. According to Kumar and Arain (2018), employers should encourage employees to delegate work responsibilities as a personal coping strategy. The subtheme of delegation does not only confirm evidence from existing literature but also adds new knowledge to the WFC interface.

Negotiating. Negotiations proved to be an effective coping strategy to address WFC. Copreneurs must negotiate the borders between work and family to manage WFC (Helmle et al., 2014). Negotiating was one of the strategies copreneurs use to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. Findings from the study showed that copreneurs use negotiations as a coping mechanism to manage WIF both as individuals and as a dyad. While P1 and P3 use negotiations to manage individual-level WIF, P1 and P2 use negotiations to manage couple-level WIF (see Table 6). P3 uses negotiations to support her partner to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability (Q7). P3 also negotiates with her partner when they have disagreements over the allocation of time that each of them gives to work and family (Q2). Negotiation is an important coping strategy that copreneurs use to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability. Participants employ negotiations to avoid individual- and couple-level WIF, to support each other to cope with WFC, and to manage WFC when they disagree over the allocation of time that each of them gives to work and family. Table 6 shows the frequency of themes related to negotiating. The evidence from the findings shows that copreneurs find negotiations as an effective personal coping strategy to manage WFC.

Table 6

Number of Times Participants Mentioned Negotiating

Questions where participants mentioned negotiating	Frequency	% of occurrence
P1, Interview Questions 3 & 4	2	29%
P2, Interview Question 4	1	14.3%
P3, Interview Questions 2, 3, & 7	3	33.3%

Subtheme and past literature. There is a link between negotiations as a personal coping strategy and WFC. Dual-career earners (such as copreneurs) used negotiation and mutual support to reduce WFC (Matias et al., 2017; Matias & Fontaine, 2015). The study findings show that copreneurs use negotiations to manage disagreement over the allocation of time and in supporting each other to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability.

Asking others for help. Copreneurs use help-seeking behaviors to manage WFC. According to Clark et al. (2014), help-seeking behaviors resulted in low WFC. The study participants use help-seeking as a means to cope with WFC to attain business sustainability. P1 asks others for help as a personal coping strategy when managing disagreements over the allocation of time with his partner, in managing individual-level WIF, and in supporting his partner to manage WFC. P1 said, “We ask staff members to help ease the stress of having to deal with work and family problems.” The rate of occurrence of responses of help-seeking for P1 is 33.3%, while P2 and P3 had 11.1% each (see Table 7). P2 also indicated the use of domestic staff at home to see to family

issues. P2 and partner also use help-seeking as a strategy to manage couple-level FIW, while P3 use seeks help to manage individual-level WIF. According to her, “We usually get support from work to handle such problems.”

Table 7

Number of Times Participants Mentioned Asking for Help

Questions where participants mentioned asking for help	Frequency	% of occurrence
P1, Interview Questions 2, 3 & 7	3	33.3%
P2, Interview Question 6	1	11.1%
P3, Interview Question 3	1	11.1%

Subtheme and past literature. Literature on help-seeking behavior for managing WFC is scant. Berkovich and Eyal (2018) found help-seeking as an adaptive personal coping strategy for managing difficulties. According to Clark et al. (2014), help-seeking behaviors resulted in low WFC. The evidence from the findings supports the available literature on help-seeking. Participants use help-seeking as a personal coping strategy to manage difficulties they experience in dealing with WFC. Additionally, participants use help-seeking in managing disagreements over the allocation of time, in managing individual-level WIF and couple-level FIW, and in supporting each other to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability.

Spending time with family. Spending time with family is another strategy that copreneurs use to manage WFC. Spending quality time with family is a motivating factor for establishing copreneurships (Othman et al., 2016). Clark et al. (2014) surmised that

spending time with family resulted in positive WFC outcomes and lower WIF. However, all study participants indicated that they spend time with family to cope with individual FIW. P3 further spends more time with family to reduce couple-level FIW. P1 said, “Making time for fun with the family frees you from the stress you have to deal with family pressures that result from not being active with family matters.” In 2015 and 2016, P1 and partner took their annual leave at the same time. A memo to the administrative executive dated 17 September 2015 and 8 August 2016 indicated that P1 and partner would be on leave for two weeks on each occasion. P1 confirmed during member checking that they wanted to spend some quality time together. For P2, she spends time with the family to make up for lost time when she gets busy with work. P1 said, “We plan ahead, delegate to others, and spend time quality time together.” Evidence from the study points to a new direction in the WFC where spending time with family results in a reduction in individual- and couple-level FIW.

Table 8

Number of Times Participants Mentioned Spending Time with Family

Questions where participants mentioned spending time with family	Frequency	% of occurrence
P1, Interview Question 5	1	11.1%
P2, Interview Question 5	1	11.1%
P3, Interview Questions 5 & 6	2	22.2%

Subtheme and past literature. Findings from the study differ from the available literature on spending time with family as a personal coping strategy. Whereas Clark et

al. (2014) found that spending time with family resulted in lower WIF, findings from the study showed otherwise. As indicated in Table 8, participants spend time with family to manage individual- and couple level FIW. Thus, adding new knowledge to existing knowledge on how spending time with family reduced FIW and WFC.

Taking care of marriage. The business and family lives of the copreneurs intertwine. In copreneurial businesses, the domains of work and family intermingle as couples deal with pressures from work and family as individuals and as a couple (Machek et al., 2016). Clark et al. (2014) found that taking care of marriage was one of the main strategies that copreneurs employed to manage WFC. Taking care of marriage resulted in lower WIF (Clark et al., 2014). Findings from the study showed that P1 and P3 take care of marriage to manage individual-level FIW and couple-level WIF respectively (see Table 9). P3 said, “We make sure our marriage is on point” as a means to manage WIF with her partner. P3 noted the importance of taking care of marital needs, while P1 indicated that she spends quality time with her husband to manage FIW.

Table 9

Number of Times Participants Mentioned Taking Care of Marriage

Questions where participants mentioned taking care of marriage	Frequency	% of occurrence
P1, Interview Question 5	1	11.1%
P2, None	0	0%
P3, Interview Questions 4	1	11.1%

Subtheme and past literature. Evidence from the study partially corroborates that of literature on taking care of marriage as a coping mechanism for managing WFC. According to Clark et al. (2014), taking care of marriage resulted in lower WIF. Findings from the study showed that copreneurs take care of marriage to manage both individual-level FIW and couple-level WIF. This finding on how taking care of marriage affects WFC further extends knowledge in the WFC literature.

Emergent Theme 2: Family-friendly Organizational Support

Organizational supports can help individuals to manage WFC. Family-friendly organizational support that helps employees to manage WFC include family leave, provision of child-care assistance, and having flexible working hours (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). Others include workplace policies, benefits, and services such as part-time work, flexible work arrangements, and paternal/maternal leave, medical and vacation expenses, childcare, therapy, and sick leave (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). The benefits of providing coping mechanisms at the organizational level are evident in the extant literature. Gurbuz et al. (2013) found that providing organizational supports to employees led to low WIF and FIW. Similarly, Mihelic and Tekavcic (2014) established that employees who benefitted from organizational supports were likely to have low WFC. Fiksenbaum (2014) also found that organizational supports such as on-site childcare, telecommuting, and flexitime promoted a supportive work environment and contributed to lower WFC. According to Kahya and Kesen (2014), perceived organizational support resulted in lower WFC. Organizational support such as flexible work arrangement and on-site childcare geared towards assisting employees to cope with

WFC are becoming common (Baltes & Clark, 2015). Hao et al. (2016) proved that the provision of organizational supports had an adverse effect on WIF and FIW. French et al., (2018) established that family-friendly organizational support was critical in reducing WFC. As indicated in Table 2, family-friendly organizational support that participants use are (a) flexible work arrangements, (b) maternity/paternity leave/ leave of absence, and (c) childcare.

Flexible work arrangements. Flexible work arrangements emerged as a subtheme for family-friendly organizational support. Baltes and Clark (2015) surmised that flexible work arrangement is the most common type of family-friendly organizational support. Flexible work arrangement constitutes one of the formal means by which organizations support employees to reduce WFC (Peretz, Fried, & Levi, 2018). Flexible work arrangements provided employees the opportunity to work outside the regular work schedule and locations (Groen, van Triest, Coers, & Wtenweerde, 2018; Stirpe & Zárraga-Oberty, 2017). According to Kahya and Kesen (2014), flexible work arrangements resulted in lower WFC. Fiksenbaum (2014) also found that organizational supports such as telecommuting and flexible work arrangement promoted a supportive work environment and contributed to lower WFC. Similarly, Kaur and Kumar (2017) surmised that dual-career couples used flexible work arrangements to manage WFC. Thus, business owners including copreneurs can use flexible work arrangements to reduce WFC.

Table 10

Number of Times Participants Mentioned Flexible Work Arrangements

Questions where participants mentioned flexible work arrangements	Frequency	% of occurrence
P1, Interview Question 2, 4 & 6	3	33.3%
P2, Interview Question 4 & 6	2	22.2%
P3, Interview Question 6 & 7	2	22.2%

All three copreneurs indicated that they use flexible work schedules to manage WFC. Table 10 shows that P1 uses flexible work arrangements to manage WFC when he and his partner disagree over the allocation of time that each spends on work and family (Q2). Also, P1 and P2 use flexible work arrangements to manage couple-level WIF (Q4). All participants use flexible work arrangements to cope with couple-level FIW (Q6). P1 said that he uses flexible work arrangements including telecommuting as one of the most successful coping strategies they use at work to ease WFC. P2 and P3 have flexible work schedules as a workplace policy for the copreneurs as well as other senior staff. P3 uses flexible work arrangements as a coping strategy to support her spouse to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability (Q7). It is evident from the findings that, the use of flexible work schedule is common to all participants interviewed, and that the practice is important in helping them to address WFC.

Subtheme and past literature. Participants in the study use flexible work arrangements to manage WFC. Flexible work arrangement is the most common type of family-friendly organizational support (Groen et al., 2018; Peretz et al., 2018; Stirpe &

Zárraga-Oberty, 2017). Evidence from the study shows that flexible work arrangement is common to all the participants and the most commonly used organizational support (see Table 2 and Table 10). All the participants use flexible work arrangement to manage disagreement over the allocation of time, to support each other to manage WFC and to manage couple-level WIF and FIW (WFC) (all couple-related coping). The evidence confirms the finding from Kaur and Kumar (2017) that dual-career couples used flexible work arrangements to manage WFC. The evidence from the study confirms existing knowledge on how couples cope with WFC.

Maternity/paternity leave/leave of absence. Maternity/paternity leave and leave of absence are family-friendly organizational support that the participants use at their workplaces, which help them to reduce WFC. The Ghana labour act (2003) entitles women to a fully paid maternity leave for 12 weeks, excluding her annual leave. The act also prescribes a minimum of 15 days fully paid annual leave to workers, after 12 months of continuous service. There is neither a provision in the act for paternity leave nor leave of absence. Findings from the study showed that all the businesses of participants have employment contracts with their employees including themselves detailing the terms and conditions of employment. All the employment contracts reviewed adhered to the provisions of the Ghana labour act (2003) by providing for maternity leave and annual leave. In addition to the statutory requirements, P1's company also provides paternity leave to employees. Bartel, Rossin-Slater, Ruhm, Stearns, and Waldfogel (2018) noted that fathers' access to paternity leave was low in private businesses. Evidence from Table 11 shows that, while P1 uses maternity/paternity leave to manage couple-level WIF, P2

uses a leave of absence and maternity leave to manage couple-level FIW. P2 indicated that sometimes they take a leave of absence to help them to manage FIW as a couple. Although P3's company adheres to the Ghana labour act (2003), she did not indicate its use in managing WFC. Evidence from the study showed that participants use paid leave to manage WFC.

Table 11

Number of Times Participants Mentioned Maternal/Paternal Leave/Leave of Absence

Questions where participants mentioned maternal/paternal leave/leave of absence	Frequency	% of occurrence
P1, Interview Question 4	1	11.1%
P2, Interview Question 6	1	11.1%
P3, None	0	0%

Subtheme and past literature. Paid leave may help reduce WFC among copreneurial couples. Allen et al. (2014b) found little evidence between paid parental leave and WFC. Findings from the study however showed that two out of the three participants use parental leave to manage couple-level WIF and couple-level FIW. Out of the three participants interviewed, only one indicated the use of paternity leave to manage WFC, thereby supporting Bartel et al. (2018) assertion of low access to paternity leave in private businesses. The results from the study extend the literature further with the use of paid leave in managing WFC.

Childcare. On-site childcare is another form of organizational support provided to ease WFC of employees. Childcare is a type of benefit offered as family-friendly

organizational support to help reduce WFC of employees (Shoba & Suganthi, 2018). Provision of on-site childcare resulted in positive organizational outcomes such as organizational commitment, low absenteeism, and turnover (Baltes & Clark, 2015). Fiksenbaum (2014) found that the provision of childcare at workplaces contributed to lower WFC. P1 indicated that the provision of childcare services for their staff help them to focus more on work without stressing out about childcare after school. P1 said, “Having workplace policy on childcare, maternity leave, telecommuting, and flexible work arrangements can help you to sustain your business despite the challenges that you would experience.” As indicated in Table 12, P1 mentioned on-site childcare as one of the policies available at his workplace to reduce WIF. Evidence from the study suggests that provision of on-site childcare may help to reduce WFC.

Table 12

Number of Times Participants Mentioned Childcare

Questions where participants mentioned childcare	Frequency	% of occurrence
P1, Interview Question 4	1	11.1%
P2, None	0	0%
P3, None	0	0%

Subtheme and past literature. Provision of on-site childcare may help to reduce WFC of copreneurs. Using on-site childcare may help to reduce WFC of employees (Fiksenbaum, 2014; Shoba & Suganthi, 2018). Li, Butler, and Bagger (2018) also noted that organizational support policies such as on-site childcare offer tangible support for

employees. Evidence from the study supports the notion that providing on-site childcare services might reduce WFC. This finding confirms existing knowledge in the literature and extends the knowledge with the finding that using on-site childcare services help one of the copreneurs to reduce WIF and by extension, WFC.

Emergent Theme 3: Integrated Coping

Integrated coping constitutes the use of personal coping strategies and family-friendly organizational support to reduce WFC. Mache et al. (2015) established that doctors in German hospitals used integrated coping strategies to reduce WFC. Similarly, Kumar and Arain (2018) concluded that personal coping in addition to social support (which includes family-friendly organizational support) is important in decreasing WFC. Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2017) noted the importance of the joint responsibility of the organization and the individual in deploying appropriate coping strategies to reduce FIW and WIF and in effect WFC. Findings from this study showed that copreneurs use integrated coping to manage disagreement over the allocation of time that each of them gives to work and family, to manage couple-level WIF and couple-level FIW, and to support each other to manage WFC (see Table 2). The alignment of couple-level WIF and couple-level FIW resulted in reciprocal coping which confirms the conceptual framework (see Table 2). From the study, it is evident that participants use both personal coping strategies and family-friendly organizational support to manage WFC, and that reciprocal coping for participants occurred when managing couple-level WIF and couple-level FIW.

Evidence from the study shows that copreneurs use personal coping and organizational support to manage WFC. When personal coping and family-friendly organizational support align, it results in low WFC (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). The alignment of integrated coping strategies appeared to be the ideal means for coping with WFC as both WIF and FIW decreased (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2012). Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2017) noted that deploying personal coping strategies with organizational support reduced WIF and FIW (WFC). The point at which personal coping strategies align with organizational support suggests reciprocal coping, which confirms the conceptual framework by Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2012). From Table 2, it is evident that reciprocal coping occurs with the management of couple-level WIF and couple-level FIW, thereby confirming the conceptual framework.

Relating Findings to the Conceptual Framework

I used the WFC for business/marriage couples and the reciprocal coping model as the conceptual framework to underpin this study. Foley and Powell (1997) developed the WFC model for business/marriage partners to address how copreneurs manage WFC as individuals and as couples. WFC for copreneurs resulted when the individuals of the copreneurship disagreed over the allocation of time that each gives to work and family (Foley & Powell, 1997). WFC experienced by copreneurs resulted from the personal characteristics of each partner, as well as the couple as a unit (Foley & Powell, 1997). If copreneurs do not manage WFC, it might affect copreneurial success (Foley & Powell, 1997; Kurniawan & Sanjaya, 2016). Thus, I explored the experiences of the copreneurs not only from their individual perspectives but also as a couple.

The second conceptual framework is the reciprocal coping model. Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2012) developed the reciprocal coping model to indicate how individuals cope with WFC. The main concept of this model is that individuals effectively cope with WFC by aligning their personal coping strategies with family-friendly organizational support. They concluded that the alignment of personal coping with family-friendly organizational support family appeared to be the ideal means for coping with WFC as both WIF and FIW decreased. Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2017) confirmed that employing personal coping strategies with organizational support reduced WIF and FIW. Adopting this model enabled me to explore both internal (personal coping) and external coping strategies (family-friendly organizational support) that copreneurs employ in managing WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years.

Evidence from the study shows that copreneurs use integrated coping strategies to manage WFC. As shown in Table 2, copreneurs use integrated coping to manage disagreements over the allocation of time they give to work and family. Copreneurs also use integrated coping to manage couple-level WIF and couple-level FIW, as well as in supporting each other to manage WFC. Copreneurs employ reciprocal coping when their integrated coping strategies aligned. Somech and Drach-Zahavy, (2017) established that there were no universally appropriate coping strategies because individual coping styles depended on the particular type of conflict in specific situations. It is evident from the study that copreneurs use reciprocal coping to manage couple-level WIF and couple-level FIW (see Table 2). Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2012) concluded from their findings that the reciprocal model was the ideal model for coping with WFC as both WIF and FIW

decreased with the alignment of integrated coping strategies. Employing personal coping strategies and organizational supports reduced WIF and FIW (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2017). Findings from the study support the conceptual framework at the couple-level but not that of the individual-level.

Relating Findings to Effective Business Practice

WFC may have a negative effect on business outcomes. Despite the high rate of family businesses and their contribution towards economic development, their survival rate including that of copreneurship is low (Hiebl, 2015). Copreneurs' ability to cope with WFC could result in the sustainability of the copreneurial business (Kurniawan & Sanjaya, 2016; Machek et al., 2016). When family business owners experienced low FIW, they were more likely to sustain their businesses for 10 years (Stafford et al., 2013). WFC might affect business sustainability (Putnik et al., 2018). Findings from the study show that copreneurs must align their integrated coping strategies to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability. Findings from the study showed that copreneurs use personal coping, family-friendly organizational support, and integrated coping as strategies to manage WFC. The evidence from the study which supports the conceptual framework is that although personal coping and organizational support help to reduce WFC, when personal coping and organizational support align, both FIW and WIF reduce, thereby lowering WFC. I discuss the three emerging themes and how they affect business practice in the following sub-sections.

Personal coping. Employing personal coping may help to manage WFC and influence business outcomes. There were no universally appropriate coping strategies

because individual coping styles depended on the particular type of conflict in specific situations (Somech & Drach-Zahavy, 2017). Personal coping decreased WFC with low social support (Kumar & Arain, 2018). Graham and Dixon (2017) found effective communication as a personal strategy that coaches used for coping with work and family demands. Employers should empower employees to delegate work responsibilities as a personal coping strategy (Kumar & Arain, 2018). Dual-career earners (such as copreneurs) used negotiation and mutual support to reduce WFC (Matias et al., 2017; Matias & Fontaine, 2015). Help-seeking is a personal coping strategy for managing difficulties (Berkovich & Eyal, 2018). According to Clark et al. (2014), help-seeking behaviors resulted in low WFC. Clark et al. found that spending time with family and taking care of marriage resulted in lower WIF. However, findings from the study show that copreneurs use spending time with family as personal coping strategy to manage couple-level FIW.

Evidence from the study shows that participants use planning and delegating to manage individual-and couple-level FIW. Participants also use effective communication, asking for help, and spending time with family for managing couple-level FIW; and taking care of marriage to manage individual-level FIW. Dartey-Baah (2015) found that Ghanaian business leaders who experienced greater WIF and FIW (WFC) had less job satisfaction. Employee FIW was more likely to result in turnover intention than WIF (Aboobaker et al., 2017). Chief executive officers who experienced FIW were unable to make accurate decisions, which had negative consequences on business performance

(Reina et al., 2017). The dire consequences of FIW are evident. Therefore, copreneurs may employ personal coping strategies to manage FIW to reduce WFC.

Family-friendly organizational supports. Family-friendly organizational supports affect business practice in various ways. The impact of WFC on both work and family included burnout, low work performance, absenteeism, and low work satisfaction (Schooreel & Verbruggen, 2016). French et al., (2018) established that family-friendly organizational support was critical in reducing WFC. Providing organizational supports to employees led to low WIF and FIW (Gurbuz et al., 2013; Hao et al., 2016). Similarly, employees who benefitted from organizational supports were likely to have low WFC (Fiksenbaum, 2014; Kahya & Kesen, 2014). Organizational support such as flexible work arrangement and on-site childcare help employees to cope with WFC (Baltes & Clark, 2015). Evidence from the literature shows that using organizational support may reduce WFC.

Findings from the study show that participants use flexible work arrangements, maternity/paternity leave and leave of absence, and childcare services as organizational support to manage WFC. Baltes and Clark (2015) noted flexible work arrangement as the most common type of family-friendly organizational support. Flexible work arrangements provided employees the opportunity to work outside the regular work schedule and locations (Groen et al., 2018; Stirpe & Zárraga-Oberty, 2017). Fiksenbaum (2014) also found that organizational supports such as telecommuting and flexible work arrangement promoted a supportive work environment and contributed to lower WFC. Similarly, Kaur and Kumar (2017) surmised that dual-career couples used flexible work

arrangements to manage WFC. Thus, copreneurs can use flexible work arrangements to reduce WFC.

Provision of family-friendly organizational supports may have different business outcomes. Bartel et al. (2018) noted that fathers' access to paternity leave was low in private businesses. Provision of on-site childcare resulted in positive organizational outcomes such as organizational commitment, low absenteeism, and turnover (Baltes & Clark, 2015). Using on-site childcare may help to reduce WFC of employees (Shoba & Suganthi, 2018). Participants from the study used flexible work arrangements to manage disagreements over the allocation of time that each of them gives to work and family, to manage couple-level WIF and FIW, and to support each other to manage WFC. The copreneurs use maternity/paternity leave/ leave of absence to manage couple-level WIF and FIW, and childcare services to manage WIF. Providing organizational supports to employees led to low WIF and FIW (Hao et al., 2016). Therefore, copreneurs may adopt family-friendly organizational support policies in their workplaces to provide support to manage WFC for positive business outcomes.

Integrated coping. Study participants use integrated coping (a combination of personal coping and organizational supports) to manage WFC to attain business sustainability beyond 10 years. Doctors in German hospitals used integrated coping strategies to reduce WFC (Mache et al., 2015). Kumar and Arain (2018) concluded that personal coping in addition to social support (which includes family-friendly organizational support) is important in decreasing WFC. Similarly, Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2017) noted that deploying personal coping strategies with organizational

support reduced WIF and FIW (WFC). Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2012) affirmed from their findings that the alignment of integrated coping strategies (reciprocal coping) appeared to be the ideal means for coping with WFC as both WIF and FIW decreased. Findings from this study showed that copreneurs use integrated coping to manage disagreement over the allocation of time that each of them gives to work and family, to manage couple-level WIF and couple-level FIW, and to support each other to manage WFC (see Table 2). The alignment of couple-level WIF and couple-level FIW resulted in reciprocal coping which confirms the conceptual framework (see Table 2). It is important for copreneurs to note that managing couple-level WIF and couple-level FIW using personal and organizational support provide the alignment necessary for reciprocal coping as suggested by Somech and Drach-Zahavy (2012) to occur.

Applications to Professional Practice

Copreneurs experience WFC, which can have a negative effect on business sustainability. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that copreneurs use in managing WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. The findings of this study are important in providing copreneurs with coping skills to enable them to manage WFC more effectively to achieve business sustainability. Experiencing WFC might have a negative effect on the business (Putnik et al., 2018). FIW is likely to result in poor business performance (Aboobaker et al., 2017). Health risks resulting from WFC such as stress might affect indirect business costs through absenteeism and poor work performance (Akinbode et al., 2018). Thus, WFC may have negative consequences on business sustainability.

Findings from the study showed that employing integrated coping strategies to reduce WFC may result in positive business outcomes and sustainable copreneurships. Results from the study showed that copreneurs use integrated coping to manage disagreement over the allocation of time that each of them gives to work and family and to support each other to cope with WFC. Copreneurs also use integrated coping strategies to manage couple-level FIW and couple-level WIF. Kumar and Arain (2018) concluded that personal coping in addition to social support (which includes family-friendly organizational support) was important in decreasing WFC. The copreneurs understudied use planning, effective communication, delegating, negotiating, asking for help, spending time with family, and taking care of marriage as personal coping strategies to manage WFC. Flexible work arrangements are the main organizational supports that the copreneurs use in combination with personal coping strategies to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability. Therefore, incorporating family-friendly organizational support such as telecommuting and flexible time into workplace policies may help copreneurs to manage WFC to achieve positive business outcomes. Perceived organizational support resulted in low WFC and improved professional commitment (Zheng & Wu, 2018). Copreneurs can use the findings of this study to improve business practice by operationalizing the recommendations and using integrated coping strategies to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability.

Family business advisors can also contribute to improved business practice by developing appropriate capacity building content to address WFC. Family business advisors help to increase firm performance (Naldi, Chirico, Kellermanns, & Campopiano,

2015; Strike, Michel, & Kammerlander, 2018) and reduce agency costs (Michel & Kammerlander, 2015). The study participants indicated the lack of capacity building programs on copreneurship and WFC as hindering business performance. Family business advisors can also use the findings to develop specific training programs to address the capacity building needs of copreneurs to provide them with the requisite skills to manage WFC more effectively to sustain their businesses.

Implications for Social Change

Copreneurs mix work and family lives, making them prone to failure. Copreneurs' ability to manage WFC may enhance business sustainability (Machek et al., 2016). Family businesses such as copreneurships contribute substantially to the economic growth of many nations (Oudah et al., 2018; Vieira, 2018), and to poverty reduction in many developing countries such as Ghana. Therefore, the sustainability of family businesses is critical to national development. Family business and copreneurial firms constitute a sizeable proportion of small businesses. In Ghana, small businesses constitute approximately 92% of registered enterprises and contribute about 70% to GDP (Acquah & Agyapong, 2015). Despite their unique importance to the development of national economies, they are prone to failure with only 10-15% transitioning to the third generation (Oudah et al., 2018). The findings of the study may impact social change by sustaining copreneurial jobs, reducing unemployment, and contributing to wealth creation. Wealth creation may contribute to the improved standard of living for Ghanaians to reduce poverty.

Recommendations for Action

Copreneurs mix their professional and family lives, which makes them prone to WFC and business failure. The ability of copreneurs to manage WFC may enhance business sustainability (Machek et al., 2016). It is best practice for researchers to provide recommendations of study findings (Funder et al., 2014). Therefore, recommending actionable strategies on how to manage WFC may help copreneurs and potential copreneurs to cope with WFC more effectively to achieve business sustainability. Recommended actions for copreneurs and family business advisors are: (a) copreneurs can mentor others, (b) copreneurs must build their capacity to manage WFC, (c) copreneurs must integrate family-friendly organizational support into their workplace policies to reduce WFC, and (d) family business advisors must support clients to manage WFC.

Successful copreneurs can mentor other copreneurs by sharing their experiences and coping strategies to enable them to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability. Copreneurs' ability to manage WFC may improve business sustainability (Kurniawan & Sanjaya, 2016). The study participants recommended mentoring as an effective means by which other copreneurs can benefit from their experiences to cope with WFC. As such, I recommend that successful copreneurs can mentor other copreneurs to learn from their experiences to enable them to manage WFC to improve business outcomes.

I recommend that copreneurs must build their capacity to manage WFC. Copreneurs must endeavor to build their capacity to help them to manage WFC to sustain their businesses. Capacity building of employees is critical to business survival (Chang,

Huang, & Kuo, 2015). Participants complained about the lack of specific capacity building programs for copreneurs and the effective management of WFC. By building their capacity in the effective management of WFC, copreneurs may be able to cope with WFC issues that can affect their businesses for sustainable outcomes.

Copreneurs must integrate family-friendly organizational support into their workplace policies to reduce WFC. French et al. (2018) found that family-friendly organizational support was the most important source of support in reducing WFC. Employers used family-friendly organizational support to reduce WFC and alleviate the negative effects of WFC on employee productivity for improved job performance (Abadi, 2018; Matias et al., 2017). Thus, employing organizational support such as flexible work arrangements may help copreneurs to manage WFC more effectively. Flexible work arrangement was the most common type of organizational support that the study participants used to manage WFC. Dual-career couples used flexible work arrangements to manage WFC (Kaur & Kumar, 2017). Fiksenbaum (2014) found that telecommuting and flexitime promoted a supportive work environment and contributed to lower WFC. Thus, I recommend that copreneurs must incorporate family-friendly organizational support in their workplaces to help reduce WFC in combination with their personal coping strategies to achieve business sustainability.

Family business advisors must advise and support their clients to manage WFC. Family business advisors help to increase firm performance (Strike et al., 2018). Family business advisors may also obtain knowledge from the findings of this study on effective coping strategies for WFC to create a new stream of business by providing support

services to copreneurs to improve business outcomes. Participants indicated the lack of specific training and capacity building programs on copreneurship and WFC. Family business advisors can also use the findings to develop specific training programs to address the capacity building needs of copreneurs to provide them with the requisite skills to manage WFC more effectively to sustain their businesses.

It is important to share research findings. Budden and Michener (2018) recommended best practices for disseminating research findings to both technical and general audiences. They suggested using scholarly publications such as peer-reviewed journal articles and technical reports, and via newspapers and magazines for general audiences. I will disseminate the findings from this study through peer-reviewed journals, technical reports, workshops, training programs, seminars, and conferences for small businesses and family firms, including those organized by the AGI. I will also present a summary of the findings to participants of the study for them to share with their staff and peers.

Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that copreneurs use to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years.

Recommendations for future research are as follows:

1. The main limitation of this study was the sample size of participants. Future researchers may consider replicating this study with a larger sample size in a different geographical location outside Accra.

2. Another recommendation could be to conduct a quantitative study to investigate the relationship between personal coping and family-friendly organizational support and the level at which they align to lower WFC.
3. Additionally, researchers may further consider other research methods and designs on copreneurial financial sustainability and business growth.
4. Another area of study could be to delve deep into copreneurial generational succession.
5. Future researchers should consider studies on gender dimensions in copreneurial businesses with transposition of the traditional role of the man as the head.

Reflections

My doctoral journey at Walden University has helped me to fulfill a life-long dream of obtaining a doctorate to impact society with the knowledge acquired. I experienced many health issues throughout my journey but the love and support from my family coupled with my determination to succeed helped me to pull through. I had the privilege of interviewing copreneurs who use effective coping strategies to manage WFC to achieve business sustainability. Contrary to my expectation, the copreneurs were eager to share their experiences to enhance knowledge in copreneurial scholarship. The copreneurs enjoyed the discourse and wished that researchers would conduct more studies on copreneurs to have a better appreciation of the peculiar exigencies they experience in balancing work and family life to achieve business sustainability. As a

copreneur, I learned the importance of using integrating coping strategies to manage WFC by aligning personal coping with family-friendly organizational support.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to explore strategies that copreneurs used in managing WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. Copreneurs from three copreneurial businesses located in the Greater Accra region of Ghana, who have employed effective strategies to cope with WFC to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years participated in the study. I Used NVivo 11 Pro software to facilitate data organization and analysis, conducted methodological triangulation with data from semistructured interviews, company documents, a reflective journal, and member checking. Emerging strategy themes were (a) personal coping, (b) family-friendly organizational supports, and (c) integrated coping. Key findings show that copreneurial couples used integrated coping strategies to manage WFC. Couple-level WIF and FIW reduced WFC with the alignment of copreneurs' personal coping strategies and family-friendly organizational support to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol and Questions

This interview is aimed at ascertaining coping strategies that copreneurs employ to manage work-family conflict to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years. The participants for the study will comprise of a minimum of three copreneurs in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. Each participant will answer the same questions as outlined in this protocol.

1. I will introduce myself to participants and provide an overview of the purpose of the study.
2. I give a copy of the consent form to the participant, go over the content, and address any concerns he/she may have.
3. I will give a copy of the consent form to the participant after he/she signs it.
4. I will request the participant's permission to turn on the audio-recorder.
5. I will start the interview by introducing the participant with a coded identification and note the date and time.
6. Each interview will start chronologically from question 1 to the last question.
7. I will ask follow-up questions as appropriate
8. I will end the interview by thanking the participant for his/her time and booking an appointment for member checking follow-up interview.

Process for member checking:

1. I will review and interpret the interview transcripts.
2. I will write each question followed by a succinct synthesis of about a paragraph.

3. I will share a printed copy of the summary of the meaning of each answer provided by the participant for their validation to ensure accuracy.
4. I will introduce the follow-up interview and set the stage for discussion.
5. I will ask probing questions related to other information found without compromising the IRB protocol/approval.
6. I will walk participants through each question and ask whether it is the true interpretation of their answer. I will also ask if they have anything more to add.
7. I will continue member checking until there is no new data to collect.

Research Question

The central research question guiding the conduct of the study is: What strategies do copreneurs use to cope with work-family conflict to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years?

Interview Questions

The interview questions below prepared by Eunice Peregrino-Dartey will be used for this qualitative case study:

Initial Probe Question

Kindly tell me about your educational and professional background.

Concept Questions

1. What strategies do you use to share responsibilities for the copreneurship to achieve business sustainability?
2. What strategies do you employ to cope when you and your partner disagree over the allocation of time that each of you gives to work and family?

3. What strategies do you employ individually to cope with work interfering with family?
4. What strategies do you employ as a couple to cope with work interfering with family?
5. What strategies do you employ individually to cope with family interfering with work?
6. What strategies do you employ as a couple to cope with family interfering with work?
7. What strategies do you use to support each other to cope with work-family conflict to achieve business sustainability beyond 10 years?
8. What support is available in your organization to help you to cope with work-family conflict?

Wrap-up Question

9. Would you like to share any other information to help copreneurs cope with work-family conflict to help them sustain their businesses?