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# Exploring the Acquisition of Information on Entrepreneurial Knowledge of Women: Niger Delta

Ebierede Osemi  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Ebierede Osemi

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Walden University  
2019

Abstract

Exploring the Acquisition of Information on Entrepreneurial Knowledge of Women:

Niger Delta

by

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HND, Federal Polytechnic, Kaduna, 1999

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

June 2019

## Abstract

Forty percent of women in the Niger Delta states in Nigeria were unemployed in 2015. Guided by acquired needs theory, this multiple case study was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of how women in the Niger Delta states can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. Twenty women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta states who had knowledge and experience of entrepreneurship were selected to participate in providing data through a semistructured interview, field notes, and document review. Through Yin's 5-step data analysis process, member checking, and triangulation, the following key themes emerged: creativity and innovation, promoting learning and development on entrepreneurship, developing a business mindset, information technology, financial and economic literacy, mentoring the mentees, financial freedom, flexibility of time, adequate control, lack of adequate entrepreneurial training, unsupportive business environment, educational barriers, and shortage of funds and resources. The study findings may create awareness of how women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta states can obtain knowledge and experience of entrepreneurship. This awareness may promote positive social change by supporting efforts to prepare women for employment, thereby reducing unemployment, improving the standard of living, and reducing poverty among women in Nigeria.

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## Dedication

I dedicate the study of this doctoral program to God Almighty. The dedication of my doctoral dissertation goes to my wife, Ebiye, and my three lovely children, Miebi, Tekena, and Eladebi. To my wife for her support towards the completion of the program against all odds, I say a big thanks to you. This dedication also goes to my mother, Mrs. Iniye Claris Agbai, for her prayers, care, and understanding during the period of the study, without which the journey would have been even harder. Thank you so much for providing me with time and encouragement for me to complete my doctoral goal.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Seventy-five percent of the 170 million people in Nigeria are women, and 70% of them live and work in rural areas (Bhardwaj, 2018). Some women in Nigeria do not have access to affordable credit, basic information, technical advice, and services (Bhardwaj, 2018). To mitigate barriers to women entrepreneurs and, in turn, alleviate poverty, the Nigerian government has encouraged women entrepreneurs, who are considered vulnerable to economic failure as sole proprietors, to form cooperative societies to allow them access to microfinances for business activities and development (Jha, Makkad, & Mittal, 2018). Forming these types of societies would assist in improving women overall quality of life and the economy by serving as a poverty reduction tool (Jha et al., 2018). The Nigerian federal government also developed several programs in 2004, including the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), State Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (SEEDS), and Local Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). Nigerian women have the strong capabilities needed to speed up the growth and development of any society, but their capabilities have not been fully employed due to various barriers (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). In this study, I address those barriers to women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta states in Nigeria. Niger Delta states in Nigeria include Bayelsa State, Cross River State, Delta State, Edo State, Akwa Ibom State, Rivers State, Abia State, Imo State, and Ondo State. The following section begins with a general discussion regarding women entrepreneurs and concludes with a discussion about several barriers facing Nigerian women entrepreneurs.

## **Background of the Study**

An entrepreneur is someone who builds a business irrespective of gender (Ekore & Okekeocha, 2012). In Nigeria, women represent 75% of the population (Ekore & Okekeocha, 2012). A significant portion of the women in the Niger Delta states are housewives who are not employed outside the home and cannot participate financially in the support of their households (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). A significant percentage of women in Niger Delta remain unemployed due to the scarcity of jobs and entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed (Satre, 2016). Franck (2012) stated that woman in the Niger Delta states are deficient in knowledge on how to (a) earn personal income, (b) fulfill their interests in conducting business, (c) increase their flexibility and autonomy in decision making, and (d) combine business and family. Despite extensive discussion in previous literature on how women can participate in entrepreneurship, there appears to be no literature that has focused on how women in the Nigeria Delta states in Nigeria can acquire entrepreneurial knowledge about business processes and procedures that is necessary to make decisions about becoming self-employed (Akhueomonkhan, Raimi, Patel, & Fadipe, 2014; Satre, 2016). This study fills a gap in existing literature and may provide answers to women in the Niger Delta on how they can acquire entrepreneurial knowledge in order to make decisions on becoming self-employed.

Decker, Calo, and Weer (2012) described entrepreneurship as synonymous with self-employment, in that both involve an individual with the motive to develop and implement an idea of enterprise to make a profit. Some of the traits that an entrepreneur

has are a desire for significant achievement, internal locus of control, propensity for risk-taking, high level of perseverance, high level of energy, and self-confidence (Decker et al., 2012). Farhangmehr, Goncalves, and Sarmiento (2016) noted that to increase knowledge among women in Niger Delta, the psychology and social skills of women should be emphasized by covering in particular the emotional experience and critical thinking of individual women. Man (2012) described the entrepreneurship knowledge acquisition process as involving an effort to (a) develop experience through entrepreneurial practice, (b) consolidate learning results from experience through practice, (c) apply knowledge acquired through practice, (d) strengthen knowledge acquired through previous knowledge gained, (e) extend the scope of knowledge acquisition to other fields of learning, and (f) mentor others in the acquisition of knowledge.

The Niger Delta in recent years has become a subject of public interest as a result of mineral resources and conflicts among stakeholders in Nigeria. The Niger Delta states are Akwa-Ibom, Cross River, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo, and Rivers State (Okpara, 2012). The Niger Delta states are home to a population of about 30 million Nigerians, who represent 22% of the nation's population (Okpara, 2012). The Niger Delta states in recent years have been associated with conflicts, criminal activities, militancy activities, and women being deprived of opportunities to participate in business (Akhueomonkhan et al., 2014). I conducted a qualitative multiple case study to interview some women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta states using an interview protocol as guide in having a uniform response to the interview questions. Using a qualitative multiple case study, I



sought to gain an in-depth understanding of how Niger Delta women can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. The sections in this chapter address the background, problem statement, purpose, research questions, conceptual framework, nature, and significance of the study.

### **Problem Statement**

The increasing unemployment among women in the Niger Delta states has become a concern for the federal government of Nigeria (Anggadwita, Luterlean, Ramadani, & Ratten, 2017). Forty percent of the women in the Niger Delta states in Nigeria were unemployed in 2015 (Kolade, 2018). Factors leading to the high rate of unemployment among women are inadequate knowledge on how to earn income, insufficient interest in doing business due to family pressures, and inability to combine business with family obligations (Anggadwita et al., 2017). The general problem is that women in Nigeria are unprepared for self-employment due to inadequate training on entrepreneurship (Kolade, 2018). The specific problem is that women in Niger Delta have insufficient requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. A gap seems to exist in the literature on how women in the Niger Delta states of Nigeria can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed (Akhueomonkhan et al., 2014; Franck, 2012; Satre, 2016).

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to gain an in-depth understanding of how women in the Niger Delta can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. Twenty women

entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta states were selected to participate in providing data through a semistructured interview, field notes, and document review. The inclusion criteria were as follows: (a) the woman entrepreneur needed to have entrepreneurial knowledge and currently own a formal business in the Niger Delta, (b) the woman entrepreneur needed to be actively engaged in the daily administration of the business, and (c) the business should have been started by the entrepreneur and not inherited or acquired by the entrepreneur, and must have been operating for at least 5 years. I transcribed the interview responses and found common themes that emerged from the data collection process.

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this multiple case study was to gain an in-depth understanding of how women in the Niger Delta states can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. The central research question in the study was the following: How have Niger Delta women entrepreneurs acquired the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed?

### **Research Subquestions**

- SQ1: What are the factors that motivate and prepare women entrepreneurs in Niger Delta?
- SQ2: What barriers hamper creating an entrepreneurial operation in Niger Delta?

## **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study was the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991). The TPB is used to explain the process of new venture creation in entrepreneurship research (Heuer & Kolvereid, 2014). In this study, I applied the TPB as a framework for the analysis of a voluntary-based behavioral setup including entrepreneurial behavior. The theory is applicable to the prediction of lifestyle changes and the assessment of venture creation behavior (Vanevenhoven & Liguori, 2013). The TPB has a direct link with educational processes and intention analysis, in that it may be applied in assessing the role of education in the intention formation process (O'Connor, 2013). The TPB is a suitable lens for considering the antecedents of entrepreneurial intention formation through perceived behavioral control, personal attitude, and subject norm; these intentions, in combination, lead a student toward entrepreneurship as a career path (Rauch & Hulsink, 2015).

The TPB is useful in stimulating entrepreneurial skills and knowledge as well as understanding how economic performance links with higher level educational attainment, which is particularly common among entrepreneurs (O'Connor, 2013; Rauch & Hulsink, 2015). In their study, Heuer and Kolvereid (2014) identified a strong direct relationship among participants in extensive education programs in entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intention, with a longer duration accounting for increased interest and intention. In a comprehensive study that involved over 18,000 students and spanned over 70 counties and 400 universities, Vanevenhoven and Liguori (2013) examined the impact of education using an education project and presented interesting questions on the

prediction of lifestyle changes that needed to be explored further in future research. Solesvik (2013) proposed the use of the TPB for predicting women's behavior in the Niger Delta states. Attitude and personality traits can influence behavior (Solesvik, 2013).

### **Nature of the Study**

In the study, I used qualitative multiple case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of how women in Niger Delta can acquire entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions on becoming self-employed. The basis for choosing this research design was the need to gain an in-depth understanding of specific cases (Yin, 2018). In contrast to case study, phenomenological design enables researchers to study the lived experience of participants (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenological design was not justified for this study, in which my purpose was to gain an in-depth understanding rather than to study the lived experience of the participants. Ethnography is used when the focus of the study relates to cultural enquiries (White, Drew, & Hay, 2009). Grounded theory was also not adequate as a design, in that the study was not aimed at developing a theory from the data collected (White et al., 2009). Likewise, narrative design was not appropriate for the study, as narrative is used when data collection occurs through storytelling (White et al., 2009).

The qualitative method was suitable for the study because qualitative research methods allow researchers to explore the concept of human understanding through open-ended interview questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The quantitative method was not suitable for the study because the quantitative method is used to study numerical

relationships, statistical elements, and variables (Borrego, Douglas, & Amelink, 2009). A mixed method approach was also not adequate for the study because a mixed method is a combination of quantitative and qualitative research in a single study (Borrego et al., 2009; Fielding, 2012). The purpose of the study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the case. I did not consider the use of quantitative and mixed method research.

### **Definitions**

The words *entrepreneurs*, *small business owners*, *small-scale businesses*, *small-scale business owners*, *women-owned businesses*, and *women business owners* and related terms were used interchangeably and referred to the same concept or phenomenon in this study. No universal definition of *small and medium-sized enterprises* (SMEs) exists, as there are a variety of ways to define SMEs (Nyadu-Addo & Mensah, 2018); therefore, I used various terms to allow linguistic diversity in my prose. The following operational definitions provide the intentional meaning of key terms and phrases used in the study to provide clarity and enhance comprehension of the research phenomenon, allowing for the realization of the research objectives.

*Breadwinner*: The primary income earner in a family (Nyadu-Addo & Mensah, 2018).

*Entrepreneurship*: The ability to create an economic organization for the purpose of profit or growth (Nyadu-Addo & Mensah, 2018).

*Entrepreneurship skills*: A basic understanding of business functioning, a willingness to take risks, and a strong will to survive in business (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018).

*Formal business sector:* The part of the society that is taxed, monitored by a government, and included in the gross domestic product (GDP) of an economy; this sector can include importing, manufacturing, commerce, and other activities (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018).

*Informal sector or economy:* The part of a society that is usually not taxed, monitored by any form of government, or included in the GDP of an economy (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). It involves the exchange of goods or services that have economic value among individuals who are outside the formal business economy. About 60% of the prospective working population earns a living in this economy in most developing nations (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018).

*Microcredit:* The extension of small loans to households that are seen as unable to gain loan access from conventional financial institutions (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018).

*Mini ethnographic case study:* A combination of case and ethnographic studies that allows a researcher to gain a rich and full understanding of a case under study involving subjects in their natural environments (White et al., 2009).

*Small-scale businesses:* For the purposes of this study, small-scale businesses are enterprises that are independently owned and operated, that provide goods and services to consumers within a local market with an annual profit of 200,000 naira or less (approximately 1,000 U.S. dollars or less), and that employ between zero and 10 individuals (Srivatava, & Misra, 2017).

*Success:* For the purpose of this study, success is continuous operation of a business for at least 5 years (Nyadu-Addo & Mensah, 2018).

*Women entrepreneurs:* For the purpose of this study, the term describes women who create businesses (Nyadu-Addo & Mensah, 2018).

### **Assumptions**

First, my interest in the study had its basis primarily in the assumption that information exists that small-scale women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta states of Nigeria need to overcome barriers that may influence women business and economic development. The second assumption was that the research participants would provide open and candid answers to the interview questions as they related to their experiences, and that the data obtained would be reliable and valid. The degree to which participants were honest and candid about their experiences determined the reliability and validity of the research findings. Third, I assumed that once I had made the proper arrangements, the interview environment would be comfortable and the interviewee would consent to and be available for the interview during the field research period. Fourth, my study design stemmed from the assumption that the findings from this research might reveal characteristics that are unique to women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta states of Nigeria. Last, I assumed that the criteria that were used to select participants for this study were appropriate and sufficient to realize the objectives of the research.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The scope of the study encompassed five women entrepreneurs in each of four local markets in the Niger Delta states who owned enterprises that were independently operated, providing goods and services to consumers within a local market. The scope of this study included only women entrepreneurs whose businesses were considered small

scale. Other categories of business, including medium and large scale, were outside the scope of this study. Additionally, the study only involved research participants who resided in the Niger Delta states in Nigeria.

### **Limitations**

Certain factors may have posed limitations to this study. For example, although 20 women entrepreneurs were purposefully selected from the Niger Delta states in Nigeria to participate in the study, the possibility remains that the views of the participants do not represent the views of all women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta states. Another limitation associated with this study involved the geographical location of the research. Focusing only on the Niger Delta states posed limitations on gaining insight into the barriers influencing the business and economic development of women entrepreneurs in other states in Nigeria. Participants may have faced unique circumstances and barriers not present in the entire country. The primary aim of qualitative research is not to generalize the research findings, but to leave the transferability decision up to the reader (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). The research participant selection criteria may also have created limitations.

I selected women entrepreneurs who ran small-scale business enterprises that were independently owned and operated, providing goods and services to consumers within a local market and employing between zero and 10 individuals. It is important to note that business experiences varied significantly from one participant to the next. A feeling of frustration led them to believe that talking to me about the barriers to women economic development might be a waste of time, as they feared that nothing would be



done with the information they provided. Moreover, there was a sense of curiosity among the participants' neighbors at work, particularly men who saw me in the women's work areas and wanted to know my reason for conducting the interviews. Additionally, participants might have been overwhelmed by my presence in their work spaces, which might have led them to act in a way that was unusual or out of the ordinary. Such behavior might have compromised my ability to achieve my ethnographic research aim, due to the *Hawthorne effect* as described by Kolade (2018).

### **Significance of the Study**

The women in the Niger Delta states of Nigeria may benefit from this study. The high rate of unemployment among the women population in Nigeria could be addressed through the study (Kolade, 2018). The purpose of the study was to gain an in-depth understanding of how women in the Niger Delta can acquire entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. The study may be significant in contributing to practice, theory, and positive social change.

### **Significance to Practice**

Unemployed women in the Niger Delta may benefit from the study's findings regarding the acquisition of the entrepreneurial knowledge required for making decisions to become self-employed. The federal government of Nigeria and the governments of the Niger Delta states may also benefit from the study by applying the findings in solving the current rate of unemployment in the Niger Delta states. Employers and other stakeholders may also benefit from the study by using information from the study to train staff or

students on ways to be motivated and acquire the entrepreneurial knowledge required for becoming self-employed.

### **Significance to Theory**

Future researchers seeking to extend the body of knowledge on the entrepreneurial behavior of women may benefit from the study. A gap in the literature may also be filled as a result of the study. The study's use of acquired needs theory (ANT) may provide meaning to future research (McClelland, 1961). The study may also contribute to theory on entrepreneurship knowledge acquisition in regard to women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta states and in Nigeria as a whole.

### **Significance to Positive Social Change**

Adopting the recommendations in this study, which are based on the research findings, may lead to a paradigm shift in the way that women view self-employment. Increased engagement of women in entrepreneurial activities may enhance the socioeconomic development of the Niger Delta states in Nigeria. The study may also be replicated with a focus on youth unemployment, retirees, or teenage unemployment in Niger Delta in particular and Nigeria as a whole. New insights into women's entrepreneurship may be gained as a result of the study. Leaders within the federal government and state governments in Nigeria may find the results relevant to policy formation as it affects women's unemployment in the Niger Delta. Social unrest in the Niger Delta may be addressed through the creation of more jobs by women who are able to employ youth who are currently involved in social vices due to unemployment.

### **Summary and Transition**

I began this chapter with an overview of the challenges facing women entrepreneurs in Nigeria and then explained the purpose of this multiple case study as gaining an in-depth understanding of how women in the Niger Delta states can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. Next, I presented the underlying ANT conceptual framework that guided this study and outlined the study's assumptions, limitations, scope, and delimitations. I also identified the significance of the study in light of the changes that could occur as a result of this research. In Chapter 2, I examine ANT, which provided the conceptual framework for the assessment of small-scale women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta states of Nigeria.

I also synthesize and present literature on barriers for women entrepreneurs globally, particularly in Nigeria. I describe the major themes found in the literature review as well as gaps and deficiencies found in prior studies in the summary and transition section of the chapter. In Chapter 3, I describe the methodology that was used for the study and explain the rationale for selecting it over quantitative research. Additionally, I present the rationale for choosing to conduct a mini ethnographic case study.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to gain an in-depth understanding of how women in the Niger Delta states can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. Twenty women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta states were selected to participate in providing data through semistructured interviews. The participants were women who were engaged in entrepreneurial activities in one of the Niger Delta states in Nigeria. To meet inclusion criteria, a woman needed to have entrepreneurial knowledge, currently own a formal business in the Niger Delta, and be actively engaged in the daily administration of the business. I transcribed the interview responses and found common themes that emerged from the data collection process.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

A literature review typically provides a theoretical basis and framework for the research question and brings the study into focus (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014; Pare, Trudel, Jaana, & Kitsiou, 2015). The literature review process is a vital first step and foundation for research, as it allows the researcher to understand the existing body of knowledge and identify useful gaps to explore (Pare et al., 2015). It also offers a theoretical underpinning for a planned empirical study, authenticates the presence of the research problem, and validates the planned study as one that is capable of contributing something new to the body of knowledge (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014; Pare et al., 2015). The literature review supports the valid research methodologies, goals, and research questions for the planned study (Pare et al., 2015). Conducting an effective

literature review is vital to move knowledge forward and for understanding the breadth of the research on the area of focus (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2014; Pare et al., 2015). It combines empirical evidence, develops theories or offers a conceptual background for succeeding research, and identifies research topics that necessitate more exploration (Pare et al., 2015).

The objective of this review is to present a complete assessment of the possible barriers influencing the business and economic development of small-scale women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta states of Nigeria and how they overcame them. This review includes findings from recent literature and studies on the topic of small-scale women entrepreneurs as aligned with the research question. The literature and articles in the review represent scholarly, peer-reviewed journal articles. I conducted searches of the following databases: Academic Source Premier, Business Source Premier, Sage, EBSCOhost, and ProQuest. I analyzed articles obtained from these databases to retrieve relevant information on barriers and challenges to small-scale women entrepreneurs.

The keywords that I used in the searches included *entrepreneurship*, *small-scale business*, *characteristics of women entrepreneurs*, *women motivation for entrepreneurship*, and *barriers to women entrepreneurship*. I also used a spreadsheet to keep track of authors, references, and themes that emerged from the keyword searches. The scholarly and peer-reviewed publications used in this study included journal articles from publications such as *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, *Journal of Business Diversity*, *International Journal of Research*, *Economic Insights Trends and Challenges*, *African Journal of Applied Research*, and *European Journal of Sustainable*

*Development*. Other sources were *International Journal of Sustainable Agricultural Research*, *Public Policy and Administration Research*, *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, *The Qualitative Report*, and *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*.

### **Conceptual Framework**

In this study, I applied the TPB as a framework for the analysis of a voluntary-based behavioral setup including entrepreneurial behavior. The theory is applicable to the prediction of lifestyle changes and the assessment of venture creation behavior (Vanevenhoven & Liguori, 2013). The TPB has a direct link with educational processes and intention analysis by assessing the role of education in the intention formation process (O'Connor, 2013). The TPB is a suitable lens for considering the antecedents of entrepreneurial intentions formation through perceived behavioral control, personal attitude, and subject norm; these intentions, in combination, lead a student toward entrepreneurship as a career path (Rauch & Hulsink, 2015).

The TPB is useful in stimulating entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, as well as in understanding how a link between economic performance and higher level educational attainment is particularly common among entrepreneurs (O'Connor, 2013; Rauch & Hulsink, 2015). In their study, Heuer and Kolvereid (2014) identified a strong direct relationship among participants in extensive education programs in entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial intention with a longer duration accounting for increased interest and intention. In a comprehensive study that involved over 18,000 students and spanned over 70 counties and 400 universities, Vanevenhoven and Liguori (2013) examined the impact

of education using an education project and presented interesting questions on the prediction of lifestyle changes that needed to be explored further in future research. However, the research concluded that the changes in lifestyle prediction during the early years in the university provide insights to university counselors to guide students in taking up entrepreneurial modules as part of their study (Vanevenhoven & Liguori, 2013). Solesvik (2013) proposed the use of the TPB for predicting women's behavior in the Niger Delta states. Attitude and personality traits can influence behavior (Solesvik, 2013). An individual with adequate knowledge on entrepreneurship is more likely to become an entrepreneur (Solesvik, 2013).

### **Entrepreneurship**

Multiple scholars have attempted to describe entrepreneurship but no single definition has been accepted for the concept (Mandel & Noyes, 2016). Definitions of entrepreneurship depend largely on the focus of the individuals creating them (Mandel & Noyes, 2016). Entrepreneurship theorists have defined entrepreneurship from disciplinary perspectives such as psychology, sociology, economics, and management (Nyadu-Addo & Mensah, 2018). Although many theories of entrepreneurship are available in the literature, most of these theories have been created and tested on samples of men; thus, there remains a need to understand the traits and behaviors of women entrepreneurs (Nyadu-Addo & Mensah, 2018).

Women should be investigated in the context of their meso and microenvironments, in that these may have a greater impact on them than on their male counterparts (Nyadu-Addo & Mensah, 2018). Gaddefors and Anderson (2017) discussed

opportunity recognition from a theoretical perspective, noting that the recognition of opportunity is linked closely to the environment in which entrepreneurship occurs.

Entrepreneurship is usually linked with risk taking, innovation, creativity, and the search for investment (Mandel & Noyes, 2016). Entrepreneurship operates in various markets and locations, where it is practiced by individuals with different skill levels and may occur in either formal or informal economic contexts (Nyadu-Addo & Mensah, 2018).

Entrepreneurship is gender neutral, meaning that both men and women can represent it. What is important is that an entrepreneur fulfills the roles associated with entrepreneurship (Nyadu-Addo & Mensah, 2018). An entrepreneur is perceived as an individual who is courageous, independent, willing to take risks, and able to combine resources to launch a profit-making enterprise (Gaddefors & Anderson, 2017).

Entrepreneurs are seen as significant influencers in initiating and providing social and economic growth (Gaddefors & Anderson, 2017). An entrepreneur is one who creates a business by bringing in a complete change through innovation for the full social good (Gaddefors & Anderson, 2017). A *woman-owned business* is an enterprise that is initiated, launched, and headed by a woman, who accepts the associated risks and ensures execution of its day-to-day activities (Gaddefors & Anderson, 2017; Hussain, Salia, & Karim, 2018). Starting and managing a business is not a stress-free undertaking, as entrepreneurs must work to increase their odds of becoming successful. Entrepreneurs strive to take steps that will bring them closer to their goals each day (Martinelli, Tagliazucchi, & Marchi, 2018; Nyadu-Addo & Mensah, 2018). The entrepreneurship



process involves characteristics of entrepreneurs, business prospects, and the business environment (Nyadu-Addo & Mensah, 2018).

### **Small-Scale Businesses**

In some emerging nation such as Nigeria, small-scale businesses employ about 22% of the adult population and are consequently important to economic growth (Sekyi, Nkegbe, & Kuunibe, 2014). Ninety percent of organizations registered in Ghana are micro, small, or medium-sized enterprises (Sekyi et al., 2014). These micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises provide 85% of manufacturing employment, which accounts for about 92% of business within the country and adds about 70% to Ghana's GDP (Sekyi et al., 2014). In high-income countries, small-scale businesses add about 55% of GDP and over 65% of total employment in the economy (Spence, 2016). Small-scale businesses also account for over 60% of GDP and 70% of total employment in low-income nations, and over 70% of GDP and 95% of employment in middle-income economies (Spence, 2016). Small-scale businesses also produce intermediary products and services that are used in large-scale organizations, contributing to the support of industrial assimilation and interlinkages (Sekyi et al., 2014). Several small businesses start up every year; however, a substantial number of those businesses fail before the end of or during the first year, and a large number close during the second year (Adisa, Abdulraheem, & Isiaka, 2019). For every 100 startups, only about 50 make it through the first 3 years (Adisa et al., 2019). Some of the reasons for the failure of these businesses are inadequate funding, poor record keeping and management, insufficient business capital from personal funds, substandard infrastructure to support small enterprises, and

an increasing government focus on Nigeria's oil industry over small business survival (Adisa et al., 2019).

Venturing into small business is very risky, and the rate of small-scale business failure in developing nations such as Nigeria is very high (Adisa et al., 2019). Despite statistics on small-scale business failures, the sector continues to provide jobs in developing economies (Spence, 2016). In Kenya, small-scale businesses contributed to the creation of about 50% of jobs in 2005 (Adom, Asare-Yeboah, Quaye, & Ampomah, 2018). Although SMEs are labor intensive, they are also capable of helping to create most of the 1 billion new jobs needed globally by the end of the century (Agwu & Emeti, 2014). Women small-scale business owners face several challenges, which include tough local conditions that make it difficult for them to access loans from banks (Adom et al., 2018). Due to the types of businesses that most women-owned SMEs are, they are known for having low startup and working capital, which lead to a low growth rate (Spence, 2016).

The decreased numbers of SMEs in Nigeria seems to be as a result of low level of labor, capital, technological knowhow, and little managerial abilities associated with small-scale businesses (Spence, 2016). Because SMEs create employment, add to the rapid growth of the economy, and employ unsophisticated resources, they serve as the lifeline of the Nigerian economy (Spence, 2016). SMEs are also seen as Nigeria's key to poverty alleviation, employment generation, and economic growth (Agwu & Emeti, 2014). For women-owned SMEs, which constitute 30 to 37% of all SMEs (8 to 10

million women-owned SMEs) in developing markets, the main barrier to development and growth is unmet financial needs (Spence, 2016).

Operational challenges for SMEs in Nigeria include inadequate managerial skills and trained human resources as well as poor infrastructure (e.g., water supply shortage, inadequate electricity, inadequate transportation system, and improper solid waste disposal system; Agwu & Emeti, 2014). Nigeria's weak physical and social structures have a huge impact on most SMEs' ability to grow and develop economically because they have to rely heavily on the infrastructure provided by the government in order to be cost effective (Agwu & Emeti, 2014). Other factors include instability in government policies, low demand for products and services, poor managerial skills, insufficient financial support, and insufficient profits (Agwu & Emeti, 2014). All of these factors contribute to the inability of SMEs to grow in Nigeria (Agwu & Emeti, 2014).

### **Characteristics of Women Entrepreneurs**

The characteristics of women entrepreneurs seem to vary by location, along with sociodemographic factors and attitudes (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). Women who are assertive, creative, and adventurous tend to initiate businesses (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). Additionally, those who have prior work experience tend to have entrepreneurial qualities, as they seem to be confident in their possession of abilities and skills required to perform managerial roles (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). Other characteristics of women entrepreneurs include the ability to handle moderate risks, a sense of responsibility, confidence in their ability, energy, hopefulness, future orientation, managerial skills, and a high level of commitment (Maden, 2015). The connection between psychological

characteristics and entrepreneurship, is that individuals with certain types of psychological characteristics tend to display a certain level of entrepreneurship (Anggadwita et al., 2017).

Traits such as need for achievement, open mindedness, locus of control (an individual's view of the control of rewards and punishments in his or her life), and risk taking tend to relate to being or aspiring to become an entrepreneur (Anggadwita et al., 2017). This is not the case for most African women entrepreneurs, who are often not seen as real entrepreneurs but as individuals who are pushed into entrepreneurship or have no choice other than to become entrepreneurs in order to escape poverty (Bhardwaj, 2018). Consequently, these women are referred to as *lifestyle entrepreneurs* (Bhardwaj, 2018). Some African women entrepreneurs are characterized as poor women who often own few or no assets and have limited abilities to access needed resources (Bhardwaj, 2018). They are also characterized as having limited or no formal education and inadequate human assets (Jha et al., 2018). Women in Africa often have partial or no formal employment and business experience; therefore, they may possess partial or no managerial and business experience as well as limited business-related networks before launching their enterprises (Jha et al., 2018).

Entrepreneurship may be related to personal characteristics. Personality is made up of characteristics that include ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving that contribute to an individual's uniqueness (Jha et al., 2018). Big Five personality dimensions such as neuroticism, extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness to new experiences contribute to the practice of entrepreneurship (Jha et al., 2018). Additionally,

attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, and expectations placed on individuals by their families are vital to their psychological, mental, cognitive, and personality development (Jha et al., 2018).

Families that are extroverted, ingenious, and have great achievement orientation tend to be resourceful, open to new experiences, and self-assured (Karki & Xheneti, 2018; Perenlyl, Zolin, & Maritz, 2018). As a result, they may encourage their children to become innovative, establish businesses for themselves, and take risks (Karki & Xheneti, 2018). Demographic characteristics such as age, gender, education, and previous experience all have an impact on a person's entrepreneurial intentions and undertakings (Karki & Xheneti, 2018). Entrepreneurs' characteristics such as behavior, personality, attitude, capabilities, education, and training are among the factors seen as influencing the growth of small businesses (Karki & Xheneti, 2018).

Other influences include family history, prior managerial experience, relevant industry knowledge, and functional skills (Karki & Xheneti, 2018). The two main demographic characteristics that underscore the notion of human capital are education and experience (Srivatava & Misra, 2017). Knowledge gained from education and experience represents the type of resources that can be dispersed heterogeneously across individuals. It is essential to understand the dissimilarities between opportunity identification and exploration (Srivatava & Misra, 2017).

### **Women's Motivations for Entrepreneurship**

Motivation is a psychological process that allows behavior to have purpose and direction (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). Motivation is also seen as an internal entrepreneurial

stimulus that is categorized by pull and push influences based on diverse personal positions, natures, and desires (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). Intentions to start a business as well as the decisions that are made before launching a business affect goals, strategies, and business structure (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018).

Some women's motivation to become entrepreneurs is connected with the design of the job itself, as it enables them to overcome challenges of family life balance and negative working conditions which are associated with traditional occupations (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). Other factors that motivate women to become entrepreneurs include tenacity and the need for achievement, self-realization, financial success, frustrations linked to non-advancement in career, government policies, family background, and support for entrepreneurship (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). Women's ability to recognize opportunity is related to their social network as well as previous work and life experiences (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018; Weathes, Maver, & Brettel, 2018). Women tend to rely on their social networks when making decisions, particularly on their families, more than their men counterparts (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018).

Making the decision to become self-employed could also be as a result of both pull and push effects (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). The internal entrepreneurial inspiration categorized as push and pull factor is based on various personal position, nature and desire (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). Consequently, the intent to exhibit a particular behavior may be affected by factors such as habits, needs, values, wants, and beliefs (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). Push factors are connected to human necessities such as recession,

inadequate family income, unemployment, displeasure within the current employment, and the need to maintain a work life balance (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018).

Pull factor can stem from the need for independence, improved financial opportunity, the need to be challenged beyond the current situation, and the desire to be one's boss (Maden, 2015). It can also stem from the need to attain flexibility, self-fulfillment, the possibility of developing a hobby, role model including influence from friends and families as well as personal achievement (Maden, 2015). Psychological motives such as self-satisfaction, independence, and finance, are some of the motivational factors for women entrepreneurs in places like Malaysia (Maden, 2015). Individuals who became entrepreneurs based on push factors tend to be less financially successful than those who built their business based on pull factors (Maden, 2015). Another reason some women become entrepreneurs consists of a slow in making progress in the workplace, which results in pull factor (Maden, 2015).

Most women leave the workplace and become entrepreneurs because entrepreneurship allows them to gain control over their careers, and possibly escape the glass ceiling occurrence (Maden, 2015). Sixteen percent of women entrepreneurs, for example, alluded to glass ceiling as the reason for becoming entrepreneurs, while other women entrepreneurs cited independence and the frustration associated with the progress of their careers as the reason for becoming entrepreneurs (Maden, 2015). Factors that motivate an individual to become an entrepreneur could be categorized into prime motivators, motives, compelling influence, facilitating influence, and opportunity factors (Maden, 2015).

## **Barriers to Women Entrepreneurs**

Women entrepreneurs face several challenges that must be addressed to empower them to rise to their rightful positions (Maden, 2015). The ability to balance work and family, for example, tends to be more difficult for women than it is for men due to family responsibilities such as childcare and other household activities that could hinder their advancements (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). Additionally, the conventional gender roles that have largely shaped the family due to traditionally held belief of men as breadwinners and women as homemakers also has an effect on women's careers (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). Due to race, religion, and socio political background, the women poverty rate in Nigeria is very high (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018).

Most women are still uneducated compared to their men counterparts (Anggadwita et al., 2017). We have about 1.4 billion poor people in the world, and 70% of them are predicted to be women (Anggadwita et al., 2017). In the past few decades, some women have come to understand the benefits associated with entrepreneurship and have decided to become a part of it (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). Hence, the increase in women entrepreneurship in countries around the world (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). In the United States, for example, women entrepreneurs own about 25% of total business, and women entrepreneurs in Canada and France own about one third and one fifth of the total businesses in the country respectively (Maden, 2015).

In Pakistan, some women are mainly protected, not permitted to move about freely on their own, or mix with men individually (Jha et al., 2018). For those who are willing to allow their women and girls to go out and obtain an education, for example,



they often encounter transportation issues and other barriers that limit their ability to move about freely to achieve their goals (Jha et al., 2018). Although Pakistani women make up about 50% of the economy, for example, their economic involvement remains low, as women owned enterprises only represent 3% of the 3.2 million enterprises in the country (Jha et al., 2018). Also, their role within the family has been seen as a social duty instead of a contribution to the economic development of the country (Jha et al., 2018).

These issues are higher in magnitude, unique to women entrepreneurs, are more distinct, multifaceted, and hard hitting, especially for women entrepreneurs in emerging economies (Jha et al., 2018). Women's work and contributions seem to have been ignored and or taken for granted because many societies have not recognized women's involvement in the development and growth of their countries' economies (Bhardwaj, 2018). In addition to work life balance, some women became entrepreneurs once they become married and have children, because when children are added to the equation, it poses a different set of issues for women than it does for men (Bhardwaj, 2018).

Pakistani women entrepreneurs, for example, are faced with environmental and traditional challenges such as cultural, religious, policymaking, and other institutional dynamics that limit their business and economic growth (Bhardwaj, 2018). Major limitations to women entrepreneur in Pakistan include inadequate education, inadequate support, insufficient financial resources, restricted access to information, no trust in their ability to succeed, and inadequate business resources growth (Bhardwaj, 2018). Nigerian women like women in other developing nations also have manifold responsibilities such

as motherhood and homemaking, which means taking on home based and low risk enterprises as a way to earn some income (Jha et al., 2018).

Although some women entrepreneurs become self-employed due to flexibility and independence, some Nigerian women become entrepreneurs as a way to conquer economic disadvantage, gender discrimination, and poverty and its effects (Bhardwaj, 2018). Some women entrepreneurs find it easy to participate in trade and service sectors where they have low representation in the small scale sectors of the economy (Maden, 2015). These small scale sectors of the economy are ascribed to low level education, inadequate financial and human capital, as well as the insufficient potential future opportunities, because, initiatives such as NEEDS, SEEDS, and LEEDS, unfortunately, do not seem to be making a difference (Bhardwaj, 2018).

Other government initiative such as the National Gender Policy, which was created to support the participation of women in both public and political affairs also does not seem to be making a difference (Bhardwaj, 2018). Some scholars have observed that the issue of gender inequality in Nigeria is not about initiatives or provisions within the constitution, but about implementation (Bhardwaj, 2018). Consequently, some women entrepreneurs in Nigeria are usually overlooked, undervalued, and hindered because of barriers, as most Nigerian women, for example, are not seen as fit and proper to own and engage in any significant investment that would enable them to grow financially independent (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018).

The reason may also be that the definition of poverty has influenced the sorts of poverty initiatives designed and implemented by different economies (Agarwal & Lenka,

2018). Regardless of the many definitions associated with poverty, some agree that the definition ascribed to poverty usually forms the basis on which poverty interventions are drawn (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). The inadequate definition ascribed to poverty for years has resulted in temporal and unsustainable poverty alleviation initiatives in many countries, as the leading definition of poverty could be seen more as the outcome of poverty rather than poverty itself (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018).

Some argued that the emergent definition of poverty has been a result of the interests advocated by the groups defining it (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). The definitions of poverty and the poverty alleviation strategies may have not always been in the interest of the poor themselves, but in the interests of the regime and the organizations that are involved in the poverty alleviation (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). Sixty-five percent of the majority of the population in most developing countries continues to live below poverty levels, even though billions of dollars are spent on poverty alleviation programs (Maden, 2015). The increasing trend in poverty in several nations has resulted to the need to reexamine the definition of poverty (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). This review of poverty definition could be a major difference between the underprivileged and the marginalized group (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018) in regards to making financing available to aspiring women entrepreneurs.

Most definitions of poverty seem to point mostly to the causes of poverty, which in turn, effects poverty initiatives and approaches. A fresh look at the definition may encourage sustainability and possibly poverty reduction because poverty has everything to do with the human spirit in certain conditions regardless of the person's geographic

location (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). This could contribute to reason low numbers of women entrepreneurs in Nigeria can obtain financing to start their enterprises.

Sustainable development and poverty eradication should not be seen as a way to meet people's needs, rather, a way to establish a supportive environment where all can realize and enjoy basic human rights (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018), among which is the ability to become an entrepreneur. For that reason, the need to address the glass ceiling occurrence, which tends to affect most women in and out of the workplace is necessary (Agarwal & Lenka, 2018). The glass ceiling phenomenon is a metaphor used to explain the invisible barriers that tend to hinder the advancement of talented women within the organization, out of frustration; these women leave the organization to become entrepreneurs (Anggadwita et al., 2017). Although these women become the chief executive officers (CEO) of their respective business, they tend to meet other forms of systemic gender biases such as limited credit availability from banks and reduced access to equity capital, which prevent them from attaining their full entrepreneurship potential; a concept known as the second glass ceiling (Anggadwita et al., 2017).

A gap in the literature subsists regarding research about how women in Niger Delta can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed. Mandel and Noyes (2016) evaluated how women may gain vocational skills through entrepreneurship education and identified higher education as a potent medium of learning for young women to develop skills required for entrepreneurship. Bennett and Woods (2014) appraised women entrepreneurship and education in the Western countries, and Martin (2016) described young women creativity

and alertness as an element to be developed in the youth for promoting entrepreneurship among youths. Despite the high rate of women unemployment and all the previous studies on women entrepreneurship development and education, none have described how women in Niger Delta can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study is to gain an in-depth understanding on how women in Niger Delta can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed. The conceptual framework for the study is grounded on the theory of planned behavior. The TPB has a direct link with educational processes and intention analysis by assessing the role of education in the intention formation process (O'Connor, 2013). The TPB is a suitable lens for considering the antecedents of entrepreneurial intentions formation through perceived behavioral control; personal attitude and subject norm; these intentions in combination, these intentions lead a student towards entrepreneurship as a career path (Rauch & Hulsink, 2015). In the review of the literature, I also assessed topics such as entrepreneurship, particularly women entrepreneurs, small scale businesses, women's' motivations for becoming entrepreneurs, as well as barriers and challenges influencing women entrepreneurs. Most women entrepreneurs, particularly those in developing nations, face challenges such as business financing, cultural and environmental issues, and insufficient required skills and education. Women entrepreneurs in Niger Delta State should be given equal treatment as their men counterparts and therefore, should encounter minimum and

controllable barriers relating to their small scale businesses. The information presented in this review has provided a basis from which to understand the phenomenon under study; the information small scale women entrepreneurs in Niger Delta State, Nigeria need to overcome possible barriers that influence their business and economic development. In Chapter 3, I provided the methodology that was used for the study and a description of the qualitative research and the rationale for selecting it over quantitative research. Additionally, I described and presented the rationale for choosing to conduct qualitative multiple case study.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to gain an in-depth understanding of how women in the Niger Delta states can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. I collected and analysed data related to the 20 women entrepreneurs who participated in this study. The information gathered in this study may illuminate the need for federal, state, or local government to focus on and help women entrepreneurs in Nigeria develop economically and reduce their poverty levels (Idris & Agbim, 2015; Ighodalo, 2012). The results of this study may also help alleviate the need for women entrepreneurs in Nigeria to depend on their husbands, partners, and relatives (Nkpoyen & Eteng, 2012; Ogidi, 2014). In this section, I provide the research design, the rationale for conducting a mini ethnographic case study, and the research questions that guided this inquiry. I also explain the selection of participants; data collection strategies; and data analysis, processing, and interpretation practices. Finally, I present my role as the researcher, ethical considerations, and a chapter summary.

#### **Research Design and Rationale**

The nature of this qualitative multiple case study was determined by the qualitative method of stating the research question. The use of multiple case study served as a guide in exploring the experiences of 20 women entrepreneurs who were engaged in entrepreneurial activities in one of the Niger Delta states in Nigeria. The main research question was the following: How have Niger Delta women entrepreneurs acquired the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed?

The two subquestions are:

SQ1: What are the factors that motivate and prepare women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta?

SQ2: What barriers hamper creating an entrepreneurial operation in the Niger Delta?

The research question and subquestions were reflections of the problem statement explored in this study. Research question also served as a framework for carrying out the study, helping to organize the study by ensuring study relevance, direction, and coherence toward the course of the study. Gill (2014) appraised multiple case study design as a design suitable for describing the essence of a case from the perspective of those who have experienced the problem that is being studied. In this study, I gained an in-depth understanding of how women in the Niger Delta states can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed.

### **Research Design**

Researchers are advised to identify research designs that are methodologically congruent with the intent of their inquiry (Van Maanen, 2015). Types of qualitative research designs include the Delphi technique, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative research, phenomenology, and case study, (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). I chose the multiple case study approach after a careful assessment. In the following subsections, I discuss the options that I considered for the research design in greater detail.

**The Delphi technique.** The Delphi technique is suitable as a research design when organizational protocols need to be established using experts for data collection



process (Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014). The technique is gaining acceptance as a research approach when researchers need to achieve consensus using a series of questionnaires and the provision of feedback to participants who have expertise in key areas (Green, 2014). The significant requirements for using the Delphi technique as a research design tool are the need for experts' judgment, group consensus to achieve results, anonymity in data collection that ensures zero influence on experts' answers; and a complex, multidimensional, and interdisciplinary problem (Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014; Green, 2014). Cassar, Marshall, and Cordina (2014) suggested that the Delphi approach becomes useful when a researcher needs to collect ideas from isolated experts on a specific topic and establish an agreement to discover the underlying assumptions or perspectives among the experts. In this study, I intended to interview the research participants in the field and not from isolated locations, so this design was not appropriate (Lewis, 2015).

**Ethnography.** Ethnography is useful when studying the culture of a people through face-to-face interviews with participants when the findings are related to cultural activities (Weis & Fine, 2012). The research design of ethnography addresses the learned behavior of a group (Weis & Fine, 2012). Ethnography involves a study of a cultural group and findings about cultural activities that focus on marginalized groups in societies (Van Maanen, 2015).

**Grounded theory.** Grounded theory is used as a research design when the aim of a study is to birth a new theory or conduct research with little theoretical foundation (Gambetti, Graffigna, & Biraghi, 2012). This study had a broad-based foundation, and appropriate explanations abound for the concept of entrepreneurship (Johnson & Bloch,

2015; Kenny & Fourie, 2014). Furthermore, researchers using the grounded theory approach have a goal of generating a theory; in this study, my intention was not to formulate a theory, making the use of the design inappropriate (Kenny & Fourie, 2014).

**Narrative research.** A narrative research design focuses on data collection from a storytelling perspective. This design is appropriate when data are collected from stories told by participants (Manning & Kunkel, 2014). The narrative design is focused on the life experiences and stories of participants presented in a story form (Bocuzzo & Gianecchini, 2015; Ivana, 2016). The use of narrative design in data collection is not suitable when the focus is on identifying broader strategic issues (Morse, 2015; Thomson, 2015); therefore, this design did not meet the needs of this study and was not used.

**Phenomenology.** Phenomenology places emphasis on the individual, is internally focused, and is suitable when people describe their lived experiences in relation to *what* and *why* questions pertaining to embarking on a decision or process (Tight, 2016; Yuksel & Yildirim, 2015). The phenomenological approach derives its strength from when the researcher tries to understand the principles of the lived experience of an individual or a related group of persons by collecting required information relating to subjective interpretations, beliefs, perceptions and specific human experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2014). These experiences create various descriptions of the essence of the experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2014; Yuksel & Yildirim, 2015). Because this study was externally focused, dealt with externalities, and was conducted to gain insight into how graduates gain entrepreneurial knowledge, the phenomenology approach was not appropriate.

**Case study.** The case study research design is preferred when an insufficient knowledge on theories exist, and when the likelihood or chance that a new theory might be developed through the outcome or result of the research being undertaken exists (Yilmaz, 2013). This research design is based on the premise of the purpose of the study and the types of data to be collected (Denzin & Lincoln, 2014). The qualitative exploratory case study design was most suitable for this study. Case study was used to explore how women in the Niger Delta states can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed.

To achieve breadth and depth of scholarship when using the case study design, Yin (2018) identified the following components of a case study: (a) the case study question, (b) building propositions, (c) identifying the unit of analysis, (d) linking data to the propositions, and (e) interpretation of findings. Peltokorpi (2014) suggested that research questions for case studies should include terms such as *what*, *how*, or *why*. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to gain an in-depth understanding of how women in the Niger Delta can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. The unit of analysis in the study was 20 women entrepreneurs from four Niger Delta states in Nigeria who had operated their businesses for at least 5 years. Participants were asked to describe their preparation and experiences, including any challenges concerning how they were motivated to make the decision to start their businesses in the past or currently as they strove toward economic development. I collected data through semistructured interviews and review of documents from the participants.

To determine the best approach to the study of women's entrepreneurship, ethnography, grounded theory, narrative, and case study were all reviewed. Finlay (2012) compared case study to other qualitative methods of research and specified how case study is different from other qualitative designs. Narrative, grounded theory, ethnography, and the phenomenological study design all share an ontological philosophical framework with multiple case study design (Finlay, 2012).

The narrative method of inquiry is suitable for storytelling, biographical research and involves an assumption that people organize their lived experiences into stories (Finlay, 2012). Both phenomenology and narrative research allow participants to share stories and assign meaning to their experiences through shared stories (Sather, 2012). Because of the robust, in-depth approach, the focus of narrative research is in the narratives of only one or two participants (Gill, 2014). Although the narrative and phenomenological designs are similar, for studying entrepreneurship challenges confronting women in the Niger Delta states, the multiple case study design of inquiry was preferable because multiple case study design is used to target multiple perspectives rather than one or two points of view. The size of the population in multiple case study is determined at the data saturation level (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Using the grounded theory method involves adopting a naturalistic and interpretive perspective on the world of lived experience (Staller, 2012). Unique in its approach, the aim of grounded theory research is to generate a theory from raw data. Comparing grounded theory design with quantitative research, the grounded theory investigator begins the process of data collection with a large number of participants and

ends with an empirically grounded hypothesis that can undergo further tests using either quantitative or qualitative methods (Cunliffe, 2011). Ethnographic design starts from the fields of anthropology and sociology and is the systematic, scientific study of human societies in their natural settings (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011).

Using ethnographic research, researchers gather data by becoming immersed in the day-to-day activities of a culture-sharing group (Van Maanen, 2015). Given that the purpose of this study was understanding women's entrepreneurship challenges in the Niger Delta states of Nigeria in depth, the multiple case study design was appropriate for two reasons: (a) using other qualitative designs would have failed to answer the primary research question concerning the experiences of women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta states, and (b) using other qualitative designs would have required extensive time in the field. The final qualitative method considered was the multiple case study design.

Multiple case study research is a systematic investigation of a case within its real-world context (Tsang, 2013; Yin, 2018). A multiple case study involves a particular group, program, issue, or social problem (Yin, 2018). In a multiple case study, the unit of analysis regarding participants may be one or more individuals, which is a common practice of psychology research (Yin, 2018). The data collection process in case study may involve conducting several interviews, taking field notes, reviewing documents, conducting field observations, and examining artifacts (Thyer, 2012). Given the nature and objectives of this study, the case study design, unlike the other alternative qualitative designs, was adequate to provide answers to the research questions. Case study is valuable for in-depth, incisive approaches; nevertheless, case study requires extensive

time, expense, and researcher labor (Snyder, 2012). Yin (2018) stated that case study involves one or multiple cases and collection of data through several sources such as interviews, field notes, and document review. With a case study, the researcher's interest is in the perspectives of individuals rather than that of a group, which could be biased by the researcher (Yin, 2018).

### **Role of the Researcher**

Unlike quantitative research, where statistical procedures are applied to ensure validity and reliability of the research findings, qualitative researchers employ methods and strategies to ensure the trustworthiness of findings (Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, & Cheraghi, 2014; Street & Ward, 2012). For instance, a researcher must account for personal biases that may affect the findings of a study (Fielding, 2012; Sanjari et al., 2014; Smith & Noble, 2014). Qualitative research allows participants to have a voice in the research process as it heightens the contributions of everyone connected to a study (Englander, 2012; Trotter, 2012). A quantitative study also enables participants to be empowered through the research process, as they are actively involved in the study and can voice their individual experiences through interviews (Frels & Onwuegbuzie, 2013; Rowley, 2012).

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research usually involves informal rapport between the participant and the researcher (Kendall & Halliday, 2014; Mikecz, 2012). The researcher is also responsible for ensuring that participants have the opportunity to validate the findings through member checking (Harper & Cole, 2012; Loh, 2013; Paull, Boudville, & Sitlington, 2013). I contacted potential participants by

telephone and in person to request their participation in the study. With the understanding that bias can occur at any stage in the research process, I mitigated bias in my study by implementing a qualitative multiple case study design, which was an appropriate design for this study. Additionally, it is important to note that researchers conducting case study research are susceptible to bias, as this type of research approach requires that the researcher understand the framework of the issue beforehand (Smith & Noble, 2014; Yin, 2018).

To mitigate these issues, a researcher should endeavor to disclose his or her initial findings and perceptions (Smith & Noble, 2014). For this study, I collected data through in-depth semistructured interviews, field notes, and document review. I also used reflective journaling as a data collection method; doing so enabled me to engage in self-analysis and reflection, which are important elements of field research. This practice gives a researcher an opportunity to reflect on his or her role concerning the case that is being studied (Smith & Noble, 2014). Although I used purposeful convenience sampling for this study, most of the participants were unknown to me prior to the study. An entrepreneur is one who starts up, runs, and grows a business (Sanjari et al., 2014).

### **Methodology**

For this study, I adopted the qualitative methodology to explore the requisite knowledge that small-scale women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta have to make decisions about becoming self-employed. Qualitative research can be used to add a dimension to studies that cannot be obtained through measurement of variables alone (Saunders & Rojon, 2014).

### **Participant Selection Logic**

A purposeful convenience sampling of 20 women entrepreneurs from four Niger Delta states in Nigeria was used to ensure that all participants shared a common experience as entrepreneurs. Purposive sampling stems from the understanding that participants have precise knowledge or experience, which is seen as an interest in the investigation (Fugard & Potts, 2015). More specifically, I used the criterion sampling technique as discussed by Duan, Bhaumik, Palinkas, and Hoagwood (2014). Purposeful sampling is commonly used in qualitative research as it enables the researcher to identify and select information-rich cases related to the case under study (Robinson, 2014; Roy, Zvonkovic, Goldberg, Sharp, & LaRossa, 2015).

Among the types of purposeful sampling strategies, criterion sampling may be the most commonly used (Fugard & Potts, 2015). Purposeful sampling involves the ability to choose persons or groups of people that are especially well informed about or are proficient with the case under study (Robinson, 2014). Purposeful sampling helps to evaluate and narrow down the population, finalize the sample, and understand the scopes associated with the context (Robinson, 2014). The triangulation of research sampling strategies may lead to more appropriate findings that may be consistent with recent developments (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

I asked 20 women entrepreneurs from four Niger Delta State, Nigeria who have operated their businesses for at least five years to describe their preparation and experiences, including any challenges in how they were motivated to take the decision to start their businesses in the past or currently, as they strive towards economic



development. Since these women are not unknown to me, I went to the four Niger Delta states to get from public knowledge if they would be willing to participate in my study. I contacted potential participants by telephone and in person to request participation in the study. Once they agree, I explained what the study entailed and how it would affect them. These women shared and articulated their experiences and perspectives of any challenges they may have faced now or in the past as it relates to business and economic knowledge through entrepreneurship. Trotter (2012) noted that qualitative methodologists do not seem to agree on a precise sample size; however, they agreed that the number of interviews needed to attain saturation could be affected by various factors. Some of those factors include the nature and scope of the researcher, the number and quality of interviews per participant, researcher experience, and sampling procedure (Dworkin, 2012; O'Reilly & Parker, 2012).

Concerning grounded theories that had smaller sample sizes (20 or fewer interviews) with no justification for the sample size used. The benefits associated with small sample size is that enough time is devoted to analyzing and reporting in depth, rich and thick content given the amount of information gathered from the data collection process (Peter, 2015). One of the disadvantages concerning small sample size is lack of transferability (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012; Trotter, 2012). Similarly, the advantages of large sample sizes are that it can ensure that saturation is reached (Peter, 2015). The disadvantages could be attributed to not devoting enough time to analyzing and reporting in-depth, rich and thick content given the amount of information gathered from the data collection process (Sabbour, Lasi, & Tessin, 2012).

Sample sizes that are selected based on purposeful sampling strategy are usually determined in connection with data saturation (Dworkin, 2012). This is because, theoretical saturation conveys the perception that purposive sampling has a component of the process associated with it, which indirectly involves a process of data collection that works together with data review and analysis (Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014; Dworkin, 2012). The data collection process can end when no additional insight into the research problem being addressed is found (Dworkin, 2012). Some scholars have suggested several ways to determine when the data are saturated in qualitative research (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Walker, 2012). For example, some scholars recommended using percentages or other quantitative procedures, while others recommended experimenting with codebooks in qualitative research (Edwards, 2014; Walker, 2012). Supporting the affirmation that no concrete solution exists across qualitative research methods concerning ways to determine when the data are saturated (Walker, 2012). Data saturation is defined as a collection of data in a study until no new information can be obtained from the data (Edwards, 2014; Fusch & Ness, 2015; Walker, 2012). The availability, location, and flexibility of the participants did not minimize the participation in this study because I conducted the study in the local markets where their businesses were located.

### **Instrumentation**

I collected primary data, so reflexivity is vital for qualitative research. I was careful of any biases (Kozlov et al., 2015). Rather than strive to eliminate such bias, it is important that the researcher manages and mitigates them (Kendall & Halliday, 2014).

Other data collection instruments that I used for this study include a semistructured interview, field notes, and document review. I used information from the women entrepreneurs as the basis from which to address the inadequate requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed.

### **Field Test**

Anseel, Beatty, Shen, Lievens, and Sackett (2015) explained that a field test is a method of obtaining feedback from experts in research design. In this study, procedures for expert validation involved sending invitational e-mails to qualitative research subject matter experts listed in the Walden University faculty expert directory (FED). The expert validation method, in which feedback is obtained from experts in qualitative research design, is used by researchers to check for alignment of research questions to interview questions and to obtain qualitative research subject matter experts' feedback (Anseel et al., 2015). Using the FED, I sent invitational emails to 11 experts on case study (see Appendix B) containing an attachment with the abridged proposal, which included the title page, problem statement, purpose statement, research question, and initial interview questions (see Appendix A).

The 11 qualitative research experts acknowledged receipt of the email; however, only three experts responded to my inquiry. The comments that I received from the three experts provided insight for revising the initial interview questions, which became the final interview questions (see Appendix B). The experts were kind enough to highlight some of the elements that were omitted and to provide further insights into ways of improving the quality of my proposal (Anseel et al., 2015). Subject Matter Expert 1

asserted that the problem statement needs to be revised and reworked to align with the purpose statement and the research question. I sent a reply email explaining how the problem statement aligned with both the purpose statement and the research question. Subject Matter Expert #2 made suggestions on possible corrections to the problem statement and the purpose statement but affirmed that the problem statement, the purpose statement, and the research question were aligned.

I made corrections to the suggested areas. Subject Matter Expert #3 recommended that I revise Interview Questions 4 and 5. Further communication between me and each of the experts was conducted via e-mail, and the feedback obtained became the final interview questions (see Appendix B). The evaluated interview question and the inputs from the subject matter experts enabled me to make the necessary revisions, improve the quality of my work, and collect relevant data from the research participants that were used in answering the research question in order to address the gap in the literature.

**Semistructured interviews.** Semistructured interviews are in-depth interviews that allow the participants to answer interview questions (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). An interview is the most common form of data collection in qualitative research, a crucial moment in the research process, but yet, entails several challenging aspects (Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). It is a form of a framework that requires its practices and standards to be recorded, archived, challenged, and reinforced, it also requires that knowledge is gained, but most importantly, gives the interviewer a lot of extra information that can be added to verbal answer given by the participant (Jamshed, 2014; Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). Some scholars suggested that researchers use

unstructured interviews when conducting field work that is long term, because it allows participants to express their views in their way and pace (Jamshed, 2014; Mikecz, 2012; Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013). It also allows them to share their views with minimal structure on participants' response or when more useful information can be obtained from focused yet conventional two-way communication with the interviewee (Jamshed, 2014; Mikecz, 2012; Peredaryenko & Krauss, 2013).

Semistructured in-depth interviews are mostly used when interviewing one person or a group of persons and lasts about 40 minutes to an hour; it also seems to provide a more useful data when the sample size is relatively small (Jamshed, 2014; Pathak & Intrat, 2012). An advantage associated with face to face semistructured interviews is the provision of social cues such as voice, intonation, and body language (Nguyen, 2015). This form of interview is largely based on semistructured interview guide, a representation of topics or questions that need to be explored by the researcher (Jamshed, 2014; Nguyen, 2015). The use of an interview guide serves the purpose of ensuring that the interview time is wisely spent and that the interview focuses on the topic of discussion (Jamshed, 2014). To effectively capture the interview data, researchers record the interview once proper permission is attained, because recording the interview enables the researcher to focus on the content of the interview (Jamshed, 2014; Redlich-Amirav & Higginbottom, 2014).

A disadvantage of a semistructured interview could arise from a novice researcher's inability to recognize where to ask prompt questions or probe responses during the interview. Once the interview is completed, the researcher needs to transcribe

the interview and analyze the data (Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). Interviews are also liable to be biased, as the participant may want to please the researcher by saying what he or she believes the researcher may want them to say. Additionally, the researcher's views could create bias by expressing surprise or disapproval about a comment made by a participant (Smith & Noble, 2014; Tanggaard, 2014).

In addition to serving as a tool for interview questions, the interview protocol included scripts of what the researcher said, before, during, and after the interview (Dima & Bucuță, 2016). It can serve as a tool to remind the researcher when informed consent can be collected, as well as when to ask about information that the researcher is interested in (Cheraghi, Ghiyasvandian, & Aarabi, 2015; Foti, Eleazar, & Furphy, 2014). As a result, the interview protocol becomes a practical guide for leading qualitative researchers through the interview process, in addition to containing a set of research questions (Cheraghi et al., 2015). Interview questions were designed to gather information on subjective and objective measures of the barriers and their influence on women entrepreneurs. Eight interview questions would be derived from the research question: How have Niger Delta women entrepreneurs acquired the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed?

### **Research Subquestions**

- SQ1: What are the factors that motivate and prepare women entrepreneurs in Niger Delta?
- SQ2: What barriers hamper creating an entrepreneurial operation in Niger Delta?

Questions would relate to other forms of business training, mentoring, and coaching was important to this study because some women entrepreneurs have inadequate entrepreneurial skills and education needed for business development and growth. The ability to ask questions concerning other forms of business training allowed me to control for other learning experiences, such as personal learning and professional service consultations.

**Document review.** The second instrument for the data collection was document review. In conducting an examination of records, I searched across a broad range of databases, such as papers, articles, and reports from the participants. Document review afforded me the opportunity to create a database of participants' experiences with entrepreneurship activities. Examination of documents is an easy way to access information in a timely manner (Edelman, 2012). The participants validated the information obtained through examination of documents. Dworkin (2012) noted that the document review process is an adequate method for collecting data needed to provide answers to the research question, as well as to demonstrate methodological triangulation. The documents that were reviewed included participants' records of training, policy service documents stating the number of training program the participants have attended in a year, on capacity building.

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

The steps involved in preparation for data collection in advance of data analysis are as follows.

1. Obtained approval from the Walden University Institutional Review Board on the suitability of the letter of cooperation.
2. Obtained permission from Walden University Institutional Review Board to conduct research for the study.
3. Obtained consent from the individual participants.
4. Scheduled and conducted interviews with participants to collect data; audio-recorded the interviews.
5. Transcribed audio-recorded interviews.
6. Performed member checking by allowing participants review the summary of the transcripts to ensure accuracy in my interpretation and meanings of participants' interview responses.
7. Imported textual transcript into Microsoft Word for commencement of data analysis.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

Data analysis was performed on the data collected from semistructured interviews, a review of document. Yin (2018) recommendation a series of steps for conducting qualitative research as follows: (a) data compilation, (b) data disassembly, (c) data reassembly, (d) data interpretation, and (e) data conclusion and meaning derived. After transcribing all of the audio-recorded semistructured interviews and focus group interviews and complete member checking, the next step was to upload the textual transcript into NVivo software from Microsoft Word to organize the data into groups and themes. Miles and Huberman (1994) explained that determining the means of data



collection, data organization, and data storage are important considerations before one commences data collection process to save time during data management. I developed a robust data framework that improved the use of data collected. The data framework served as a guide for future researchers who might be interested in furthering the body of knowledge. Data organization tools such as NVivo were useful for organizing the data collected from the interview, and document review (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

The aim of data analysis in qualitative research is to deduce the data and the subsequent themes to help understand the phenomenon under study (Baskarada, 2014; Sangster-Gromley, 2013). Qualitative content analysis is a research method for a subjective explanation of the content of a text data through a logical taxonomy process of coding and pattern identification (Cho & Lee, 2014; Ritter, Broers, & Elger, 2013). It is also a method for thoroughly cataloging the meaning of qualitative material (Brown & Gardner, 2015; Cho & Lee, 2014). The qualitative content analysis enables a researcher to utilize the inductive, deductive approaches or a combination of the two when conducting the analysis (Cho & Lee, 2014; Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2012). An inductive method can be useful when very little information is known about the case under study, therefore, codes, categories, or themes are directly extracted from the data (Allemann & Sund-Levander, 2015; Brown & Gardner, 2015).

Content analysis also allows the researcher to mine noticeable as well as underlying information from the data (Cho & Lee, 2014). Conducting a qualitative research analysis involves a researcher's ability to uncover and understand what the data are trying to inform him or her (Cho & Lee, 2014; Rowley, 2012). Coding and labeling a

qualitative study allows for the emergence of themes, as it requires that a researcher can define the sentences, phrases, and paragraphs attained during the interview process and arrange it in such a way that commonalities and themes among the data were identified (Dasgupta, 2015). Data from each participant were coded so that names are not used. I used codes such as Participant 1 to Participants 20 to represent each participant. With the ongoing need for operational and candid strategies to be used by qualitative researchers to analyze data, a method for data identification, labeling, and coding known as content analysis were developed (Collier, Moffatt, & Perry, 2015).

Content analysis is exclusively used to classify, organize, and summarize data, and can be used when a researcher has collected qualitative data through, semistructured interviews, field notes, and documentary analysis (Vohra, 2014). Sargeant (2012) noted another type of analysis, known as interpretive analysis, which can lead to an in-depth understanding of the study results. The interpretive analysis consists of three stages, which include deconstruction, interpretation, and reconstruction. These three stages occur after interview transcription, so the data are ready for analysis (Callary, Rathwell, & Young, 2015; Sargeant, 2012). I used NVivo to organize the data and manually analyse the data using Yin 5 data analysis methods (Yin, 2018). Deconstruction is similar to content analysis, as it involves the breaking down data into several parts to understand what is included in them (Hale, Pathipati, Zan, & Jethwani, 2014). This process requires the researcher to read, reread the interview transcripts, and reduce the data into categories or codes that can describe the content of the transcribed data (Griffiths, 2016). After deconstruction, the researcher would endeavour to make sense of, and understand the

coded data, a process known as interpretation (Dasgupta, 2015; Singh, 2014). This process enables the researcher to make comparisons of the categories and codes across all transcripts (Sargeant, 2012). At this stage, Sargeant (2012) noted that one or two general ideas and notions usually emerges as the main idea, and the rest would appear in the form of subthemes that contribute further to the main theme.

Several approaches to qualitative research data analysis exist (Baskarada, 2014; Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid, & Redwood, 2013). Some analysis seems to be concerned with the language and how it is used in social interaction such as discourse analysis and ethnomethodology, others pay attention to the meaning and language as in narrative method and phenomenology (Gale et al., 2013; Lin & Mao, 2015; Seidi, Alhani, & Salsali, 2014). Others seek to develop theory through a series of procedures and interconnected stages as in the case of grounded theory (Brown & Gardner, 2015). Several of these approaches are associated with specific and precise discipline whereas others are supported by philosophical ideas that shape the process of analysis (Lin & Mao, 2015). It is important to note that theme development is a common characteristic of qualitative data analysis, as it involves the systematic search for patterns to generate full descriptions that can illuminate the phenomenon under study (Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2013). Particularly, most qualitative researchers use the constant comparative method that was developed as part of grounded theory (Paradis, Leslie, & Gropper, 2015). In addition to constant comparative method which I used, I also gained an understanding of the credibility of the research results by conducting an indepth review of participant responses (Gale et al., 2013; Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2013).

After which I proceeded to conduct a more detailed analysis to identify common themes, patterns, and meanings as stated by Gale et al. (2013), Lips-Wiersma and Mills (2013) and Onwuegbuzie et al. (2012). Coding can be conducted digitally using CAQDAS as it is a useful way to track new codes automatically, some researchers however, employ pen and paper as a preferred method until they reach the later stage in coding process (Gale et al., 2013; Marshall & Friedman, 2012). I first transcribed the audio recording of each interview into Microsoft Word and then imported it into Microsoft Excel for data analysis. This process was useful because it sped up the procedure and ensured that data could be easily retrieved in the later stage (Cope, 2014; Gale et al., 2013; Rademaker, Grace, & Curda, 2012).

It is important to note that computer software does not analyze the data but simply serves as an effective way to store and organize data in a way that makes it available to be analyzed (Schlitz, Ha, Marks, & Lauhon, 2012). This is unlike quantitative statistical analysis software which can make calculations with the right instructions (Gale et al., 2013). I analysed interview transcripts manually to extract specific and important statements, phrases, and sentences concerning how Niger Delta women entrepreneur can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed what are the motivating factors that can increase women participation in entrepreneurship in Niger Delta, and what are the entrepreneurial activities required of Niger Delta women to acquire to becoming an entrepreneur. I generated a list of themes associated with possible answers to the research questions.

Yin (2018) suggested five analytical techniques that I can use to analyze a case study research. They include; pattern matching, explanation building, time series analysis, logical models, and cross case synthesis (in the case of multiple case studies). For this study, I employed the pattern matching technique, as it enabled me to capture the entrepreneurial knowledge women entrepreneurs require. I triangulated the data from the interview transcripts, field notes, and document review notes on entrepreneurial knowledge women in Niger Delta require to becoming self-employed.

Once I completed the data analysis, I evaluated the data for accurate interpretation and research findings to ensure that the themes and findings that emerged during the data analysis were consistent with the conceptual framework of the study, the research question, and the literature review on the research phenomenon. This process is recommended by Imenda (2014). I hope to publish the research results to all stakeholders, including the small scale women entrepreneurs in Niger Delta state, Nigeria, government and nongovernmental organizations, community leaders, and educational institutions using effective platforms such as conference presentations, training, seminars, and journal articles. I engaged the participants' in the data analysis and interpretation process. The interview questions may help to address the research questions: How Niger Delta women entrepreneur can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed what are the motivating factors that can increase women participation in entrepreneurship in Niger Delta, and what are the entrepreneurial activities required of Niger Delta women to acquire to becoming an entrepreneur?

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness could be described as the openness and sensitivity applied to the phenomenon in a study (Baskarada, 2014). Baskarada (2014) described trustworthiness to refer to the credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability of data collected during a study, which implies the sensitivity applied during data collection. Patton (2002) shared a different view of ensuring trustworthiness in carrying out a study, categorizing the strategies that lead to research trustworthiness as (a) reporting the size of the population to be studied, (b) describing the choice of the sample size, (c) explaining the research processes that are relevant to future researchers, (d) maintaining openness and flexibility to standards and methods, and (e) teaching and encouraging transparency of data reporting among the stakeholders of the study. Using an interview protocol is essential to collecting relevant information from participants (Patton, 2002). I adhered to the use of interview protocol to keep track of the questions for uniformity in the data collection process

Trustworthiness defined by Patton (2002) is traditional scientific research criteria and includes the following:

1. Objectivity of the inquirer to reduce bias.
2. Validity of the data, systematic rigor of fieldwork procedures.
3. Triangulation (consistency of findings across methods and data sources).
4. Reliability of codings and pattern analyses, correspondence of findings to reality.
5. Transferability (external validity).

6. Strength of evidence supporting causal hypotheses.
7. Contributions to theory.

### **Credibility**

Harper and Cole (2012) described credibility as the process a researcher engages in to ensure that findings are accurate. Credibility as evaluated is the value and acceptability of the research outcome that involves conducting the research in a convincing manner and the ability to demonstrate that the processes were trustworthy (Houghton et al., 2013). I maintained credibility within the context of the study by participating in a series of one-on-one interviews with the selected 20 participants. I spent sufficient time in the interview process to gain an in-depth understanding of the case under investigation. I ensured that no new themes or concepts emerged before concluding each interview. I transcribed the 20 individually recorded interviews verbatim and ensured participants received a manuscript of the transcribed interview for comment and correction.

Transcribing interviews verbatim was done to ensure that participant' subjective statements and interpretations did not form the basis of the findings and conclusion. I used transcript review by providing each participant a copy of the transcription to close any likely gaps or imprecise statements and returned to the participants with my interpretation of what was said to ensure that I had captured the meaning for member checking. I adhered to the rule of triangulation as a strategy for ensuring credibility. By ensuring credibility in data collected through semistructured interview, field notes, and the document review process, I corrected all discrepancy discovered in the data collection

process. Member checking reinforced my own checks for accuracy. I wrote out the questions, provided copies for member checking, returned to the participants with my interpretations to ensure that I had captured the meaning of what was said, and continued the process until no new data emerged. Yin (2018) explained that maintaining credibility (internal validity) entails that multiple sources of evidence are preferred to a single source of evidence. Yin also suggested the creation of a case study database, and that a chain of evidence is maintained. Finally, Yin suggested the researcher should exercise care in using data from electronic sources as social media information.

### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the ability to reapply a research finding in another study (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). To determine transferability in the study, I adequately explained the findings of the study to provide detailed descriptions for future readers to make informed decisions about the transferability of the findings to a specific organization, location, or context (Stake, 1995). The areas to include in the research description are the research methods, research design, data presentation, and research so that readers and future researchers can make their own interpretations. The readers make the decision whether a study is transferable or not (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Borrego et al. (2009) implied that transferability is how research findings and outcomes are useful to the environment, individuals, and a country. The outcome may not be transferable to the other women in other parts of Nigeria to ensure the well-being of citizens of the country.



**Dependability**

Dependability refers to how well-established the data used in a research study are (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Tobin and Begley (2004) described the process whereby a reader could understand the steps in arriving at a conclusion in a study as an audit trail. I provided an audit trail to outline the research activities throughout the research process to justify the rationale for the research method and design. To enhance dependability in the study, I examined all the processes that adhered to arriving at the findings and described the processes followed in the study.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the objectivity and correctness of data (Houghton et al., 2013). To ensure confirmability in the study, I maintained a qualitative objectivity within the study through entries in a reflexive journal (for personal presupposition) and a reflective journal (for an audit trail). The justification for the decisions made in research methodology and data thematization are recorded as journal entries in the reflexive journal. I documented all reflections regarding personal experience, culture, biases, and explanations that would inform and influence the research process (Nimon, Zientek, & Henson, 2012). All such notes were identified only by numerical codes. Houghton et al. (2013) explained that the credibility of a study is not only on the research procedures, but also on the self-awareness of the researcher throughout the research process. I used member checking to ensure reliability and validity of data; after conducting the interview and transcribing the audio recording, I interpreted the transcript and shared my

interpretations with the participants and obtained participants' feedback to validate the data.

### **Ethical Procedures**

Seidman (2013) explained the interview process as including conceptualization of the interview plan, creating access and making communication with the sampled population, interviewing the sampled population, transcribing the data, and presenting the findings for all stakeholders who might find them relevant. Protecting participants' right was paramount. I informed the participants of their right to accept or reject the offer to participate in the study. The participants had the right to withdraw any time from the interview process without penalty, as stated in the both expression of interest form and the informed consent form. I kept all the collected for a period of 5 years in a safe place, after which I shredded the interview notes and transcripts, and destroy the flash drive used for storing any data during the data collection process. I commence data collection after the approval by the Walden University Institutional Review Board approval (IRB # 01-03-19-0496169).

### **Summary**

Chapter 3 covered the description of the case study research design. I provided a description of the qualitative method that served as underpinning guide for the study. The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study is to gain an in-depth understanding on how women in Niger Delta can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed. The research design employed in the study served as a guide for the interview questions that were designed to extract information to

answer to the research question. Twenty women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta states were selected to participate in providing data through a semistructured interview, field notes, and document review. The participants were women who are engaged in entrepreneurial activities in one of the Niger Delta states in Nigeria. Two data collection methods; semistructured one-on-one interviews, field notes, and document review was used to collect data to allow for exploration of the research question. Chapter 4 contains the presentation of data collected and analyzed for the study.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to gain an in-depth understanding of how women in the Niger Delta states can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. To address the research question and purpose of the study, I conducted a qualitative analysis using semistructured interviews with 20 women entrepreneurs from four Niger Delta states in Nigeria who had operated their businesses for at least 5 years. During the interviews, participants described their preparation and experiences, including any challenges relating to how they were motivated to make the decision to start their businesses in the past or currently as they strove toward economic development. I purposively selected the 20 research participants and obtained data from them using semistructured face-to-face interviews. Additionally, I reviewed archival training documents to ascertain the correctness of some business information of the participants.

In this chapter, I describe the methodology that I used for the data analysis in this study to provide a common understanding of the findings related to the research question and interview questions. I collected data in the interviews using eight open-ended questions to address the central research question: How have Niger Delta women entrepreneurs acquired the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed? The research subquestions were as follows:

SQ1: What are the factors that motivate and prepare women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta?

SQ2: What barriers hamper creating an entrepreneurial operation in the Niger Delta?

The data resulting from the 20 interviews with the participants served as the input for analysis after I used NVivo 11 software to organize the data. In Chapter 4, I present an overview of the purpose of the study, the design of this study, and the implementation of the research setting, demographics, data collection, analysis, and general analysis strategy used for this study. I illustrate the data collection procedures and data analysis processes using coding and themes to reflect the findings ascertained from the stored data collection consisting of 20 respondent audio recordings and transcriptions.

### **Research Setting**

To recruit participants for this study, I asked 20 women entrepreneurs from four Niger Delta states in Nigeria who had operated their own businesses for at least 5 years to describe their preparation and experiences, including any challenges in how they were motivated to make the decision to start their businesses in the past or currently as they strove toward economic development. The interviewing process and member checking occurred in four Niger Delta states in Nigeria and spanned 3 weeks in the office premises of the participants. I administered and disseminated the script and the consent form to the research participants and explained the primary focus of the study prior to asking them the interview questions.

Some potential participants declined to take part in the study based on their busy schedules, and others did not respond to my email. Some potential participants did not have email addresses; therefore, I contacted them and learned that they did not have the

qualifications to participate per the inclusion criteria. As a result, I sent e-mails to other possible participants not contacted earlier, to those who responded, I sent consent forms and interview protocols. I obtained the necessary number of participants and set up interviews. The interviews lasted approximately 30-45 minutes. I sent a transcript to each participant on the day after her interview; I did this over the course of the data collection process to ensure participants' immediate review for the strength, validity, and reliability of the study.

All 20 participants asked for copies of their final transcripts, and four participants requested copies of the final dissertation. The strength of the study reflects a mixture of interviewees' expertise varying from their area of specialization or trade. The professional knowledge shared by the participants during the face-to-face interviews for the selected times showed the depth of their knowledge of the experiences of entrepreneurship that they shared with me without any signs of discomfort.

### **Demographics**

The sample for this study consisted of 20 women entrepreneurs from four Niger Delta states in Nigeria who had operated their businesses for at least 5 years to describe their preparation and experiences, including any challenges in how they were motivated to make the decision to start their businesses in the past or currently as they strove toward economic development. The purposeful sampling allowed me to intentionally select this sample size, which had demographics aligned with the criteria for participation in this qualitative study. Tables 1 and 2 depict the demographics of the research participants. The study involved five participants from each of four Niger Delta states in Nigeria. In

alignment with the objectives of the study, I used the sample size of 20 to establish data saturation and appropriately answer the central research question.

Table 1

*Participant Demographics*

Participant number	Gender	Education level	Years of self-employment	Type of business	Niger Delta state
Participant 1	Female	BSc	5	Agriculture	Edo
Participant 2	Female	BSc	6	Oil & gas	Edo
Participant 3	Female	HND	5	Hair stylist	Edo
Participant 4	Female	HND	7	Paint production	Edo
Participant 5	Female	HND	6	Soap production	Edo
Participant 6	Female	HND	6	Hair stylist	Warri
Participant 7	Female	Master's	5	Oil & gas	Warri
Participant 8	Female	BSc	7	Catering services	Warri
Participant 9	Female	BSc	7	Agriculture	Warri
Participant 10	Female	HND	6	Hair stylist	Warri
Participant 11	Female	BSc	5	Oil & gas	Port Harcourt City
Participant 12	Female	BSc	5	Catering services	Port Harcourt City
Participant 13	Female	BSc	8	Oil & gas	Port Harcourt City
Participant 14	Female	Master's	7	Paint production	Port Harcourt City
Participant 15	Female	HND	5	Soap production	Port Harcourt City
Participant 16	Female	BSc	5	Hair stylist	Bayelsa
Participant 17	Female	HND	6	Hair stylist	Bayelsa
Participant 18	Female	BSc	5	Agriculture	Bayelsa
Participant 19	Female	BSc	5	Soap production	Bayelsa
Participant 20	Female	BSc	5	Oil & gas	Bayelsa



### **Data Collection**

After receipt of approval from the Walden University IRB (# 01-03-19-0496169), I commenced recruitment of the research participants—five participants each from four Niger Delta states in Nigeria. The four Niger Delta states from which participants were recruited were Edo, Warri, Port Harcourt City, and Bayelsa. I completed data collection through semistructured interviews with the women entrepreneurs. E-mails (see Appendix E) were sent to the potential participants after I had received formal approval from the Walden University IRB for data collection. Participants had to sign the informed consent form to formally express their willingness to participate in the study.

I completed the interviews of the 20 participants using a digital audio recorder to record their responses. I obtained permission from the participants to record their responses. The duration of the interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 40 minutes, with an average of 35 minutes and 12 seconds per participant; the entire data collection process took about 3 weeks. I listened to the audio recordings of the interviews several times, transcribed the interviews, and used member checking to ensure that I captured the correct responses during the interviews. The transcripts were saved as Word documents on a laptop; I emailed transcripts to participants who had Internet access, and I took hard copies of the transcripts to the participants who had no Internet access to verify the accuracy of the information presented. I asked the participants to provide feedback within 48 hours if changes were necessary. I did not receive responses or complaints from any of the participants and assumed that the participants were satisfied with the contents of the

transcripts. All 20 participants requested their transcripts, and four requested a copy of the dissertation after completion.

I had to make small changes to the data collection plan outlined in Chapter 3. I initially intended to interview and analyze data from 15 research participants but ended up interviewing 20 participants. Each participant was available on time during the interview process. After completing the interview, I reviewed documents with each of the participants at their offices at an agreed date. I also collected field notes during the face-to-face interview session of each participant. The interview location was based on the preference of the research participants. The interview protocol (see Appendix D) served as the data collection framework that I consistently used throughout the data collection process. I will store all of the data that I collected for 5 years before destruction.

In this study, I used in-depth, open-ended interview questions to generate responses that uncovered important themes, categories, and subcategories. I used the same interview questions (see Appendix B) in each interview with the 20 participants. I was the data collection instrument, collecting data from the 20 interviewees using the research question and interview questions (see Appendix B). All 20 participants provided feedback that supported the research question and interview questions. I used one audio recorder and performed hand coding during data collection. The hand-coding process was a significant factor that supported the development of codes. I used the hand-coding process as a backup strategy to fully capture the data for understanding the respondents' feedback for coding, analysis, and transcript development.

### **Data Analysis**

My data analysis plan was deployed as previously outlined in Chapter 3. The interpretive analysis consisted of three stages: deconstruction, interpretation, and reconstruction. These three stages occurred after interview transcription so that the data were ready for analysis (Callary et al., 2015; Sargeant, 2012). I used NVivo to organize the data and manually analyse the data using Yin's five data analysis methods (Yin, 2018). Deconstruction is similar to content analysis, as it involves the breaking down of data into several parts to understand what is included in them (Hale et al., 2014). This process requires the researcher to read and reread the interview transcripts and then reduce the data into categories or codes that describe the content of the transcribed data (Griffiths, 2016). After deconstruction, the researcher endeavors to make sense of and understand the coded data, in a process known as *interpretation* (Dasgupta, 2015; Singh, 2014). This process enables the researcher to make comparisons of the categories and codes across all transcripts (Sargeant, 2012). Sargeant (2012) noted that the emergence of one or two general ideas and notions as primary usually occurs at this stage, with the remaining ideas appearing in the form of subthemes that contribute further to the main theme(s).

Several approaches to qualitative research data analysis exist (Baskarada, 2014). Some forms of analysis, such as discourse analysis and ethnomethodology, seem to be concerned with language and how it is used in social interaction, while others such as the narrative method and phenomenology pay attention to the meaning of language (Gale et al., 2013; Lin & Mao, 2015; Seidi et al., 2014). Others seek to develop theory through a

series of procedures and interconnected stages, as in the case of grounded theory (Brown & Gardner, 2015). Several of these approaches are associated with specific and precise disciplines, whereas others are supported by philosophical ideas that shape the process of analysis (Lin & Mao, 2015). It is important to note that theme development is a common characteristic of qualitative data analysis, as it involves a systematic search for patterns to generate full descriptions that can illuminate the phenomenon under study (Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2013). Particularly, most qualitative researchers use the constant comparative method that was developed as part of grounded theory (Paradis et al., 2015). In addition to the constant comparative method, which I used, I gained an understanding of the credibility of the research results by conducting an in-depth review of participant responses (Gale et al., 2013; Lips-Wiersma & Mills, 2013).

I proceeded to conduct a more detailed analysis to identify common themes, patterns, and meanings, as described by Gale et al. (2013), Lips-Wiersma and Mills (2013), and Onwuegbuzie et al. (2012). Coding can be conducted digitally using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), as it is a useful way to track new codes automatically; some researchers, however, employ pen and paper as a preferred method until they reach the later stage in the coding process (Gale et al., 2013; Marshall & Friedman, 2012). I first transcribed the audio recording of each interview into Microsoft Word and then imported it into Microsoft Excel for data analysis. This process was useful because it sped up the procedure and ensured that data could be easily retrieved at a later stage (Cope, 2014; Gale et al., 2013; Rademaker et al., 2012).

It is important to note that computer software does not analyze the data but simply serves as an effective way to store and organize data in a way that makes it available to be analyzed (Schlitz et al., 2012). This is unlike quantitative statistical analysis software which can make calculations with the right instructions (Gale et al., 2013; Schlitz et al., 2012). I analysed interview transcripts manually to extract specific and important statements, phrases, and sentences concerning how Niger Delta women entrepreneur can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed what are the motivating factors that can increase women participation in entrepreneurship in Niger Delta, and what are the entrepreneurial activities required of Niger Delta women to acquire to becoming an entrepreneur. I generated a list of themes associated with possible answers to the research questions.

Yin (2018) suggested five analytical techniques that I can use to analyze a case study research. They include; pattern matching, explanation building, time series analysis, logical models, and cross case synthesis (in the case of multiple case studies). For this study, I employed the pattern matching technique, as it enabled me to capture the entrepreneurial knowledge women entrepreneurs require. I triangulated the data from the interview transcripts, field notes and document review notes on entrepreneurial knowledge women in Niger Delta require to becoming self-employed. Once I completed the data analysis, I evaluated the data for accurate interpretation and research findings to ensure that the themes and findings that emerged during the data analysis were consistent with the conceptual framework of the study, the research question, and the literature review on the research phenomenon. This process is recommended by Imenda (2014). I

hope to publish the research results to all stakeholders, including the small scale women entrepreneurs in Niger Delta state, Nigeria, government and nongovernmental organizations, community leaders, and educational institutions using effective platforms such as conference presentations, training, seminars, and journal articles. I engaged the participants' in the data analysis and interpretation process. The interview questions may help to address the research questions: How Niger Delta women entrepreneur can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed what are the motivating factors that can increase women participation in entrepreneurship in Niger Delta, and what are the entrepreneurial activities required of Niger Delta women to acquire to becoming an entrepreneur?

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

#### **Credibility**

Harper and Cole (2012) described credibility as the process a researcher engages in to ensure that findings are accurate. Credibility as evaluated is the value and acceptability of the research outcome that involves conducting the research in a convincing manner and the ability to demonstrate that the processes were trustworthy (Houghton et al., 2013). I maintained credibility within the context of the study by participating in a series of one-on-one interviews with the selected 20 participants. I spent sufficient time in the interview process to gain an in-depth understanding of the case under investigation. I ensured that no new themes or concepts emerged before concluding each interview. I transcribed the 20 individually recorded interviews verbatim and ensured participants received a manuscript of the transcribed interview for comment and

correction. Transcribing interviews verbatim was done to ensure that participant' subjective statements and interpretations did not form the basis of the findings and conclusion. I used transcript review by providing each participant a copy of the transcription to close any likely gaps or imprecise statements and returned to the participants with my interpretation of what was said to ensure that I had captured the meaning for member checking. I adhered to the rule of triangulation as a strategy for ensuring credibility.

By ensuring credibility in data collected through semistructured interview, field notes, and the document review process, I corrected all discrepancy discovered in the data collection process. Member checking reinforced my own checks for accuracy. I wrote out the questions, provided copies for member checking, returned to the participants with my interpretations to ensure that I had captured the meaning of what was said, and continued the process until no new data emerged. Yin (2018) explained that maintaining credibility (internal validity) entails that multiple sources of evidence are preferred to a single source of evidence. Yin also suggested the creation of a case study database, and that a chain of evidence is maintained. Finally, Yin suggested the researcher should exercise care in using data from electronic sources as social media information.

### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to the ability to reapply a research finding in another study (Sinkovics & Alfoldi, 2012). To determine transferability in the study, I adequately explained the findings of the study to provide detailed descriptions for future readers to

make informed decisions about the transferability of the findings to a specific organization, location, or context (Stake, 1995). The areas to include in the research description are the research methods, research design, data presentation, and research so that readers and future researchers can make their own interpretations. The readers make the decision whether a study is transferable or not (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Borrego et al. (2009) implied that transferability is how research findings and outcomes are useful to the environment, individuals, and a country. The outcome may not be transferable to the other women in other parts of Nigeria to ensure the well-being of citizens of the country.

### **Dependability**

Dependability refers to how well-established the data used in a research study are (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Tobin and Begley (2004) described the process whereby a reader could understand the steps in arriving at a conclusion in a study as an audit trail. I provided an audit trail to outline the research activities throughout the research process to justify the rationale for the research method and design. To enhance dependability in the study, I examined all the processes that adhered to arriving at the findings and described the processes followed in the study.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the objectivity and correctness of data (Houghton et al., 2013). To ensure confirmability in the study, I maintained a qualitative objectivity within the study through entries in a reflexive journal (for personal presupposition) and a reflective journal (for an audit trail). The justification for the decisions made in research



methodology and data thematization are recorded as journal entries in the reflexive journal. I documented all reflections regarding personal experience, culture, biases, and explanations that would inform and influence the research process (Nimon et al., 2012). All such notes were identified only by numerical codes. Houghton et al. (2013) explained that the credibility of a study is not only on the research procedures, but also on the self-awareness of the researcher throughout the research process. I used member checking to ensure reliability and validity of data; after conducting the interview and transcribing the audio recording, I interpreted the transcript and shared my interpretations with the participants and obtained participants' feedback to validate the data.

### **Study Results**

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to gain an in-depth understanding on how women in Niger Delta can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed. I purposively selected 20 participants in alignment with the research method and methodology of this research study; I recruited 20 the participants after getting the Walden University IRB approval, and I interviewed the 20 participants as outlined in Chapter 3. The responses from the 20 participants formed the basis for the generation of the themes. The analysis of the themes was based on the interview questions in alignment with the central research question and the sub-questions. Participants' interviews were transcribed and the transcription served as evidence to the theme formation. I transcribed the interviews word for word, but removed such words as *Umms*, *ahhs*, and repeated the participants' words as interviewed. I presented the themes in the highest order of occurrence and order of the interview

questions using the semistructured interview protocol. I also included the themes that emerged from the field notes, and observation along with the interview questions to triangulate the data.

**Research question.** The central research question for the study was: How have Niger Delta women entrepreneurs acquired the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed?

**Research subquestions.**

SQ1: What are the factors that motivate and prepare women entrepreneurs in Niger Delta?

SQ2: What barriers hamper creating an entrepreneurial operation in Niger Delta?

Table 2

*Case Study's Research Question, Interview Questions, and Proposed Data Analysis*

Research question/ subquestion	Interview question	Types of data	Analysis
How have Niger Delta women entrepreneurs acquired the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed?	What training or learning on entrepreneurial knowledge did you acquire in life that prepares you towards your pursuit of entrepreneurship?	Semistructured, open-ended questions, field notes, and document review	Through coding and emerging themes
What are the factors that motivate and prepare women entrepreneurs in Niger Delta?	What challenges have you encountered after acquiring entrepreneurial knowledge?		
What barriers hamper creating an entrepreneurial operation in Niger Delta?	What was your impression of becoming self-employed as a woman?		
	How does need for self-achievement enhance your knowledge to become self-employed?		
	How does your need for affiliation enhance your knowledge to become self-employed?		
	What are the motivational factors you derived from being self-employed?		
	What are the other reasons or factors that influenced your decision as entrepreneur to become self-employed in Niger Delta?		
	What other challenges confront your business that you may share in this interview?		

Table 3

*Themes Generated From Research Questions/Subquestions*

Codes	Themes	Number of occurrences	Percentage of occurrences
Knowledge acquisition through creativity and innovation on ideas	Creativity and innovation	15	75%
Knowledge acquisition through learning new ways of services and lifelong self-development	Fostering learning and development	14	70%
Acquisition of entrepreneurial knowledge by developing businesses and mastering business act	Developing business perspective	16	80%
Acquisition of knowledge through the aid of information technological tools	Using information technology	17	85%
Acquisition of knowledge through financial and economic literacy	Financial and economic literacy	12	60%
Factors such as mentoring staff to become leaders someday	Mentoring the mentees	14	70%
Factors such as financial freedom	Financial freedom	20	100%
Motivated by having flexible time to perform task and provide unique services	Flexibility of time	18	90%
Motivated by having full control of decision and business activities	Adequate control	17	85%
Barrier such as lack of training on entrepreneurship prior to starting up a business in Nigeria	Lack of adequate entrepreneurial training	15	75%
The unfriendly nature of the environment could serve as deterrent to business survival	Unsupportive business environment	15	75%
Not having adequate education on a particular business could limit the progress of the intending entrepreneur	Educational barriers	17	85%
Not having sufficient funds could deter or limit the rate of progress for an entrepreneur	Shortage of funds and resources	20	100%

## **Emergent Themes**

### **Theme 1: Creativity and Innovation**

The first emergent theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview question, and document review. Fifteen participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11,12, 14, 15, 16, and 20) who represent 75% responded that creativity and innovation is a training received that prepared them towards becoming entrepreneurs and becoming self-employed. Participant 1 and 2 inferred that by obtaining knowledge on innovation and creativity, an intended entrepreneur begins to reveal relevance for service which may lead to a decision to becoming self-employed in pursuing passion on service delivery. Participant 3 stated ‘’ by exploring my innovation and creative mind, I began to see myself as entrepreneur; starting my business in the line of provision of security to financial institution became easy and clear as a business I wanted to kick start’’. Participant 4, 5, and 7 inferred that as soon as your mind is trained to create and innovate, new ideas begin to flow into your mind; becoming an entrepreneur also begin to become a reality. Participant 6 mentioned that ‘’ having the opportunity to build your innovated mindset as well as improving your creativity, becoming an entrepreneur take precedence over working as salary employee’’. Participant 8,9,11 inferred that

all an entrepreneur requires is knowledge acquisition on innovation and creativity; training on both qualities set you up for entrepreneurial role, to provide quality, service oriented goods and services across board with a

sole aim of making profits and satisfying the customers beyond what the competition can provide.

Participant 12, 14, and 15 mentioned that acquisition of training on innovation, creativity, and customer service set the pace for thinking towards becoming an entrepreneur. Participant 16 and 20 inferred that having trained towards the thought of becoming innovative and becoming creative in a diverse market such as we have in Nigeria, a would-be entrepreneur begins to conceive entrepreneurship thought; that ability to serve a wide range of customers without recourse to your employer's approval.

### **Theme 2: Promoting Learning and Development on Entrepreneurship**

The second emergent theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview question, field notes, and document review. Fourteen participants (1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, and 20) who represent 70% responded that promoting learning and development on entrepreneurship is a way that could lead to having the thought of becoming self-employed. Participant 1, 2, 4, and 5 all mentioned that the promotion of learning and development of entrepreneurial knowledge might propel someone to become self-employed eventually. Participant 6, 7, 8, and 9 all agreed that through learning and development of entrepreneurial characteristics, an employee gradually begin to nurse the thought of becoming an entrepreneur. Participant 10 stated

Learning any skill and promoting personal development on entrepreneurship was the knowledge I pursued after having a first degree in sociology. During my formative stage in the acquisition of knowledge

on entrepreneurship, my focus was fisheries, which was also a passion. As a business that requires expertise, I knew I required I needed to learn in details and also develop myself for the opportunities as well as the challenges. For me, one begins to prepare for self-employment, the moment he begins to learn and develop those skills required to become entrepreneur.

Participant 11, 12, and 14 inferred that improving one's learning on any field of calling and self-development are two criteria required for self-employment decision. Participant 15, 16, and 20 agreed that for one to become self-employed, one has to learn and develop a skill in an area of providing goods or services to the market place.

### **Theme 3: Developing Business Mindset**

The third emergent theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview question, field notes, and document review. Sixteen participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 19) who represent 80% responded that developing business mind-set is a training required to make decision about becoming self-employed. Participant 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 all agreed that they developed business mindset on a particular trade before venturing into that line of business, hence becoming self-employed. Participant 6 mentioned

The first step toward becoming self-employed is to identify a business gap or opportunity waiting to be explored; I developed business mindset on e-business, sewing cloths and advertising them online for both local and foreign market. I continuously develop my business mindset to improve

on existing market as well as expand by introducing more lines of business into my portfolio.

Participant 7, 8, 10, and 11 inferred that the first criteria towards becoming self-employed is developing the business mindset of the individual; to know the business cycles, how to identify customers, provision of services, and retaining the customers for business sustainability. Participant 12, 14, and 15 mentioned that developing business mindset is the beginning towards becoming self-employed. As soon as one begins to learn how to think as an entrepreneur, one begins to take responsibility of the line of business, one chooses to serve its clients. Participant 16, 17, and 19 mentioned that developing business mindset is required to becoming self-employed; the entrepreneur takes full responsibility of the choice of business activities.

#### **Theme 4: Information Technology**

The fourth emergent theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview question, field notes, and document review. Seventeen participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20) who represent 85% responded that information technology is one factor that motivate and prepares women towards making the decision about becoming self-employed. Participant 1 stated ‘ ‘ I began to think of becoming self-employed the moment I realized the with information technology, I could perform the duties of more than four persons put together. Participant 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 agreed that through information technology, one could learn the skills of becoming self-employed, hence beginning to think of becoming self-employed. Participant 7, and 8 mentioned



that knowledge on information technology alone, provide a ready market for any would-be- entrepreneur, as not everyone could use information technology in some Niger Delta states in Nigeria. Having to have such knowledge, set one apart from the crowd, hence having the thought of becoming self-employed and having adequate time to attend to customers' needs and requests.

Participant 8, 10, and 11 mentioned with knowledge on information technology, one could begin to make significant improvement in delivery services in an existing part time business, which may eventually lead to conceiving the thought of focusing on that line of business for adequate results in meeting customers' requests. Participant 12, 14, 16, and 17 mentioned that acquisition of knowledge on information technology could be a necessary knowledge that could set one apart from the crowd, hence creating the thought of becoming self-employed when the result of what information technology could be used to achieve as compared to manual labor. Participants 19 and 20 mentioned that we knowledge on information technology coupled with other personal developmental knowledge, one start to think of becoming self-employed, especially after when one had identified a potential market to be served.

### **Theme 5: Financial and Economic Literacy**

The fifth emergent theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview question, field notes, and document review. Twelve participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11,12, 14, 15, 16, and 20) who represent 60% responded that financial and economic literacy is a factor that motivate and prepare

women towards making the decision about becoming self-employed. Participant 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 mentioned in the interview that having financial and economic literacy was the beginning of their realization that becoming self-employed was possible for any business oriented individual. Participants 6, 7 and 8 also refer that after having knowledge in how to keep accounting and financial records coupled with understanding the economic theory of demand and supply, they started channeling their marketing strategies towards a market where the demand for their products were high at a low cost. Participant 10-20 inferred that literacy on financial and economic knowledge was a major insight into having the knowledge of an employer of business, which initiate the thoughts of becoming self-employed.

#### **Theme 6: Mentoring the Mentees**

The sixth emergent theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview question, field notes, and document review. Fourteen participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11,12, 14, 15, and 19) who represent 70% responded that mentoring and mentees is a source of entrepreneurial knowledge acquisition required to make decision about becoming self-employed. Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 mentioned that having a mentor who is self-employed is a sure way of becoming self-employed easily. Participant 6 stated that

I started as a mentee to a self-employed in my chosen area of business. I was mentored for 2 years and I learnt the processes that involve in the business start-up, expansion and growth, as well as the strategies require for business sustainability. I gained confidence as a result of this mentor-

mentee relationship. The advantage of using a mentor is that even after you have commenced your business, you still rely on your mentor for the day-to-day questions while *trying the waters* in your new business start-up. Participant 7, 8, 10, and 12 mentioned that the best way to learn the ropes of becoming self-employed is by using a mentor and serving as mentee within a given period of time. Participant 14, 15, and 19 inferred that they started knowing the possibility of becoming self-employed was feasible the moment they had a mentor who had the knowledge, education, and training on the business they wanted to have an in-depth knowledge on.

### **Theme 7: Financial Freedom**

The seventh emergent theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview question, field notes, and document review. Fifteen participants (1 to 20) who represent 100% responded that financial freedom was the first reason for having the thought of becoming self-employed. All participants mentioned that the drive and passion of becoming financially free from receiving salaries and having the freedom to making financial decisions, and exploring the strategies of making decisions, that may lead to achieving financial freedom was a major motivation towards becoming self-employed.

### **Theme 8: Flexibility of Time**

The eight emergent theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview question, field notes, and document review. Eighteen participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20) who

represent 90% responded that flexibility of time was a major factor leading to the decision of becoming self-employed. Participant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 mentioned that having flexible time at work was a major factor or motivation towards making the decision to self-employment. Participant 7, 8, 10, and 11 inferred that flexibility of time as self-employed was a major motivation in taking the decision to becoming self-employed. They all stated that when they realized the flexibility of time as an entrepreneur, they all had knew that self-employment was a better deal than been in the payroll of another company. Participant 12, 13, 14, and 15 inferred that having flexible time to multi task and combine different activities at same time, gives an entrepreneur advantage. Participant 16, 17, 19, and 20 mentioned during the interview that the major factor that influence the decision to becoming self-employed was the luxury of time to attend to several activities.

### **Theme 9: Adequate Control**

The ninth emergent theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview question, field notes, and document review. Seventeen participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11,12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20) who represent 85% responded that adequate control was the factor that motivated them to start nursing the idea of becoming self-employed. Participant 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 mentioned during the semistructured interview process that having the control mandate could be a source of motivator to a would-be entrepreneur to become to take the decision immediately on becoming self-employed. Participant 6, 7, and 8 inferred that the control of checking the planned budget against the actual budget made them took the decision of

becoming self-employment. Self-employment is most likely preferred to becoming staff in a company. Participant 11-20 all the participant mentioned that having the authority to cut cost or increase control was the major factor towards making the decision of becoming self-employed.

### **Theme 10: Lack of Adequate Entrepreneurial Training**

The tenth emergent theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview question, field notes, and document review. Fifteen participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11,12, 14, 15, 16, and 20) who represent 75% responded that lack of adequate entrepreneurship training is a barrier that hampers the creation of entrepreneurial operations in Niger Delta. Participant 1 stated

Not having adequate knowledge on entrepreneurship has been a major issue here in Niger Delta. People may have the financial resources to venture into small business such as soap making, agriculture, or fish farming; but when such training is not provided in a school or in any organize setting, we get frustrated initiating such venture for fear of failure. For instance, apart from the block making business that I do, I could manage other small business, but due to lack of training in those venture, I have to remain on one business.

Participant 2, 3, 4, and 5 mentioned that lack of training on major entrepreneurial venture had been the major limitation while people don't become self-employed.

Participant 6, 7, 8, and 10 inferred that due to no training on how people could become self-employed, a lot of people shy away from taking such risk. Participant 11, 12, 14, 15,

16, and 20 mentioned that people in Niger Delta are skillful on farm farming but when everybody is training on fish farming, who is going to do other services and business, these lack of training on other ventures had limited people from becoming self-employed.

### **Theme 11: Unsupportive Business Environment**

The eleventh emergent theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview question, field notes, and document review. Fifteen participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11,12, 14, 15, 16, and 20) who represent 75% responded that unsupportive business environment is a barrier that hampers creating entrepreneurial operations in Niger Delta. Participant 1-6 mentioned that in Niger Delta, government tax is usually same with both new and old business. Government demand notice for yearly payment are as high as one million naira (N1,000,000) which could be a major challenge for a new start up. Participant 7, 8, and 10 mentioned that the cost of renting accommodation for new business are usually high as a result of oil and gas activities in Niger Delta state; most landlord relate every new business to oil and gas business which limit the activities of new businesses that are not related to oil and gas. Participant 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, and 20 inferred that the hash environmental levies from community, government, landlord, business registration, accommodation, and taxes make self-employment unattractive in Niger Delta states.

### **Theme 12: Educational Barriers**

The Twelfth emergent theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview question, field notes, and document review. Fifteen participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11,12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19 and 20)

who represent 85% responded that educational barriers hampers creating an entrepreneurial operation in Niger Delta states. Participant 1 and 2, mentioned that the high rate of illiteracy in Niger Delta has direct effect on low entrepreneurs in Niger Delta states. Participant 3,4, 5, and 6 inferred that lack of education in most Niger Delta states is a barrier to entrepreneurship in the states; it is difficult to entrust huge amount of capital on illiterate men and women in Niger Delta states to start business for fear of diversion of those funds. Participant 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12 mentioned that the high level of school dropout has been a major reason while people don't even become self-employed when such skills to become self-employed are not picked up on the street. Participant 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, and 20 agreed that the low educational patronage in Niger Delta states in Nigeria has a direct impact of low entrepreneurship activities in Niger Delta.

### **Theme 13: Shortage of Funds and Resources**

The thirteenth emergent theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview question, field notes, and document review. Twenty participants (1-20) who represent 100% responded that shortage of funds and resources are major barriers that hampers creating an entrepreneurial operation in Niger Delta. All participants agreed that shortage of funds, inability to raise capital, lack of collateral security, inability to earn, and inability to save are some major reason for shortage of funds, which further limit the entrepreneurial activities in Niger Delta states.

### **Summary**

In Chapter 4, I explained the setting of the research concerning the demographics and schedule for interviews. I presented the demographics of the participants drawn from

the five Niger Delta states in Nigeria that made up the multiple case study. The research question was used to identify how Niger Delta women entrepreneurs acquired the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed, identify the factors that motivate and prepare women entrepreneurs in Niger Delta, and identify the barriers that hamper creating an entrepreneurial operation in Niger Delta. I discussed the trustworthiness and its application to the study. The chapter comprised the study results that encompassed how I generated the codes that entailed the themes in alignment with the interview questions and participants' quotes supporting the themes. Chapter 5 reflects the findings from the study, including the clarification and considerations to support additional research knowledge, the limitation of the study, the recommendation, and the implication of social change for the study.



## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to gain an in-depth understanding of how women in the Niger Delta can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. I purposively selected 20 participants in alignment with the research method and methodology of this research study; I recruited 20 the participants after obtaining Walden University IRB approval, and I interviewed the 20 participants as outlined in Chapter 3. A qualitative approach was appropriate for this study because the qualitative research method may be used to explore potential antecedents and factors that researchers do not know about or intend to explore (see Khan, 2014). The participants in this study answered my interview questions and contributed to the development of emerging themes to address the research question.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The research question that guided this study was the following: How have Niger Delta women entrepreneurs acquired the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed?

The research subquestions were as follows:

SQ1: What are the factors that motivate and prepare women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta?

SQ2: What barriers hamper creating an entrepreneurial operation in the Niger Delta?

I manually coded the data from the transcribed interviews of the research participants, my field notes, and document review to generate themes to address the

research question. Thirteen significant themes emerged, and I aligned the themes with my findings from the literature review in Chapter 2 to ascertain their concurrence with existing literature and to support the research framework.

### **Creativity and Innovation**

The first theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found that creativity and innovation contribute to how Niger Delta women entrepreneurs acquired requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. This first theme supported Lee's (2016) findings on innovation and creativity; Lee identified the three most important physical work environmental characteristics for companies to produce creative, innovative ideas and products and services for growth and market competitiveness as balanced layout, technology interface for collaboration, and space for idea generation. Innovation is considered to be the main thrust of successful entrepreneurship, while creativity is a foundation of innovation (Lee, 2016). Creativity involves producing novel and useful ideas, and innovation entails successfully implementing these ideas in an organization (Khalili, 2018). The findings confirmed the statements of Mandel and Noyes (2016) as noted in Chapter 2; entrepreneurship is usually linked with risk taking, innovation, creativity, and search for investment (Mandel & Noyes, 2016).

### **Promoting Learning and Development on Entrepreneurship**

The second theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found that promoting learning and development related to entrepreneurship contributed to how Niger Delta women

entrepreneurs acquired the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. The second theme aligns with the work of Toding and Venesaar (2018). Toding and Venesaar indicated that lecturers with a learning-centered mindset tended to make changes in their teaching approaches and introduced changes in other teaching and learning components, such as content (learning process) and outcomes of the learning subjects. Inconsistency in the application of changes had justified the need for a systemic approach to entrepreneurship training and learning (Warhuus, Tangaad, Robinson, & Erno, 2017). Entrepreneurial learning is experiential in nature and involves the application of learning principles through hands-on action in rich contexts, as well as the use of interactive social learning with and from others (Toding & Venesaar, 2018; Warhuus et al., 2017). The theme confirmed previous literature on promoting learning and development in entrepreneurship.

### **Developing Business Perspective**

The third theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found that developing business viewpoints contributed to how Niger Delta women entrepreneurs acquired the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. The third theme aligns with the work of Farzaneh, Isaai, Arasti, and Mehralian (2018) and Ansong and Boateng (2019). Farzaneh et al. revealed that team-level influential factors play a significant role in business development success. A business development perspective can be enhanced by interactions and relationships with suppliers and customers (Farzaneh et al., 2018). A business development perspective involves applications, functions, and

methods for in-depth analysis of data to enable accurate and informed decision making in an organizational context (Ansong & Boateng, 2019). Ansong and Boateng (2019) investigated 20 international companies' business development perspectives and identified various patterns, such as (a) cooperative value innovation, (b) customer-centric value innovations, (c) corporative productivity improvement, and (d) company-centric productivity improvement. The findings confirm previous literature on business development.

### **Using Information Technology**

The fourth theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found out that knowledge on information technology contributed to how Niger Delta women entrepreneurs acquired the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. The fourth theme aligns with the work of Astuti, Rahayu, and Wilopo (2018). Astuti et al. inferred that the use of information technology brings a company favorable conditions such as ease of market entry, product differentiation, and cost efficiency. Information is indispensable for an organization as an input in decision making to solve problems confronting it (Astuti et al., 2018). Information is required to survive and succeed by responding to current and future business competition.

The management of an organization must respond to competition in a way that promotes better performance while enhancing and maintaining quality, competitiveness, and flexibility to cope with further pressures and make needed changes (Lindh & Nordman, 2017). Information technology ability can enable a business to produce

innovative products quickly with high quality, high competitiveness, cheaper prices, increased productivity, and a reduced number of workers compared to competitors in order to face increasingly fierce competition (Lindh & Nordman, 2017). Fast and secure services may be created with the help of technology; this is certainly a distinct competitive advantage for a company. The findings further support the claim that with information technology, women in the Niger Delta could realize how possible it is to become self-employed.

### **Financial and Economic Literacy**

The fifth theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found that financial and economic literacy contributed to how Niger Delta women entrepreneurs acquired the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. The fifth theme aligns with the work of Bongomin, Ntayi, Munene, and Malinga (2017). Bongomin et al. (2017) observed that SMEs contribute up to 45% of total employment and 33% of national income in developing economies. Hussain et al. (2018) found that SMEs encounter external finance constraints as a result of insufficient knowledge of financial and economic management. SMEs are characterized by poor financial and managerial knowledge, which affects their access to external finance (Baker, Kumar, Goyal, & Gaur, 2019). Limited financial and economic literacy negatively impact SMEs' chances of survival, growth, and innovation (Baker et al., 2019). SME owners' financial and economic literacy may increase if they are educated on business best practices and access to finance (Bongomin et al., 2017).

## **Mentoring the Mentees**

The sixth theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found that mentoring contributed to how Niger Delta women entrepreneurs acquired the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decisions about becoming self-employed. The sixth theme aligns with the work of Mains and MacLean (2017). An entrepreneurial mentoring system was started in the 1970s in Europe and the United States; its success has attracted much attention among academic researchers since the 1980s (Mains & MacLean, 2017). Interest in mentoring has been revitalized in recent years and is becoming a key part of the learning and training toolkit (Mains & MacLean, 2017). Formal mentoring programs include one-to-one mentoring, peer mentoring, and group mentoring (Ting, Feng, & Qui, 2017). Mentoring initiatives have been driven by the finding that entrepreneurial successes are largely influenced by entrepreneurial mentoring (Ting et al., 2017). Most of the members of the first generation of entrepreneurs have not yet retired; thus, it is hard for them to dedicate enough time and effort to the mentoring service (Ting et al., 2017). Mentors in China usually include entrepreneurs, government officials, and scholars from research institutions, with each group having a different participation motivation, mentoring approach, and mentoring capabilities (Ting et al., 2017). Young entrepreneurs tend to hold relatively low-level education degrees and to lack entrepreneurship education, as mentioned in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor report of 2015 (Gisbert-Trejo, Landeta, Albizu, & Fernandez-Ferrin, 2019). From the perspective of the mentoring process, the transfer of knowledge, information, and resources depends crucially on not

only the characteristics of the substance, but also on the context in which such transfer takes place (Gisbert-Trejo et al., 2019).

### **Financial Freedom**

The seventh theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found that financial freedom was a major contributor to why entrepreneurs made decisions about becoming self-employed. The Seventh theme aligns with the work of Ghosh and McCannon (2017). Financial independence is a stage in life in which individuals no longer trade time for money (Ghosh, 2016). Individuals have assets that pay cash and cover expenses (Ghosh, 2016). Individuals control their finances instead of being controlled by them (Ghosh & McCannon, 2017). The path to financial independence is not a get-rich-quick strategy. Sarpong-Kumankoma, Abor, Aboagye, and Amidu (2018) inferred that most individuals who become entrepreneurs and self-employed do so for the need to become their own boss and make decisions independently without much interference from a team. Financial freedom is achieved by SMEs investing in profitable ventures and having multiple investments with high demand and low competition (Ghosh, 2016). I found out that the seventh theme emerged from the subquestion one, on the factors that motivate and prepare women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta. Becoming financially free motivated women entrepreneurs who were interviewed. This concept of financial freedom is a gap that require further research on how it could be used to motivate other women to become entrepreneurs, thereby becoming employed and improve their standard of living.

### **Flexibility of Time**

The eighth theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found that flexibility of time was a major contributor to why entrepreneurs made decisions about becoming self-employed. The eighth theme aligns with the work of Yousaf and Majid (2018). Weathes et al. (2018) described entrepreneurial time flexibility as a characteristic of formal or informal institutions that permits individual choice. When choice itself, rather than a specific behavior or action, becomes the target of institutionalization, then flexibility and freedom are built in and explicitly preserved (Weathes et al., 2018). The preservation and protection of choice lead to and foster more creative, innovative, and entrepreneurial behaviors (Yousaf & Majid, 2018). Institutional flexibility is likely to increase entrepreneurial intentions of individuals in several ways through the mechanism of giving choice. Greater choice is likely to increase the self-efficacy of individuals. Such choice might signal that leaders within institutions trust individuals with making appropriate choices. This confidence improves self-efficacy, which makes it more likely that individuals will have confidence to aspire to entrepreneurship (Yousaf & Majid, 2018). I found out that the eighth theme emerged from the subquestion one, on the factors that motivate and prepare women entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta. Having the flexibility of time motivated women who became entrepreneurs that were interviewed. This concept of time flexibility made the participants take a decision to become self-employed rather than be an employee to other employers.



### **Adequate Control**

The ninth theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found that the drive to have adequate control was a major contributor to why entrepreneurs make decisions about becoming self-employed. The ninth theme aligns with the work of Lewis, Ho, Harris, and Morrison (2016). Perenlyl et al. (2018) described an entrepreneur as someone who identifies a market opportunity for commodities and products and creates a business organization to pursue the opportunity. Entrepreneurs tend to have a strong internal locus of control (Perenlyl et al., 2018). Locus of control is a concept defining whether a person believes that he or she is in control of the future or someone else is in control of it.

People who feel that they are victims of outside forces, who blame others for what happens to them, have an external locus of control. Entrepreneurs have a very strong internal locus of control (Lewis et al., 2016). Entrepreneurs believe that their future is determined by the choices that they make (Lewis et al., 2016). Entrepreneurs want to be self-directed (Zhang & Chun, 2018). Entrepreneurs want to be in control of their activities (Zhang & Chun, 2018). Entrepreneurs often do not fit well in traditional employment positions. Entrepreneurs do not want to be told what to do; they know what they want to do and how to do it (Zhang & Chun, 2018). Entrepreneurs like to create things. A business entrepreneur likes to create businesses and organizations. Often, the more unique a business, the better entrepreneurs like it. They like the challenge of coming up with new solutions (Lewis et al., 2016). I found out that the ninth theme emerged from the subquestion one, on the factors that motivate and prepare women

entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta. Having control in making decision motivated women who became entrepreneurs that were interviewed. This concept of adequate control is a gap that require further research on how it could be used to motivate other women to become entrepreneurs, thereby becoming employed and improve their standard of living.

### **Lack of Adequate Entrepreneurial Training**

The 10th theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found that lack of adequate entrepreneurial training was a major barrier blocking women from becoming self-employed in the Niger Delta states. The 10th theme aligns with the work of Lassalle and McElwee (2016). The capability of entrepreneurs and small firms to manage the extent and complexity of regulation is dependent upon their entrepreneurial skill, and this has been a major concern of small firms' associations and representatives of entrepreneurs worldwide (Lassalle & McElwee, 2016). Zheng, Xu, Chen and Dong (2017) appraised entrepreneurial behavior as a process of strategic thinking that is required to maintain an independent belief system that supports discovery, exploration, and exploitation of wealth opportunities that destabilize prior market equilibrium, demonstrating innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurship to generate new flexible, adaptive, and responsible market spaces that reward people who are ready, able, and willing to meet emerging individual and societal needs, wants, hopes, and expectations.

Entrepreneurial skill incorporates attitudes that have a specific object and can be approached as something that can be changed through communication or experience (Deakins, Bensemman, & Battisti, 2016). Lack of entrepreneurial skills is a key factor

affecting entrepreneurial performance; entrepreneurial experience refers to prior experience gained from involvement in venture businesses or entrepreneurial management (Feder & Nity-Antonie, 2017). The reason is that millions of people looking for jobs after spending about 6 years in a university in Nigeria cannot apply their knowledge towards creation of job as entrepreneurs due to the nature of the educational curriculum (Kolade, 2018). I found out that the tenth theme emerged from subquestion two; what barriers hamper creating an entrepreneurs' operations in the Niger Delta? Lack of adequate entrepreneurial training among women is a barrier to becoming entrepreneurs. The knowledge of becoming self-employed should be available to all willing women in Niger Delta and other states in Nigeria to improve the women standard of living.

### **Unsupportive Business Environment**

The eleventh theme resulted from analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found that an unfavorable business environment was a major barrier preventing women from becoming self-employed in the Niger Delta states. The eleventh theme aligns with the work of Gruenhagen (2019). A business enterprise is basically a micro unit, and its success or failure mainly depends upon factors such as the resources at its command, the physical facilities available to it such as plant and equipment, its investment policy, its objectives, its size, its structure, and its relationship with the people inside the organization (Gruenhagen, 2019). Business environmental factors are external factors that exercise a vital influence on the scope and performance of the firm (Martinelli et al., 2018).

Environmental factors, being internal in character can be controlled, modified or altered. Micro environmental factors have a direct and close impact on the enterprise, such as suppliers, distributors, debtors, and creditors. On the other hand, macro environmental factors are those, which have a general impact on the industry to which the enterprise relates (Shirokova, Bogatyreva, Beliaeva, & Puffer, 2016). Macro environmental factors that affect influence SME are high taxation policy, and pricing policy (Martinelli et al., 2018). Other macro environmental factors are technological developments, government rules and regulations, labor environment and competitive environment (Gruenhagen, 2019). These micro environmental and macro environmental factors influence the decisions of women to become self-employed in Niger Delta states. I found out that the eleventh theme emerged from subquestion two; what barriers hamper creating an entrepreneurs' operations in the Niger Delta? Unsupportive business environment is a barrier to becoming entrepreneurs. The ease of doing business in Niger Delta and other parts of Nigeria should be regulated by government to allow new entrants into becoming self-employed. Factors such as business registrations, taxes, rent, and other factors should be revisited to make provision for women entrepreneurs in Niger Delta.

### **Educational Barriers**

The twelfth theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found out that educational barriers were a major barrier reframing women from becoming self-employed in Niger Delta states. The twelfth theme aligns with Ghouse, McElwee, Meaton, & Durrah (2017).

Entrepreneurship education (EE) has emerged as the most cost-effective and speedy way to increase both the quality and quantity of entrepreneurs entering an economy (Ghouse et al., 2017). Females are constrained in their choice of career by external factors which are mainly in the form of family and societal pressures stemming from the patriarchal and tribal traditions of society (Mehtap, Pellegrini, Caputo, & Welsh, 2017). Research suggests that females are less inclined toward entrepreneurship than their male counterparts; certain conditions within the economic and social environment which could limit an entrepreneur are (a) lack of training and (b) education and a general lack of confidence with regards to succeeding in entrepreneurship (Ghouse et al., 2017). Many women, particularly in developing economies, become entrepreneurs because of a need to survive or to enhance their livelihoods and can be dependent on the opportunity structures that are available, however, lack of education on entrepreneurship could impend women progress in making the decision to become self-employed as a result of fear of making progress (Ghouse et al., 2017). I found out that the twelfth theme emerged from subquestion two; what barriers hamper creating an entrepreneurs' operations in the Niger Delta? Educational barriers are barrier to becoming entrepreneurs. Most women without basic education also lack the confidence of becoming self-employed. The government should promote education at all level in Niger Delta to create room for adult education as means to educating all willing individual to basic education.

### **Shortage of Funds and Resources**

The thirteenth theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found out that shortage of funds

and resources was a major barrier reframing women from becoming self-employed in Niger Delta states. The thirteenth theme align Hatt (2018). Among the many constraints that affect the success of new venture development, access to capital is crucial for entrepreneurs (Bewaji, Yang, & Han, 2015). Compared to private sources such as family members and friends, financial institutions present an important funding source, with sufficient funds designated for venture investment (Hatt, 2018). Minorities confront many disadvantages in starting their new businesses, ranging from inadequate education and experience in the industry to management of work-family conflict (Hatt, 2018). The various accessibility of capital by different entrepreneurs may be due to the different social networks those entrepreneurs possess (Bewaji et al., 2015). Actually social networks play very important roles in new ventures because it can provide entrepreneurs valuable resources such as the access to information, financial capital, legitimacy and even competitive capabilities (Bewaji et al., 2015). I found out that the thirteenth theme emerged from subquestion two; what barriers hamper creating an entrepreneurs' operations in the Niger Delta? Shortage of funds and resources is a barrier to becoming entrepreneurs. The initial funds, the working capital, and the funds required for sustainability are major concern to women who may have the willingness of becoming entrepreneurs. Government could provide support such as loan or subsidy for women entrepreneurs with clear ideas written out as business plans to enable such women become self-employed.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The scope of this case study design was limited to four states in Niger Delta, Nigeria, and this might detract the validity of the findings and generalizability of the research findings to other states in Nigeria as stated in Chapter 1. I was the sole instrument of data collection and due to elements of subjectivity from both the researcher and participants regarding the purposeful sampling approach used in the data collection process, it has an inherent bias. Thus, the research result from the sampled population cannot be generalized to a larger population (Patton, 2002).

I used a qualitative multiple case study design for this inquiry. This design entailed the selection of participants from four states in Nigeria, which limited the representation of the population sample and this situation restricted the validity and generalizability of the research findings to the sampled population (Morse, 2015). I was the sole instrument of data collection; this situation may have affected the responses of the participants due to the open-ended nature of questions that have influenced the veracity of statements and personal interests. I upheld a high standard of academic integrity and followed the procedures for the data collection and interview protocol.

Also, some of the participants may have omitted some details in their responses, and some may have exaggerated in their responses. I used member checking to establish the reliability and validity of this study and verify the participants' statement within a limited time-frame, this may have impacted on the responses of the participants due to lack of sufficient time for proper reflection (Morse, 2015). The consideration for time restraints, rescheduling, and cancellations was a contributing factor that might have

limited this study (Houghton et al., 2013). I used NVivo 11 software for the data organization and audit trail to elicit reflexivity towards enhancing dependability and confirmability of the study (Houghton et al., 2013). The use of hand coding, note taking, and digital audio recorder for the interviews facilitated the validation and confirmation of the data collection. Consistent checking for reliability, validity, and accuracy of the data ensured that the study did not have any missed data or inconsistencies.

## **Recommendations**

### **Recommendations for Research**

The recommendation for research are made based on the analysis of the data provided by the participants of this study, using semistructured interview, field notes, and document review, and from my reflective journal entries. While the findings of this study are not intended to be transferable, as transferability is always left up to the reader to decide (Houghton et al., 2013), The women in Niger Delta states in Nigeria require a lot of information to overcome possible barriers that influence their business and economic development. The result of this study indicated the need to develop ways in which women in Niger Delta states can thrive through obtaining information necessary to initiate, grow, and sustain their businesses. This study may need to be expanded to include other women entrepreneurs in other states, as these women entrepreneurs may also benefit from this study. The need for future researchers to investigate is important to evaluate the difference in the information needed to identify barriers that influence the business and economic development of women entrepreneurs in Niger Delta states,



Nigeria. The federal, state, and local government have a role to play in ensuring the wellbeing of women entrepreneurs in Nigeria.

The study findings have created future opportunities for further research in the area of women entrepreneurs. The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study is to gain an in-depth understanding on how women in Niger Delta can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed. I used a multiple case study; the research method was qualitative. The first recommendation for future researchers is to increase the number of the selected states in Niger Delta from five to eight to represent the entire Niger Delta states in Nigeria. This may provide an opportunity for future researchers to compare the result of this study with future outcomes.

The second recommendation for future research is to consider carrying a quantitative study; comparing Niger Delta states in Nigeria and other states in Nigeria to have a depth of knowledge on women entrepreneurship in Nigeria. A researcher uses quantitative methodology to compare variables (Kendall & Halliday, 2014). Using quantitative methodology enables the findings to be generalized. The third recommendation for future research is to consider using a mixed method approach for this study. A mixed method approach deploys both qualitative and quantitative means to get data from the sample population; the mixed method approach enables the researcher in future research to augment the qualitative method with the quantitative method in this study. A mixed methods research deploys the best-suited synergy of quantitative and

qualitative approaches towards the optimization of the results of the study (Kendall & Halliday, 2014).

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The following is a compilation of recommendations based on the findings from this topic of study and could be supported by government policies to ensure adequate implementation of findings:

**Inclusion of women entrepreneurship in academic curriculum in Nigeria.** The National University Commission (NUC), the federal government of Nigeria could make it compulsory that all universities and secondary schools must have women entrepreneurship module included in the academic curriculum. A foundational knowledge on women entrepreneurship may increase the number of women who would become self-employed. To substantiate this recommendation, I refer to Themes 2 and 10, and 12 in Chapter 4. The participants indicated that by fostering learning and development, providing adequate entrepreneurial training, and mitigating educational barriers, women in Niger Delta could become self-employed. By introducing entrepreneurship into the educational curriculum of both universities and polytechnics in Nigeria, more women may attain entrepreneurship knowledge required for self-employment.

### **Provision of funds for women entrepreneurs and financial literacy.**

Government at the federal level, state level and local government level should make access to finance available for women entrepreneurs. To substantiate this recommendation, I refer to Themes 5, 7, 11, and 13 in Chapter 4. By the provision of financial and economic literacy, attainment for financial freedom, having favorable, and

having access to funds; women could have confidence of making the decision to become self-employed and thereby reduce unemployment.

**State government adoption of positive social change mindset.** The state government in Niger Delta states should take responsibility to change the paradigm that is currently not working to a system that is efficient; government should find a means to create confidence in women who are interested and willing to become self-employed. To substantiate this recommendation, I refer to themes 1-13 in Chapter 4. Government could create a new paradigm that would contribute to positive social change among women that business ideas could come from a combination of individual activities such as studying competitors, being innovative, through a customer service attitude, business management knowledge, use of social media positively, having a mentor, attending workshops, studying macroeconomics trends, identifying gaps to be filled, promotion of existing product, and learning to write a feasibility study.

## **Implications**

### **Implications for Practice**

The study has implication on government at the various levels of authority for policy making, implementation, job creation and the education subsector need to adopt entrepreneurship as a baseline study for all professions to provide an alternative for women who seek employment. The results from the study provided evidence of how leaders of tertiary institutions' commitment to entrepreneurship education have led to the creation of employment that empowered the entrepreneur towards national growth,

development. As the result provided the empirical evidence needed to support entrepreneurship education and skill development.

Eleven of the women entrepreneurs in this study indicated that attaining financial freedom and having adequate control of their business and resources was a major motivation to the decision of becoming self-employed. The implication is that once women realized that they do not have to depend on the male counterpart for money and having the freedom to take decisions about their lives, more women may become to initiate the interest of becoming self-employed. Nine women mentioned that education was the barrier to having the training of becoming self-employed. To address the issue of lack of education among women in Niger Delta states and in Nigeria, government could establish adult education policy where women and youth would be enrolled for vocational studies, mathematics, and business courses; where basic information on business management and business establishment could be taught. The women entrepreneurs in this study discussed having mentoring relationships that they called upon as the need arose. In addition, two of the women identified role models that they used as benchmarks for learning how to grow their businesses. Programs could be established to encourage informal mentoring among women entrepreneurs. For example, a membership-based community of practice could be a valuable resource for women entrepreneurs seeking just-in-time advice, assistance, or support. In addition, membership in a community of practice would expose growth-oriented women entrepreneurs to more role models and give them additional opportunities to access resources and learn about self-employment and what self-employed women have accomplished.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The research findings indicated that learning entrepreneurship at the university level had a potential implication of positive social change in the lives of women entrepreneurs in Nigeria as they could be self-employed. Unemployment problems may be better addressed through the knowledge through the outcome of the study as women would consider self-employment as alternative to staying at home as full time wife's. The implication of social change is improving standard of living among women, improvement of employment rate, reduce pressure in the family as a result of women gainfully self-employed. The results and implications of this research may provide information to women entrepreneurs in Nigeria on how to acquire entrepreneurial skills, strategies, knowledge, and education that could help them become self-employed and develop economically. The current dependency women entrepreneurs on their husbands, partners, or relatives due to cultural belief may also be reduced. Finally, the results of this study may also contribute to a curriculum to educate children concerning family economic roles.

### **Implications for Research**

Future research could explore typologies of women entrepreneurial knowledge based on conceptual framework of TPB which has a direct link with educational processes and intention analysis by assessing the role of education in the entrepreneurial intention formation. To gain more extensive understanding of women entrepreneurs' experiences in growing their businesses, and becoming self-employed, more large-scale studies of entrepreneurial knowledge on women entrepreneurs are needed. While the

study used an appreciative inquiry perspective, it did not specifically set out to challenge while women work as employees for other women or male counterpart, instead it sought to understand how women could acquire entrepreneurial knowledge and contribute to the dialogue on women entrepreneurial growth by presenting narratives that expanded the understanding of women entrepreneur's perception of becoming self-employed. Future studies may challenge the male-normative discourse in the entrepreneurship literature by using an appreciative inquiry perspective or critical feminist lens.

The historical context of the women entrepreneurs' experiences is noteworthy. As discussed during the data collection process, practices or regulations in the 1990s required husband's co-signature on loans to women or operate the business while the women play the support role; norms encouraged deal-making on the banks by men while women managed household responsibilities. These experiences are historically and socially situated and may not be applicable to women in different generations than that of the participants in this study. As women's participation in professional arenas has become more pervasive, some of the practices that the women in this study described have already begun to change. An interesting line of inquiry for future research may be an investigation into the differences between generational contexts for women in leadership role (women entrepreneurs from the Baby Boomer and Millennial generations). An interesting finding from this study across the 20 participants was that despite the fact that shortage of funds or inability to access funds were barrier to starting a business, the drive for financial freedom serves as motivation for woman towards the decision of becoming self-employed. Future researcher may want to carry out studies on

the relationship between the drive for financial freedom and the challenges of access to funds among women entrepreneurs in Nigeria.

### **Implications for Theory**

The findings from this study have undergirded the theoretical framework regarding the body of knowledge and professional practice that would help leaders of Nigerian educational sector to resolve the problems of women unemployment. The research findings provided additional information to resolve how women in Niger Delta can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed. Future scholars of leadership and management could find the information useful on the need to take a look at women entrepreneurship skill development as a means of resolving the women unemployment dilemma in Niger Delta and support societal growth and development. The results of this research could benefit the leadership of educational institutions as it could help leaders to understand better how to manage the educational policy as it relates to women entrepreneurship skills development, job creation, and unemployment reduction. The study has contributed to the body of knowledge on women entrepreneurship development in Nigeria as it could provide the basis for future research by students and researchers concerning women entrepreneurship education policies and its impact on societal growth and development.

### **Conclusions**

The purpose of the qualitative multiple case study was to gain an in-depth understanding on how women in Niger Delta can acquire the requisite entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed. This topic of this study was

Exploring the Acquisition of Information on Entrepreneurial Knowledge of Women in the Niger Delta. The key findings from this study are demonstration of the need for continuous research on knowledge and positive social change initiatives to reduce the unemployment deficit in women in Niger Delta, Nigeria to improve the provision of entrepreneurial knowledge for making decision on self-employment. Regardless of the challenging experiences these women entrepreneurs encountered, none indicated that they were debilitated, hindered, or disadvantaged in any way due to the male-normative nature of entrepreneurship.

Rather, they saw it as part of the natural landscape; a price for playing in the field. As such, they sought ways over, around, or through challenges to become self-employed and grow their businesses despite the male dominated environment. The women entrepreneurs in this study indicated that their business growth was facilitated through learning from others (mentors and/or role models). They often observed from a distance to learn what they needed to grow their businesses. The implication for research includes studies on the relationship between the drive for financial freedom and the challenges of access to funds among women entrepreneurs in Nigeria. The implication for practice includes that once women realized that they do not have to depend on the male counterpart for money and having the freedom to take decisions about their lives, more women may become to initiate the interest of becoming self-employed. Also, lack of education was the barrier to having the training of becoming self-employed as identified by some participants. To address the issue of lack of education among women in Niger Delta states and in Nigeria, government could establish adult education policy where



women and youth would be enrolled for vocational studies, mathematics, and business courses; where basic information on business management and business establishment could be taught. Both women employees and unemployed women has the responsibility to take advantage of training provided at work, knowledge from previous education, and the entrepreneurship experience attained into a realizable small-scale business venture prior to becoming self-employed (Hyder & Lussier, 2016).

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

### Interview Questions

How did having entrepreneurial knowledge to make decision about becoming self-employed help you make that decision to become self-employed?

How has entrepreneurial knowledge assisted you in becoming successful in your business? What kind of information did you find most useful?

How do your husband's responsibilities in handling all financial obligations impact your decision to be self-employment?

What was your impression of becoming self-employed as a woman?

How does need for self-achievement enhance your knowledge to become self-employed?

How does your need for affiliation enhance your knowledge to become self-employed?

How does your need for power influence your desire to become self-employed?

What are the factors that motivated you as entrepreneurs in Niger Delta?

RQ2: What barriers hamper you in creating an entrepreneurial operation in Niger Delta?

What are the other reasons or factors that influenced your decision as entrepreneur to become self-employed in Niger Delta?

## Appendix B: Revised Interview Protocol

### Demographic information

- What is the business? (product, service, retail, etc.)
- How long have you operated your business?
- Age, schooling, marital status, or any other details you think might be important

1. What training or learning on entrepreneurial knowledge did you acquire in life that prepares you towards your pursuit of entrepreneurship?
2. What challenges have you encountered after acquiring entrepreneurial knowledge?
3. What was your impression of becoming self-employed as a woman?
4. How does need for self-achievement enhance your knowledge to become self-employed?
5. How does your need for affiliation enhance your knowledge to become self-employed?
6. What are the motivational factors you derived from being self-employed?
7. What are the other reasons or factors that influenced your decision as entrepreneur to become self-employed in Niger Delta?
8. What other challenges confront your business that you may like to share in this interview?

### Appendix C: Expression of Interest Letter

My name is XXXXXXXXXX I am a doctoral student at Walden University. My field of focus is in XXXXXXXX a specialty in My research is supervised by xxxxxxxxxx of the faculty of Management and Decision Making.

Your (organization- xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx) has given us permission to invite you to participate in this research study. The consent form document will be given to you that will provide information so that you can make an informed decision concerning participation.

#### **What is the research about?**

I am doing a research study to explore.

#### **What does participation in this research study involve?**

Participation in this study are limited to 15 individuals employed within this ministry. Should you be selected as a final participant, participation would involve you participating in a semistructured interview, field notes, and document review process, that would explore your opinion and experience on the subject matter. All assessment results are kept confidential.

The interview process would take 40-60 minutes to complete. You are not required to participate in this study. Should you initially agree to participate, you also have the opportunity to withdraw at any time through the study.

#### **Guarantee of confidentiality**

All information obtained in this study is completely confidential unless disclosure is required by law. None of the individual interview results are made available to participating organizational leaders or the organization as a whole. The results of the study may be used, at an aggregate level, in reports, presentations and publications. Individual participants are not identified.

#### **Confirmation of participation**

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

I am happy to respond to any questions or concerns you have about the research. I can be reached at xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx or at Semail@waldenu.edu.