

2019

## Sustainable Business Growth: An Exploration of Ghanaian Small Business Survival

John W. Atanga  
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# Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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John Williams Atsu Atanga

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2019

Abstract

Sustainable Business Growth: An Exploration of Ghanaian Small Business Survival

By

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MBA, Southern New Hampshire University, Manchester, NH, 1990

BS, University of Massachusetts, Lowell, MA, 1987

Dissertation Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Applied Management and Decision Science

Walden University

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## Abstract

Small businesses are significant contributors to a nation's job creation and employment. These enterprises face many challenges that often lead to failure within 5 years. Some small business owners fail because they lack the necessary strategies for maintaining a sustainable business operation. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study was to analyze how to overcome the high failure rate of small businesses in Accra, Ghana. The conceptual framework for this study was institutional and planned behavior theories. The research questions sought participant's experiences with small business survival that may have led to sustainable businesses. Data were collected from 20 participants using semistructured telephone interviews in Accra, Ghana. Participants were small business owners in the consumer products industry. Eligibility required full-time self-employed persons aged 26-65 years who must have been in business beyond 5 years. Thematic analysis was used to analyze data. After data analysis, member checking was used to establish the trustworthiness of the outcomes. The main result of the study was that small businesses that had identified viable business opportunities in sustaining the needs and challenges of potential customers reported gains in sales and customer retention. The findings were significant for improving sustainable small business efforts, improving self-employment, reducing poverty through inclusive business models, and creating positive social change. Small business owners and policymakers might benefit from this research by reducing redundancies in their operations. This effort should promote an environment that enhances wealth creation and the quality of life of small business owners in Accra, Ghana.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this doctoral study to my wife, Regina Nsom Atanga. and my children, Addison and Erick, for their support during my research. Their continuous encouragement significantly allowed for the completion of this program. I will never forget the day my wife suggested that I should go for the Ph.D. I said I have been thinking about it within the past few months, we all agreed as she increased her encouragement for me to do it. I would not be in this position without her support towards the completion of my doctoral degree and for advocating for me in my consulting efforts. To my dad of blessed memory who was a grade-school teacher and Headmaster, your inspiration survives on, Dad. I dedicate this study to all small business owners who work to improve their lifestyle and create jobs for others, particularly in Accra, Ghana.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Ghana is a low-income nation-state witnessing long-term constraints against economic growth (The World Bank Group, 2016). The limitations include severe structural, social, political, linguistic, and economic instabilities and low levels of human resource development. I sought to understand the lived experiences and management strategies of some small business owners in Accra, Ghana. Some of these business owners were not aware of the strategy that might have helped improve the growth for their businesses to survive. The private sector in Accra, Ghana, has recognized the significance of promoting a sustainable business policy agenda given the role of small businesses as a potential mechanism of social transformation in many less-developed nations (Edoho, 2015; Elumelu, 2014). Small business ventures have involved established businesses that are independently owned and operated for growth and continued profitability (Kuratko, 2009; Marks, 2012; Shobhit, 2017).

This study involved small business owners in Accra, Ghana, who sought full-time self-employment and wealth creation. Their businesses typically have few employees, mostly family members who fostered the lack of separation between ownership and control (Peprah & Mensah, 2016). It was significant that more than half of the small businesses in Ghana failed to survive in the first five years as they offered the primary prospect for job creation and economic development (Gyimah, Appiah, & Lussier, 2019; Legas, 2015; Ogutul & Kihonge, 2015). The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016) stated that new business failure rates in the USA resulted from age, firm size, births, and deaths that might eventually lead to failing businesses. Still, small business

ventures in Accra, Ghana, have the potential to become viable businesses beyond five years.

Policymakers in Ghana reflected on self-reliant initiatives. The government of Ghana had used better macroeconomic fundamentals for improving financial management. An insufficient institutional framework at the national level, required for improving corporate governance and the legal framework impeded these endeavors. Ghanaian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) lacked information on improvements in domestic and global markets. Just as laws, finance, and taxes present barriers to competitiveness locally (Government of Ghana, 2013; Regional Economic Outlook, April 2016). Researchers broadly used the World Bank definition to cite Ghanaian SMEs studies. SMEs are micro, small, and medium-sized businesses engaged in entrepreneurial ventures to create new investments and successfully managing the enterprise. SMEs are defined as micro with 5 to 9 employees, small with 10 to 49 employees, and medium-sized with 50 to 99 employees (Kumar, 2017). Small firms show an average annual revenue of \$26,000, and medium-sized businesses show revenues of \$1,022,000. SMEs' performance depends on the competence of management to organize, control, and appraise the operational process (Government of Ghana, 2016). The intricacies of these economic problems required an in-depth analysis both at the individual and aggregate levels.

Most small business owners in Accra, Ghana, had difficulty in sustaining their businesses beyond five years. I examined whether their inability to sustain their ventures was due to a lack of institutional information, financial knowledge, management skills, or



proficiency in innovation and marketing (Bamfo, 2013; Lighthelm & Cant, 2002). Some small businesses in less developed countries failed due to inadequate business insight and lacked access to finance and financial literacy that undercuts small business activities (Bongomin, Ntayi, Munene, & Malinga, 2017). I explored how access to finance, innovation, partnership, and a capacity building may lead to small business survival (Ismail, 2015; Mezias & Fakhreddin, 2015).

The influence of the bottom of the pyramid market (BOP) and the place-based enterprise (BPE) were crucial to this study. The BOP market refers to the population that comprised the bottom-tier low-income people, located in the less developed countries in Africa, South America, and Asia, and many living on less than \$2 a day (Singh, 2015; Tarafdar, Singh, & Anekal, 2013). Some researchers contended that this market exhibited many management deficiencies, unique capabilities, and challenges, such as developing proper processes with BOP communities (Canaque & Hart, 2015). The place-based enterprise (PBE) business model referred to those attributes of the communities in rural areas that attract sustainable business ventures and investment. This model “promoted social, economic, and ecological awareness in local communities” (Shrivastava & Kennelly, 2013, p. 83). Overall, these models might determine whether their adoption sustained businesses beyond five years (McKeever, Jack, & Anderson, 2015; Cohen & Monuz, 2015; Sandeep, Sergi, & Jaiswal, 2016). The benefit of this study furthers the contribution to social change endeavors that do not rely on the government for employment, wealth creation, and self-sufficiency for future small businesses.

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study design was to explore the experience of small business owners who have been in business for more than five years. I explored the lived experiences and the perspectives of potentially established small business owners toward sustainable business activities. Chapter 1 contains the problem statement, the purpose statement, the conceptual framework, and the research questions.

### **Background of the Problem**

Ghanaian policymakers recognized that the failure of small businesses has implications for job and wealth creation. Research and public policy on small business literature partially embraced failure as being integral to doing business and recognized its value in their venture. Small business owners perceived business failure as a learning process that contributes to economic growth (Olaison & Sorensen, 2014). The small business owner's perception of failure and the management of emotions inherent in failures improved the learning experiences (Gartner & Ingram, 2013; Ogutul & Kihonge, 2015; Olaison & Sorensen, 2014). Some small businesses in Accra, Ghana that were engaged in these activities have experienced some failure at the startup stage.

The inadequate management skills of some small business owners were a function of the African business and investment culture. Business activities go beyond a profit-making enterprise; business is a way of organizing societies resources, human, and financial to meet society's' needs (Elumelu, 2014; Nafukho, Machuma, & Muyia, 2013). Africapitalism necessitated a paradigm shift, a new kind of business culture. Africapitalism refers to sustainable business investment in the informal sector that

generates social wealth and economic prosperity (Edoho, 2015; Elumelu, 2014).

Africapitalism is a unique model of social transformation for the 21st century. This ideal model may serve Accra, Ghana, so long as transformational leaders of the government, institutions, and small businesses were committed to a model that associates business and society.

Entrepreneurial ventures illuminated personal, economic, and societal benefits. Despite different definitions of entrepreneurship, an “entrepreneurship denote a bridge between the profit-centered institutions and people that encompassed: (a) an organizing mechanism to provide economic value, (b) initiative, and (c) risk of failure” (Kuratko, 2009, p. 4). The focus of this study was on small businesses in Accra, Ghana, but a discursive discussion of entrepreneurship helped to differentiate entrepreneurial ventures from small businesses. Schumpeter (1951) submitted that an entrepreneurial venture innovatively combined various factors, to generate value through new products and services. One criterion of this study was to highlight, early on, the conversation of entrepreneurship and its role in a free enterprise system against small businesses role of social transformation and sustainable growth in many less-developed nations (Dean, 2015). Some researchers in the developed countries marginalized low-income nations as cradles of innovation. The trend is changing as more people have access to better and more reliable information.

Small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures are unprecedented. Researchers have recognized the existence of differences in risk and wealth creation between entrepreneurial ventures and small businesses (Kuratko, 2009; Marks, 2012; Shobhit,

2017). Entrepreneurial ventures are startups, taking on investments in high risks business. On the other hand, small business owners used a stable approach to business management by expecting stable growth. Small business owners involved established small businesses that aim for limited growth and continued profitability. Small business owners are managers of small businesses (Kuratko, 2009; Marks, 2012; Shobhit, 2017). This study involved small business owners in Accra, Ghana, who sought full-time self-employment and wealth creation.

The Ghanaian economy witnessed micro and macroeconomic imbalances during the Great Recession (GR) of 2008/2009. Researchers have used the neo-classical economic real business cycle theory to discern the GR in Ghana as wide-ranging due to oil shocks (Stein, 2015). Structural conditions such as commodity prices threatened the survival of small businesses and growth in Accra, Ghana. The commodity boom in production-generated opportunities for Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) nations repositions their businesses to better compete in global markets (Salazaar-Xirinachs, Nubler, & Kozul-Wright, 2014; Stein, 2015). The GR enabled some small businesses in Accra, Ghana, to adopt sustainable business practices. The reliance on commodity production by SSA countries during the Great Recession involved a sliding trend in prices with implications to the continuity of growth in the region (Stein, 2015). Consequently, some small business owners have sustained their businesses beyond 5 years.

The private sector made significant strides in addressing diverse socio-economic challenges in Accra, Ghana. Providing youths composed, most of the Ghanaian population, this group was notable for small businesses' viability (Boateng & Boateng,

2018). Business incubators are the magic bullet that contributed to arresting the high failure rate among small businesses in the developing world estimated at approximately 75% (Bamfo, 2013; Ogutul & Kihonge, 2015; Wirtz & Volkmann, 2015). Consequently, the usage of incubators by small business owners enhanced the survivability of small businesses beyond 5 years.

Some researchers considered both the institutional attributes (IA) and the business environment to study phenomena. Institutional attributes distinguish small businesses from other institutions and the business environment that they operate. The unique features include culture and structure, competition, innovativeness and improvement, and ways of doing business. Researchers have defined institutional attributes as those features that differentiate the institution from other institutions by underlining the process that enhanced their programs and policies in achieving innovation and improvement (Philibert et al., 2010). Edgell (2013) stated that the governments of developing countries embraced institutional strategies that encourage small business owners to gain legitimacy. The growth of sustainable small businesses provided the catalyst for emerging economies as well as the future of economic development. Small business owners employed sustainable ways of doing business that, in principle, might improve their economic growth along with poverty reduction. Sustainable business practices implied that natural resources or business factors for an endeavor would not deplete as the economy grows.

### **Problem Statement**

Failure rates for small businesses in the SSA and specifically Accra, Ghana, were higher than average, and the causes of this were not well known. The results from several

studies suggested that between 60% and 80% of small businesses in Accra, Ghana, failed in the first 5 years (Amankwah, 2015; Fatoki, 2014; Gartner & Ingram, 2013; Hayton, Cacciotti, Andres, Robert, & Ainge, 2013; Ogutul & Kihonge, 2015).

The general management problem was that there is a high failure rate of small business owners in Africa who failed to survive in the first 5 years (Legas, 2015; Ogutul & Kihonge, 2015). This failure rate is comparable to those countries of Malaysia 60%, Mexico 75%, and USA 30%, as they failed to survive within the first 3 years (Failure Institute, 2014; Fatoki, 2014; Ogutul & Kihonge, 2015). The specific management problem was how to overcome the high failure rates of many small businesses that may lead to sustainable businesses (Fatoki, 2014; Legas, 2015; Ogutul & Kihongi, 2015).

### **Purpose of This Study**

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study design was to analyze how to overcome the high failure rate of many small businesses in Accra, Ghana. The objective of this study was to discover how successful small businesses in operation for more than five years might have used those specific strategies to stay in business. The sample population included surviving small business owners who have overcome the problem of survival and have been in business for more than 5 years. Reid, Flowers, and Larkin (2005) recommended a range of 5 to 25 participants for a sample in a phenomenological study. I selected 20 participants from the Accra, Ghana, research site. Data collection proceeded until the saturation point when no new concepts emerged. I used data saturation to increase the credibility of the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016; Patton, 2015). I gathered data for this study through semistructured interviews with 20

small business owners in the metropolitan area of Accra, Ghana. These small business owners were those with five years plus of experience in surviving businesses. The objective of sustainable businesses is to promote the survival of enterprises by eliciting those multilayered factors that increase business competitiveness, performance, and permanency. I explored how small business owners improved the long-term sustainable outcomes of their activities through gross domestic product growth.

### **Research Questions**

The general research question was: How have small business owners in Accra, Ghana, used the available institutional attributes to overcome the problems that cause many small businesses to fail within 5 years?

The following were the sub research questions:

Sub research Q1. How have small business owners, who are embedded in specific business locations in the metropolitan area of Accra, Ghana, sustained their businesses beyond 5 years?

Sub research Q2. How have small business owners adopted the management strategies that allow small businesses to grow and sustain their businesses beyond 5 years?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this qualitative study was the institutional and planned behavior theories. Qualitative researchers have either relied on or applied the institutional theory to derive a framework that ground the study. The viability and survival of small businesses was an attribute of the institutional context (North, 1990;

Scott, 2008). Some qualitative researchers contended that the conceptual framework fostered the growth of small businesses in the city (Kusi, Opata, & Narh, 2015; Roxas, Lindsay, Ashill, & Victorio, 2008). A study of the specific political and socioeconomic environment in which small businesses operate provided for exploring proper methods of institutional attributes. Figure 1 shows the application of the conceptual framework for this study. Some concepts and constructs of small business survival (the conceptual framework for this study) that are weaved around sustainable businesses included the expectations of the institutional environment within the business community. Also, Figure 2 shows the core components supporting business operations and their relationship between the cultural, social, economic, political, and local community involvement and development.

Icek Ajzen developed the theory of planned behavior (TPB) in 1991. Researchers have used the theory to predict people's behaviors and intentions (Cameron, Ginsburg, Westhof, & Mendez, 2012). The TPB highlighted that motivational factors shaped the entrepreneurial intentions of small business owners. The TPB served in researching entrepreneurial motivation and intentions (Fatoki, 2014; Malebana, 2014). Ajzen (1991) advocated that the factors embedded in TPB encompassed personal attitudes, the subjective norms, and the perceived behavioral control (Kim-Soon, 2016). TPB illuminated that human behavior is a cause of intentions, as those intentions influenced attitudes. Ajzen's TPB and Shapiro's (1982) entrepreneurial event model (SEE) was vital to entrepreneurial research. There is needed research to integrate these models into a more systematic model (Esfandiara, Sharifi-Tehranib, Pratt, & Altinay, 2017).



Researchers have highlighted that people who exhibited a developed attitude maintained the monitored action. Researchers have underlined that institutional theory influenced small business activities from the perception of individuals rooted in the TPB and the business event model (Bae, Qain, Miao, & Fiet, 2014; Soumaya & Javier, 2015; Walter & Block, 2014). Consequently, the development of entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors of people originated from these beliefs and patterns. Figure 1 below illuminates the components of the conceptual framework. The highlights showed how the small business ecosystem contributed to sustainable businesses.

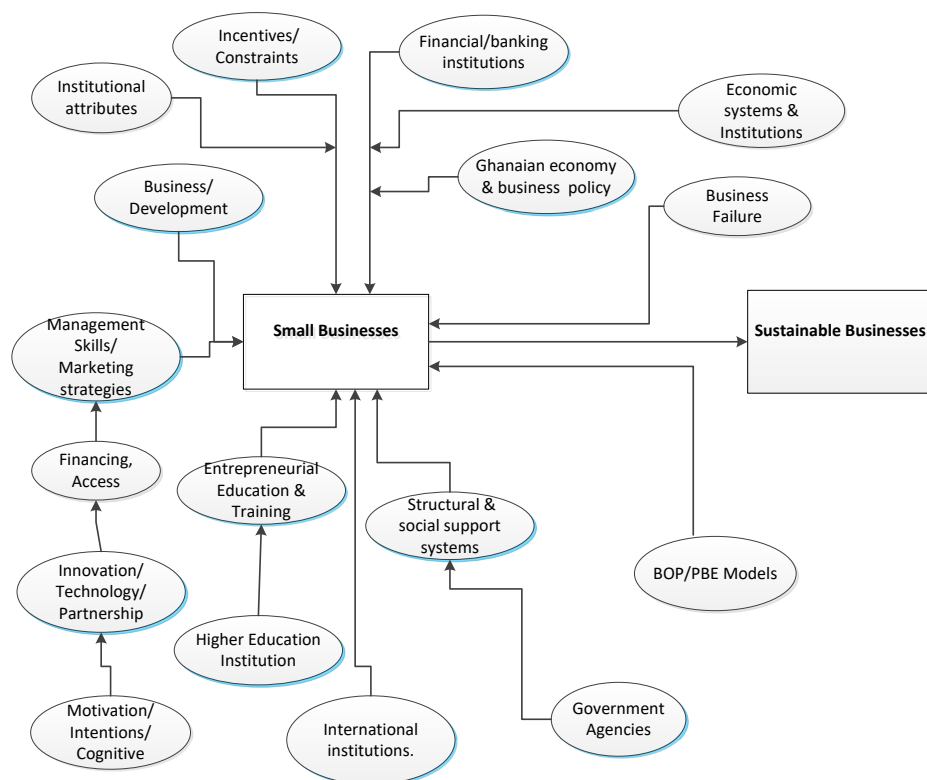


Figure 1. Design of the conceptual framework.

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 is a graphical depiction of 17 elements that directly influenced any thriving small business life cycle. The small business owner

should know how to engage the necessary business fundamentals into his or her business operations within a competitive business environment. The framework highlighted those small business owners, with the appropriate management functional skills as well as the possible adoption of business fundamentals that ensured sustainable businesses. In Chapter 2, Figure 2, a more detailed analysis of the 17 elements is highlighted to show how small businesses become sustainable. Small business survival was the phenomenon for this study highlighted by various definitions of small businesses by theorists from different countries. Small business survival has been defined by the strategies business owners adopt to determine their growth and profitability. Porter (1979) advanced the focus, cost leadership, and differentiation strategies as options necessary for achieving success by small businesses (Ifekwem & Adedamola, 2016). I tested these strategies during the participants' interviews in Accra, Ghana. Small businesses survived and became sustainable businesses when they have overcome the challenges that had hindered both the internal and external business environments.

Institutional theories originated from the social sciences and economics that have evolved to neo-institutionalism, which focused on the way institutions reacted and affected society. Institutions originated from regulatory structures, government agencies, laws, courts, professions, and practices in the societal and cultural sphere that exert compliance pressure (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Meyer & Rowan, 1991; North, 1990). Figure 1 highlighted that an institutional theory perspective gave insights into small businesses' survival that helped develop an understanding of several internal and external influences on the small business ecosystem. Small businesses embedded at the city level

achieved legitimacy in conforming to the rules and norms of the institutional environment. Kusi et al. (2015) indicated that institutional theory is crucial to the sustainable and rapid growth of small businesses. These institutions were critical due to globalization, given that Ghanaian small business environment is not conducive (Kusi et al., 2015). Institutions denote “rules, norms, and beliefs that describe reality for organizations in the form of incentives and disincentives” (Hoffman, 1999, p. 351). The influences of small businesses and their owners by standards and beliefs of an institutional framework varied across countries and cultures. Small businesses gained legitimacy in conforming to the rules and norms of the institutional environment.

Various researchers have highlighted small businesses from the perspectives of social-economic and institutional spheres. Qualitative researchers grappled that concrete manifestation of economic activities resulting from an institutional context highlighted the relationship between the quality of institutions and transaction costs. This existing institutional matrix was a function of the viability, profitability, and survival of small businesses (Erastus, Stephen, & Abdullai, 2014). In this research, I analyzed the participant’s responses to see if there was a link from these small businesses.

Figure 1 is a depiction of small business survival elements that necessitated a holistic approach to understanding the socioeconomic and institutional structures of small business objectives at the city level. Researchers claimed that small business research resulted from the dissatisfaction of mainstream researchers with theories that supported efficiency while neglecting social forces entrenched in the institutional environment (Roxas et al., 2008). This socioeconomic environment enabled a relationship of small

businesses' operations to the human interactions within the operational environment, as they aimed to gain legitimacy as well as the social support of the institutions.

Small business owners should realize that identifying critical business components to survive requires a holistic approach to understanding the environmental activities of a business enterprise. Finance and financing, entrepreneurial education, and training programs and management skills suggested small business survivability are phenomena caused by multiple contributing factors (Abor & Quartey, 2010; Erastus, Stephen, & Abdullai, 2014). Some small business owners complied with institutional demands by sharing business practices and shared norms. Consequently, sustainable business ventures could potentially be the effect of the low-income market approach through economic growth improvement.

### **Nature of the Study**

The selected research method was a qualitative descriptive phenomenological study design. The qualitative approach was appropriate for exploring in-depth program development, as researchers collect data on a study site rather than in a research laboratory setting (Creswell, 2014). Denzin and Lincoln (2005; 2014) and Alvesson and Skouldberg (2009) suggested that phenomenology could offer the opportunity to focus on the *when* and *how* its adoption is appropriate. I excluded a mixed-methods approach, which combines quantitative and qualitative methods. Qualitative researchers' strive to become the instrument of data collection, which gathers the data from diverse sources such as interviews and observation (Lewis, 2015). I explored the perspectives, perceptions, influences, and the meaning attached to the experiences of small business

owners through theoretical saturation (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2012). The qualitative data from small business owners might reveal richness that yields contextualized dense, rich descriptions. The qualitative data involved the participants' lived experiences, letting the story of these experiences to provide insight to discern meanings. Participant eligibility for this study required that persons met the following four criteria: (a) must be full-time self-employed aged 26-65 years; (b) must have a level of education ranging from some high school training to a post-doctoral program to ensure literacy of the participants; (c) must also have been a small business owner beyond 5 years to provide the participants' experience; and (d) must be doing business in the consumer products industry, as chosen participants of this study were from this industry. Participants' selection targeted owner-managers of small businesses in the consumer products industry. Reid, Flowers, and Larkin (2005) recommended 5 to 25 study participants for a phenomenology study, and 20 participants provided an adequate sample size to provide insight into this study's research questions. The goal of the sample participant is to obtain a sample size large enough to understand the characteristics of the studied phenomenon.

There are five most popular design approaches of inquiry in qualitative research, such as (a) case study; (b) ethnography; (c) narrative research; (d) phenomenology; and (e) grounded theory (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Ethnographic researchers study human groups and seek to explore how groups formed and maintained a culture. A case study research involved strategies to collect data from the participants to describe an understanding of life occurrences (Yin, 2014). Narrative researchers explore the experiences of individuals to formulate a narrative story. Phenomenological researchers

strived to explore the participants' lived experiences and their shared essence rooted in shared experiences of a phenomenon. Grounded theory methods comprise of systematic guidelines to collect and analyze qualitative data to construct theories from the data themselves. Theory construction is grounded in its data. The grounded theory involves inductive data, which uses repetitive strategies of going back and forth between data and analysis, using comparative methods. The process keeps the researcher interacting with the data and emerging analysis (Charmaz, 2014).

The choice of a methodology depends on the subject the researcher explores and the research questions (Fletcher, 2016; Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). There are several definitions of phenomenology by research theorists such as Denzin and Lincoln (2005; 2014) and Alvesson and Skouldberg (2009). The methodology to highlight the lived experiences and perspectives of the participants in the “phenomenological inquiry aims at the description and critical self-reflection of the situation as the focus” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 72). Qutoshi (2018) highlighted that Heidegger stated in 1993 that phenomenology is a way of constructing meaning based on experience requiring interpretation. A poststructuralist worldview served as the lens for the inquiry method of this study. Poststructuralism strived for enhancing the relationship between small businesses and the institutional context of the enterprise support services. Poststructuralism offered a way of studying how to produce knowledge (Angermuller, 2014). A pilot study approach was necessary to provide consistency and feasibility for data collection. A pilot study is a trial run that I used on participants who are officials of the national board for small-scale industries (NBSSI). I also used a small business owner

who has managed a small business beyond five years (Passer, 2015). The self-developed interview questionnaire used in this study provided questioning of the participants consistent with a phenomenological inquiry that examined the lived experiences of the participants.

Moustakas (1994) indicated that the phenomenological data analysis proceeds through the method of reduction, the analysis of themes and specific statements, and a search for all relevant meanings, while the researcher sets aside all experiences. Avoiding biases is significant in this study. I explained biases when inquiring on the topic; conversely, I should not lead the participant or gesture the perspective that I wanted them to share (Yin, 2014). Phenomenological research studies attempt to highlight how small business owner's beliefs and perceptions have helped their businesses to survive beyond 5 years (Moustakas, 1994). The goal of phenomenology is to identify essence, viewed as similarities in their lived experiences. A descriptive phenomenology approach allowed the participants to describe in the interviews their pre-reflective and existential manifestations of their experiences. I described what has been said in analyzing and sorting the experiences (Van Manen, 1990). Semistructured methods and procedures such as coding applied in investigating the research problem. I involved thematic analysis in Chapter 4 on data coding and generating themes from interview transcripts. In Chapter 3, I provided a detailed articulation of the research method and design that encompassed the inquiry method, data collection, and analysis.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Africapitalism:* The term Africapitalism, coined by Elumelu (2014) and defined as the economic thinking that the African private sector and the informal economy could transform the region. This effort is attained through sustainable investments, which might create both social wealth and economic prosperity (Amaeshi & Idemudia, 2015; Edoho, 2015). The ongoing transition in Africa depicted the rise of Africapitalism as the dominance of the entrepreneurial paradigm that is fostering economic renaissance in Africa, impact investing, and conscious capitalism (Edoho, 2015; Hile, 2014).

*Bottom-of-pyramid or Base of the pyramid:* The population that comprised the bottom-tier low-income people, located in the less developed countries in Asia, Africa, South America, and the Pacific and many were living on less than \$2 a day (Singh, 2015; Tarafdar, Singh, & Anekal, 2013). Prahalad (2005) conceived BOP in his seminal work. The concept established that multinational corporations (MNC) gained market share and improved economic growth in emerging countries while earning pro-poor corporate revenues. Pro-poor denotes, absorbing the poor into the worldwide marketplace (Chatterjee, 2016). The realization of outcome-alleviated poverty is a derivative of inclusive capitalism. This initiative provided pathways to collaborate with the continent's poor into unique value chains and global networks (Dolan & Rajak, 2016).

*Business development:* A business-training program that teaches and educates individuals in economic development (Adjimah, 2014)

*Entrepreneur:* An entrepreneur is a person of very high personal ability who pioneers change, possessing characteristics found in only a tiny fraction of the



population. As such, an entrepreneur is anyone who wanted to work for him or herself (Kuratko, 2009).

*Entrepreneurship*: The concept of entrepreneurship in the context of Ghana denoted the process of launching and running an enterprise, which initially a small business offering a product, process, or service. Entrepreneurship is an act of recognizing opportunities, mobilizing resources, and making a profit for the risk involved in the provision of goods and services (Akinwale, 2014).

*Financial repression*: financial repression that goes along with financial mismanagement demonstrated barriers to the competitive existence of entrepreneurial endeavors in Ghana (Rafindadi and Yusof, 2014).

*Inclusive innovation*: Inclusive innovation influences income distribution by leveraging social innovators who provided the solution for improving the welfare of lower and medium income groups (Prahalad & Krishnan, 2008).

*Institutional attributes*: Researchers defined institutional attributes as those features that distinguished the institution from other institutions by highlighting the process that enhanced their programs in achieving innovation and improvement in their business environment (Philibert et al., 2010).

*Place-based enterprise (PBE)*: is involved with the promotion of social and ecological viability in local communities (Cohen & Monuz, 2015; McKeever, Jack, & Anderson, 2015; Shrivastava & Kennelly, 2013).

*Poststructuralist*: Poststructuralism offered a way of studying how to. A poststructuralist approach required an understanding of both the object and the systems of

knowledge that produced the object. Poststructuralism either claimed that founding knowledge on pure experience or systematic structures is impossible (Angermuller, 2014).

*Small businesses:* Small businesses are privately owned businesses or sole proprietorships that have fewer employees and less annual revenue than a medium-sized enterprise (Kuratko, 2009; Marks, 2012; Shobhit, 2017).

*Small business owner:* Some researchers considered small business owners as managers of small businesses; small business owners' aimed for limited growth and continued profitability (Kuratko, 2009).

*Socioeconomic impact:* The BOP and PBE initiatives highlighted the socioeconomic effect, inspired by the role of small business owners at the city level through the interaction of the small businesses with local community development programs (Guerrero, Urbano, Alain, Klofsten, & Mian, 2016).

*Sustainable:* The term sustainable is an adjective supporting the nouns such as sustainable development, sustainable ventures, and sustainable businesses. Dean (2015) stated that sustainable businesses were for-profit small businesses that provided a living while pursuing other ventures. In the Ghanaian context, the Registrar of small businesses labeled these ventures as a small business rather than sustainable businesses.

### **Assumptions**

The primary assumption of this study was that each participant offered truthful answers to the interview questions. Qualitative researchers have recognized assumptions to prevent misrepresentation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Lips-Weirsmas and Mills (2014)

stated that assumptions were pertinent facts for a research study over which the researcher had no control. Respondents may offer evasive answers, should they believe that the process may lack confidentiality. I used consent forms to minimize the risk of dishonesty by ensuring the participants' confidentiality to the data they provided.

A qualitative methodology was appropriate for this study to explore the factors that contributed to small businesses to survive (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2012). The following three assumptions of this study included: (a) the participants may lack knowledge about the BOP and PBE marketplace; (b) some of the participants were engaged in business without the necessary management skills; and (c) the interview participants gave accurate information about their lived experiences. Theoretical saturation occurred in qualitative data analysis when the researcher continued to sample and analyze data until all concepts, in theory, were developed, and no new data appeared (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). The participant responses to the interview questions reflected these assumptions.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The scope of this study was the parameter that defined the boundaries chosen for the study (Kumar, 2015; Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). The reliability of this study was a function of the limits to the scope of the study. I sought to reveal whether small business owners who received assistance from government agencies were aware of the BOP and PBE strategies and concepts. Responses from interview participants on how they might have used them to sustain their businesses are pivotal. The choice of phenomenological research design was proper to narrow the bounds of this study to the lived experiences of

viable small business owners across the Accra, Ghana, consumer products industry despite the existence of many other industries. The choice of the site of this study was in the African nation of Ghana with adequate potentials for small business development. These selections fostered the exploration of management skills for small business survival.

Delimitations denote constructs and factors that researchers excluded from the study. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) stated that the delimitations of a study signified items excluded and elements included. The research design determined the delimitations of the study that consisted of well-defined boundaries for the inquiry (Simon & Goes, 2011). The delimitations were critical, as they highlighted what the researcher intended to address. The limitations of this study were limited to the sample size of small business owners who have sustained their business beyond 5 years. I interviewed small business owners limited in the metropolitan area of Accra, Ghana.

### **Limitation**

The conditions of the interview process presented some limitations in this study. The lived experiences of the participants that necessitated the use of this phenomenological study design rather than a case study design allowed for a narrow view of the lived experiences of the chosen participants for the research (Kumar, 2015; Patton, 2015). Phenomenologists rely mainly on interviews. The selected participants were a purposeful sample of small business owners restricted to Accra, Ghana. Snowball sampling was a limitation due to the participants' referral process. The timing of the semistructured interviews for data collection was subject to the participants' level of

stress, restrictions, or psychological factors that affected the responses to the questions. A respondent's views might not represent the views of most small business owners in Accra, Ghana. Diverse sociocultural and religious beliefs of small business owners from other geographical regions influenced their views. The limitations also reflected the critical thinking skills involved in discerning the use of this phenomenological study and how these limitations affected this study.

### **Significance of the Study**

The significance of theory development involved the uniqueness of sustainable businesses to the Ghanaian private sector as a possible pathway to improve their economic growth. The significance of practice highlighted the application of models to address challenges in managerial practice. The implication for positive social change involved the potential that small business owners applied these findings to improve profitability. Their small business sustainable efforts might provide increased self-employment, poverty reduction, and wealth creation for future small businesses.

### **Significance of Theory**

Sustainable businesses offer unique opportunities within the small business marketplace potentially. As a holistic management solution, it helped to create the future through inclusive innovation partnership, strategy, and leadership (Caneque & Hart, 2015; Gupta, Pouw, & Mirjam, 2015; Rainey, 2010). Lifestyle and management thinking introduced the selection of the most socially, economically, and environmentally conscious approaches that may lead to sustainable businesses. Sustainable businesses involved those business activities that positively contributed to economic growth. In the

Ghanaian context, small business owners are entrepreneurs who have been in business for more than 5 years.

### **Significance to Practice**

Small businesses strive to provide services to customers in the most cost-effective manner. Small business owners realized that striving for success necessitated improvement performances in their offerings by adopting best management practices to benefit their customers. Small business management highlighted the strategic dimensions required for opportunity-relating behaviors. This study's findings included major themes that assisted small business owners in staying in business beyond 5 years. Small business owners integrated management models to address the challenges presented by competitive environments (Bengasi & Roux, 2014; Maes & Sels, 2014). Small business owners who recognized the proper management strategies improved the productivity and job satisfaction of their staff. This occurrence may well lead to improving the quality of services and life unleashing real positive social change to society. I hope to convey this social change based on the results of this study.

### **The Significance of Social Change**

This study relied on the existing literature on sustainable business development by integrating the synergies of market strategies in the Ghanaian economy. This study could contribute to positive social change by helping to improve future operations in small businesses as well as potentially creating pathways independent of the government for wealth creation. This study might benefit Ghana, given the embeddedness of small businesses in the social structure of community-based enterprises in the developing

world. The uniqueness of the field offered significant opportunities as well as enabling the exploration of new ground along with the development of expanded relationships in the sphere of sustainable businesses. This occurrence may well lead to improving the quality of services and wellbeing, unleashing real positive social change to society. This study may provide policy-makers with the capacity to enable economic and noneconomic benefits for the people, the community, and future generations.

### **Summary and Transition**

Chapter 1 addressed the background, problem statement, the purpose statement, the nature of this study, and the research questions. Chapter 1 was a preview of a more detailed plan to follow in subsequent chapters. Chapter 2 provides a literature review.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

The specific management problem was how to overcome the high failure rates of many small businesses that may lead to sustainable businesses (Duke, 2016; Rainey, 2010; Sandeep, Sergi, & Jaiswal, 2016; Shrivastava & Kennelly, 2013). The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study design was to analyze how to overcome the high failure rate of many small businesses in Accra, Ghana. This chapter includes three sections: (a) the search strategy that validates an exhaustive search of the literature; (b) the conceptual framework that shows a reference point for this study; and (c) the literature review on the existing body of theories, studies, and research on small businesses. The section concludes with a discussion about the gap in the literature that offered context for the research questions.

### Literature Search Strategy

The literature review required a search strategy for primary sources that included peer-reviewed journal articles and corporate publications. I considered peer-reviewed articles that contributed to the identification of the current phenomena and concepts, as well as the conceptual framework. The keywords or search terms I used for the review included, but not limited to the following: *small businesses, small business owners, sustainable businesses, entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial ventures, small business ventures, private sector, microfinancing, SMEs, financial repression, institutional attributes, bottom of the pyramid, place-based enterprises, partnership and collaboration, innovation, inclusive innovation, institutional theory, the theory of planned behavior, Africapitalism, and post-structuralism*. I employed a logical approach that



extracts keywords related to the topic. I ensured the information elicited and validated is relevant to this study.

The sources of information included books, databases, dissertations, and websites. For a broad coverage, the search of the database included EBSCO host, ProQuest Central, Emerald, Springer, Routledge, SAGE Premier, ProQuest Dissertations, Full-Text databases, and Lycos and Google Scholar search engines to research relevant literature on the subject. The search involved full text and then followed by filtering with peer-reviewed searches. I conducted web searches on relevant research institutions and international organizations, such as the World Resource Institute, BOP global Network, BOP innovation Center, Organization for economic cooperation and development (OECD), and the World Bank Group. I used professional and scholarly books as well as secondary and primary sources to gather literature for the remainder of this study. I developed a search log (databases and articles), the literature review matrix, and a concept map for this study. I found that Walden University's dissertations and conference proceedings were helpful. I sought their usefulness in addressing the alignment of the chapters, the research questions, and the exploration of the notion of surviving small businesses.

The conceptual framework for this study highlighted concepts related to the BOP market and PBE market. A search of applicable terms involved ProQuest Central, Routledge, and SAGE Premier Databases. The current knowledge on BOP and BPE on the sustainable businesses in the private sector was a function of the proliferation of sustainable businesses leveraged by the institutional matrix.

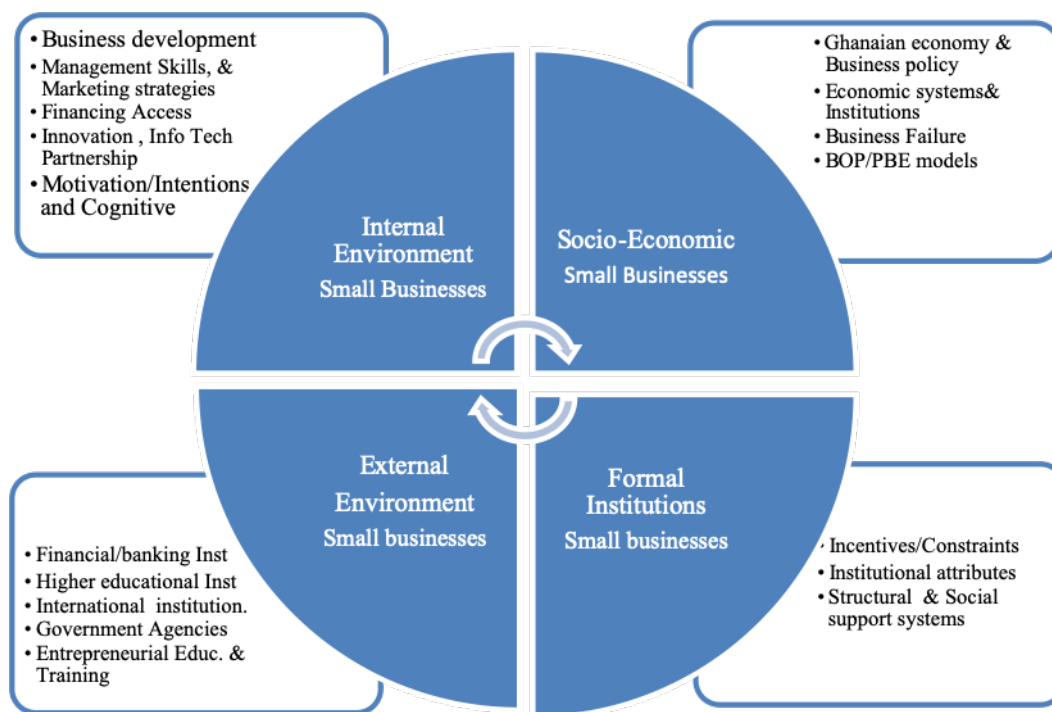
One major highlight of this study was the influence of the BOP market and the place-based enterprise realm. The BOP market exhibited many management deficiencies, unique capabilities, and challenges, such as developing proper processes with BOP communities (Canaque & Hart, 2015). PBE involved the promotion of social and ecological viability in local communities (Cohen & Monuz, 2015; McKeever et al., 2015; Shrivastava & Kennelly, 2013). The BOP market referred to the population that comprises the bottom-tier low-income people, located in the less developed countries in Africa, South America, and Asia, as many living on less than \$2 a day (Singh, 2015; Tarafdar, Singh, & Anekal, 2013). On the other hand, the place-based enterprise business model referred to those attributes of the communities in rural areas that attract sustainable entrepreneurial ventures and investments.

The methodology for this research is qualitative with a descriptive phenomenological study design. The social norms of the communities drive the Ghanaian private sector's managerial policies, practices, and lifestyle, given the relationship between business development and social and cultural geography (Agyapong & Obro-Adibo, 2013; Ikupolati, Oni, Ijaiya, Adelabu, & Olatunde, 2017). Small business owners, the population of this study, might be unaware of the institutional attributes and the benefits of inclusivity. Those amenities encompassed accessibility and affordability to financing services; aimed at improving the growth of the inclusive business strategies in Accra, Ghana. It is unknown if small business owners used these strategies to sustain their businesses, as those strategies were novel in the SSA region. Overall, researchers

have realized a relationship between BOP and PBE models in their integration with local communities and economic growth.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The grounding of this qualitative study is the conceptual framework of the institutional theory and the theory of planned behavior. The conceptual framework furthers the understanding of small businesses by connecting the institutional environment that fostered the growth of small businesses in the city (Mckenzie & Woodruff, 2016; Roxas, Lindsay, Ashill, & Victorio, 2008). The viability and survival of small businesses is the derivative of the institutional attributes (North, 1990; Scott, 2008). Researchers have highlighted that the existence of a relationship between specific elements of small business concepts and institutional structures necessitated examination and analyses (Ostrom, 2005). This qualitative study involved an all-inclusive approach to the factors that contribute to a small business' survival life cycle. The small business survival ecosystem comprises the sociocultural and economic influences that were necessary for the provision of services for the survival of a business enterprise. Figure 2 illustrates the involvement of diverse small business functions necessary for small business survival.



*Figure 2.* The sociocultural and the politico-economic environment (self-compiled).

Figure 2 shows a relationship between the variables that supported the life cycle of small businesses in a cyclical development, weaved together within the institutional environment. The relationship between Figures 1 and 2 revealed how the components of the conceptual framework were involved in Figure 2 in explaining how small businesses become sustainable businesses. Interview participants shared their perceptions and lived experiences based on these concepts. Some concepts and constructs of small business survival (the conceptual framework for this study) that are weaved around sustainable businesses included the expectations from the institutional environment within the business community. Figure 2 shows the core components supporting business operations

and their relationship between the cultural, social, economic, political, and community involvement and development.

Small business survival was the phenomenon for this study highlighted by various definitions by theorists from different countries. Small business survival has been defined by the strategies the business owners adopt to determine their growth and profitability. Porter (1979) advanced the focus, cost leadership, and differentiation strategies as options necessary for achieving success by small businesses (Ifekwem & Adedamola, 2016). Small businesses survived and became sustainable businesses when they have overcome the challenges that hindered both the internal and external business environments. The strategies used by these participants to become sustainable were important outcomes of this study.

Institutional theories originated from the social sciences and economics that have evolved to neo-institutionalism, which focused on the way institutions reacted and affected society. Researchers highlighted that institutions originated from regulatory structures, government agencies, laws, and practices in the societal and cultural spheres that exert compliance pressure (DiMaggio & Powell, 1991; Meyer & Rowan, 1991; North, 1990; Scott, 2008). Qualitative researchers contended that influences of small businesses and their owners by rules, norms, and beliefs of an institution varied across countries and cultures (Bruton, Ahlstrom, & Li, 2010; Scott, 2008). Small business owners should know that they gained legitimacy and embeddedness as they conformed to the rules and norms of the institutional environment. Formal institutions highlighted incentives and constraints, structural and social support systems, with more detailed later.

Overall, the framework highlighted that one discovered what strategies small businesses are using and to examine if there were linkages from the small businesses.

The TPB illuminated the level of small businesses' entrepreneurial motivation and intentions. Researchers have highlighted that TPB is the conceptual basis of the entrepreneurial processes that gave rise to new startups. The perceived behavioral control identified actual behaviors as well as the formation of intentions (Abereijo, 2015; Bae et al., 2014; Esfandiara et al., 2017; Kibler, 2014). The TPB highlighted those small business owners should understand that their involvement with the institutional environment and the Ghanaian business policy revealed a relationship between their entrepreneurial intentions and perceptions. The participants' interview responses from those who have experienced failure could enable one to learn what leads to failure, as well as avoiding such future failures. Generally, the TPB served in examining small business owners' entrepreneurial intentions and behaviors that may lead to sustainable businesses.

Small business owners realized that identifying critical business factors to survive required a holistic approach to understanding the environmental, institutional, and entrepreneurial activities of a business enterprise. Researchers have emphasized that in describing small businesses from the perspective of institutional theory comprised the integration of specific factors from an institutional context (Abor & Quartey, 2010; Erastus et al., 2014). The effect of the following contextual business factors in Accra, Ghana, required examination. The characteristics of small business owners' could be associated with: (a) the internal business environmental factors, involving small business

growth, business policy and the economy, access to financing, and government institutions and agencies; (b) internal elements of small business lifecycle, including business development and survival, marketing strategies, and cocreation; (c) institutional factors including enterprise support services, Non-government organization (NGOs), government agencies, and academics; and (d) local community involvement and development including bottom of the pyramid market, innovation, partnership, place-based enterprise strategies; embeddedness, legitimacy, rural development, and participatory approaches are required to achieve the objectives of the business enterprise.

Researchers have underlined that small business' survival required an understanding of the definition of small businesses. The operationalization that enabled a business involvement with desired institutional attributes in fostering their businesses activities necessitates the practical use of resources. Small business development involved "the long-term structural changes in self-reliant development, poverty alleviation, market orientation, including government promotion programs as well as the level of economic development" (Bamfo, Asiedu-Appiah, & Oppong-Boakye, 2015, p. 485). It is necessary to recognize how these institutional incentives enabled small businesses to engage the current institutional environment for business opportunity and survival.

Qualitative researchers have suggested that external environmental factors influenced the failure or survival of small businesses. Small business owners recognized how the Ghanaian 1980s trade liberalization business and economic policies illuminated the failure rates of small businesses. Those businesses depended on the institutional

policies and bureaucracy to survive (Aryeetey & Ahene, 2005; Roxas et al., 2008). Previous research from the Enterprise survey (2013) has highlighted that access to financing presented gaps in the financial systems underlined by high-interest rates, high collateral requirements, and lack of experience with financial intermediaries (Opuni & Asiedu, 2017). These negative factors affected business opportunities, economic conditions, and government regulations. Surviving small business owners shared insight with other aspiring business owners.

The development of a small business survival lifecycle involved an understanding of the required internal business components, such as business development and management skills. These numerous contributing factors are necessary for small businesses to survive. Researchers have revealed that the significance of the commitment of small business owners was essential for small businesses to survive, given the multiple contributing factors (Abor & Quartey, 2010; Erastus, Stephen, & Abdullai, 2014). The effect of numerous contributing factors from the institutional context view on small business survival ecosystem in Ghana necessitated recognition (Kusi et al., 2015). Small business owners recognized the impact of multiple contributing factors in business development that are necessary for sustainable businesses.

Small business owners understood how to participate in community involvement. The basis of the participation is on revealing a relationship between the BOP market and small businesses. This market model denotes the bottom-tier of the global income pyramid that illustrated the larger share of people living in moderate and extreme poverty. The PBE and BOP initiatives highlighted the socioeconomic impact, inspired by



the role of small business owners at the city level through the interaction of small businesses with local community development programs (Guerrero, Urbano, Alain, Klofsten, & Mian, 2016). Experiential studies revealed the significance of marketing, co-creation, inclusive innovation, partnership with multinational corporations (MNCs), as well as capacity building in the low-income market (Canaque & Hart, 2015; Ismail, 2015; Ernst, Kahle, Dubeil, Prabhu, & Subramaniam, 2014). Small business owners should know how partnerships and collaborations with MNCs were necessary for the bottom of the pyramid business models that focused on innovation in sustainable businesses and poverty alleviation. Hietaporu and Halme (2015) and Riviera-Santos Holt, Littlewood, and Kolk, (2015) stated that partnership encompassed strategic alliances, joint ventures with small businesses, and local communities. Partnership relationships between small business owners and MNCs are enduring. Institutions foster the interactions between small business owners and community involvement. This engagement may lead to sustainable businesses through legitimacy and embeddedness.

Table D1 Appendix D highlighted the conceptual framework and the data collection narrative. The data collection involved the collection and evaluation process (Column 2) that linked the interview questions with the conceptual framework. In Table D1, the construction of the interview questions elicited information from the elements of the conceptual framework (Figure 1) that highlighted the problem statement and provided insight into the research questions. In addressing the research problem, one should understand that the presentation of the conceptual framework influenced all aspects of the research process (Casanave & Li, 2015). The interview questions mirrored Column 2. In

Column 1 of Table D1, the concepts mirrored those highlighted in Figure 1. Figure 2 represented four quadrants (wedges) that related to the institutional environment and provided context for sustainable businesses. The identified elements highlighted the sociocultural and politico-economic fundamentals of any thriving small business. In the next section, the discussion encompassed small business owners' self-motivation and intentions to grow and sustained a business enterprise.

### **Self-Motivation**

Researchers have underlined the factors that motivate a small business owner-manager to start a business enterprise. Small business owners' entrepreneurial motivation modified behaviors that promoted growth and the overall effectiveness of a business (Nguono, Onyango, Nyagol, & Museve, 2014; Sloka, Kantane, Avotins, & Jermolajeva, 2014). The conceptual framework highlighted that small business owners recognized that their ability in management and access to financing institutions revealed a relationship between entrepreneurial motivations in launching successful businesses. Researchers have highlighted that self-motivation, self-efficacy, and risk attitudes among small business owners were necessary for managing success (Koe & Majid, 2014). Small business owners understood that involving information technology and other support services revealed a relationship between entrepreneurial motivation and the survival of the business enterprise. Researchers found that the need for achievement showed significant relationships with small business owner's behaviors (Adjimah, 2014; Koe & Majid, 2014). Overall, self-motivation and entrepreneurial intentions were critical factors for sustainable businesses.

## **Intentions**

A small business owner's intention may lead to positive behavior. Small business owners' entrepreneurial intentions referred to their desires to grow and own their businesses (Bae et al., 2014; Koe & Majid, 2014). Researchers have underlined that the basis of research influencing small business owners' entrepreneurial intentions relied on two distinguished models, the theory of reasoned action (TRA) and the entrepreneurial event model (Esfandiara et al., 2017; Karimi Biemans, Lans, Chizari, & Mulder, 2014; Koe & Majid, 2014). The TRA asserted that the effects of normative with attitudinal influences on people's intention manifested to expected behaviors.

The entrepreneurial event model accentuated the impact of perceived feasibility and perceived desirability on entrepreneurial engagement (Adjimah, 2014; Koe & Majid, 2014). The conceptual framework highlighted those small business owners realized that the objective of entrepreneurial education and training might reveal a relationship between their behavioral intentions and the survival of the business enterprise. The TPB highlighted that human behavior is a cause of intentions, as those intentions involved the perceived behavioral control, attitude, and subjective norms. Small business owner's intentions and motivations in their responses to the interview questions provided insight into the research questions.

## **Internal Business Environment**

An internal business environment comprised of the components within the business, including management and the business culture. This section addressed

business development, management skills, and marketing strategies, financing accesses to credit and microfinance, innovation, technology, and partnerships.

### **Business Development**

Business development improved processes that fostered growth opportunities in the business enterprise. An institutional context was necessary for business development in a small business's survival life cycle. Macroeconomic processes that involved government policy and financial assistance were critical in shaping the development of business ecosystems (Meru & Struwig, 2015). Small business owners recognized that the local business environmental diverged regarding the economic and institutional requirements as well as the regulatory framework. Business development involved training programs that teach and educate individuals in economic development (Adjimah, 2014). Business development also involved small business growth and business incubators. The adaptation of these processes and the knowledge acquired by small businesses may lead to sustaining their businesses.

**Small business growth.** The realization of the sustainable growth of small businesses in Ghana in the decades has been primarily due to the influence of government and nongovernment institutions. Small businesses' success was attributed to the creation of these institutions and their role in fostering technological advances (Akhuemonkhan, Raimi, Patel, & Fadipe, 2014; Ahiawodzi & Adade, 2012). The "growth of small businesses and the long-term structural changes in employment output composition, market orientation, and the location is related to government's promotion programs" (Bamfo, Asiedu-Appiah, & Oppong-Boakye, 2015, p. 485). These institutional incentives

enabled a small business startup to engage the current institutional environment for business opportunity and survival. Overall, small business owners shared their experience with institutions involved in sustaining their businesses.

The creation of business programs through government's policies helped foster business growth. The development of loan systems promoted access to finance and credit extension to small businesses for both fixed asset acquisition and working capital (Ahiawodzi & Adade, 2012; Cant, Erdis, & Sephapo, 2014). The Ghanaian government created some microfinancing programs such as MASLOC, the venture capital trust fund (VCTF), and the export development and investment fund (EDIF) (Appendix B) to enable these small businesses to develop and succeed financially. Also, non-government organizations, such as the United State agency for international development (USAID), and the United Nations development program (UNDP) have developed investments and business training programs for the provision of credit facilities as well as other business assistance to small businesses.

**Business incubators.** The incubator program involved the practice of incubation, which represented a flexible link to the members. Researchers seek the nursery facilities viewed as managed workplaces: incubator centers (Akhuemonkhan et al., 2014; Meru & Struwig, 2015). A business incubator is an environment that enabled new startups, especially for micro and small businesses in the development of new ideas to the trade of sustainable and scalable enterprises (Ogutul & Kihonge, 2015). Salem (2014) stated that the concept of incubation highlighted the provision of boot camps rooted in economic and social development (Meru & Struwig, 2015). Incubators are regional innovation

systems that served as good candidates for entrepreneurial ventures. The proficiencies of the incubator managers are rooted in their performance outcomes.

The development of incubation systems provided the stimulus to increase economic growth, especially for micro and small businesses. Ogutul and Kihonge (2015) stated that knowledge and experience acquired with incubators showed an estimated incubation survival rate of about 70% for the tenants. The dimension of incubation systems for small businesses involved financial viability and growth. Masutha and Rogers (2014) contended that small business owner's perception of business incubators, reported a significant relationship between the actual services delivered and the expectations of the tenants. Meru and Striwig (2015) showed that the incubation process highlighted business growth procedures ranging from idea prospecting and conception through entry development. Meru and Struwig stressed that incubation programs in Kenya, benefited, and met the expectations of small business owners. Participants' responses during interviews allowed for data capture of their lived experiences in business development at startup. The reactions could shed more light that may lead to sustainable businesses.

An institutional framework could provide the impetus to sustainable business development. The institutional context has increasingly used macroeconomic models in light of monetary assistance and public policy (Akhuemonkhan et al., 2014; Meru & Struwig, 2015). Meru and Struwig (2015) advanced a positive relationship with incubators assisting incubates to start a business especially for micro and small businesses. The literature review of business development highlighted the factors of small

business success that needed replication in Accra, Ghana. Lastly, the response of incubators to local needs and their offerings contributed to job creation and poverty alleviation, noticeable in their economic growth.

### **Management Skills and Marketing Strategies**

This section explored the critical management functional skills that also included marketing strategies. A discussion highlighted how these components helped firms to become sustainable businesses.

**Management skill.** Researchers have emphasized that managerial incompetence of small business owner's presented internal challenges. Small business owners are those who exhibited competent financial knowledge, management skills, and expertise in the relevant practice area of marketing (Bamfo, 2013; Maes & Sels, 2014; van Scheers, 2016). The provision of training and advisory services to small business owners was pivotal, as skill gaps existed within this profession. Managerial competence, in general, gave rise to efficacy in business planning and strategic management. The Ghanaian consumer products industry created opportunities for management education facilities through the university's community service programs. Small business owners shared their lived experiences in education and expertise as the participants to data collection for this study.

Small businesses required networking, given their resource scarcity. Small business owners recognized that risk management promotes networking and resource collaboration in diversified industries as well as institutional and regulatory frameworks necessary for small businesses to survive (Bengasi & Roux, 2014). Small business

owners grasped that networking comprised of market access and technology collaboration. The participants' responses to interview questions about their lived experiences yielded data about their survivability. Consequently, compliance fostered small businesses to survive.

Many small business owners lacked information about management programs. To offset this problem, the Ghanaian Capacity Development Centre (CDE) provided a-state-of-the-art management advisory and promotional activities to secure international partners and collaborators (Government of Ghana, 2013; Mutoko, 2014). CDE promoted business management skills, technology upgrades, joint ventures, and technology transfers. Western companies created partnerships with local businesses that provided for the creation of unique markets in Ghana. Small business owners were the proper participants to share their strong management skills for this study.

**Marketing strategies.** Researchers have recognized that small business owners involved marketing strategies for business survival in their respective sectors. One major gap preempting the survival of small businesses was the necessity to identify trends and established target markets. Everett (2014) has underlined that high-performing firms developed market-centered cultures and executed marketing strategies that enhanced their financial performances. For example, SWOT analysis, involving strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, is reflective. Low-income markets engaged firms in market expansion rather than adopting particular marketing strategies. Marketing strategies addressed ways that businesses attracted customers to their products and services (Appiah-Adu & Amoako, 2016). Small business owners grappled that brand loyalty is a



product of this concept in supporting sales promotion events; the outcome is a function of brand trials and the customer's support for the brand (Appiah-Adu & Amoako, 2016).

Despite the diverse potential of this concept, there are limitations in emerging economies.

Marketing strategies allowed small business owners to engage in business opportunities with available markets for their services. Multinational corporations transformed dormant demands in low-income markets. This effort happened by introducing package resizing or scaling down the product or service to local markets, which dramatically increased sales (King & Lynghjem, 2016). Prahalad and Hammond (2002) highlighted that these engagements by MNCs created choices for the local communities that resulted in a better quality of life (King & Lynghjem, 2016). Small business owners shared their lived experiences during interviews in marketing strategies on how to sustain their businesses that offered insight into other aspiring small businesses. Small business owners involved in co-creation with MNCs shared their lived experiences, and the value obtained that enabled their businesses to become sustainable. Overall, the MNCs' perception of the low-income market segment as intermediaries provided the impetus to marketing endeavor that may contribute to the knowledge of marketing theories for small businesses to survive. The literature review of management skills and marketing strategies highlighted the elements of small business success that needed replication in Accra, Ghana.

### **Financing Accesses to Credit and Microfinancing**

The lack of access to credit is a significant barrier to business ventures, along with the survival of small businesses in Accra, Ghana. A detailed analysis was necessary to

highlight the influence of access to loans for small businesses to survive. The literature review highlighted how small businesses that have survived obtained credit to sustain their activities as well as overcome the barriers that precluded access to finance. The presentation in this section includes credit finance and other funding sources available to business enterprises.

**Access to credit financing.** Small business owners recognized that access to financing was a fundamental factor that fostered small business access to credit under the Ghanaian fiscal sector's liberalization policy. Small business owners acknowledged that the improvement of access to credit finance by advances in credit scoring results reduced the dependence on collateral (Fraser, 2015). The availability of credit improved financing, given that some small business owners were open to access to funds from the financial institutions (Avortri, Bunyaminu, & Wereko, 2013; Etim, Heilman, & Peprah, 2014; Nkuah, Tanyeh, & Gaeton, 2013; Kessey, 2014). These credit-financing activities assisted small business owners in building their credit histories and financial management skills. The institutional framework that provided incentives and disincentives may enable access to credit. The most significant variables were necessary to improve access to credit and financing of small businesses encompassed (a) institutional attributes that gauged security requirements; (b) reducing the burden in getting personal guarantors; and (c) availability of accounting records. Basu's (2004) study revealed that only about 6 % of adults in Ghana had access to banking services. Chaia et al. (2013) found that many adults in Accra, Ghana, do not use institutions and formal financial services in borrowing funds (Etim, Peprah, & Heilman, 2014). Small business owners shared their lived

experiences in obtaining access to credit financing with other aspiring small business owners. Getting access has enabled their businesses to grow and survive.

The credit rationing theory enabled financial institutions to make better financing decisions. The credit rationing theory advanced by Stiglitz and Weiss (1981) offered a model, which provided context for market inefficiencies analysis. Financial institutions are watchful of credit risks by raising interest rates to compensate for those risky business loans (Avortri, 2014; Nkuah, Tanyeh, & Gaeten, 2013; Zariani & Zaimah, 2013). Small businesses that obtain timely insider information of the market included a stream of potential lenders (Aborampah, 2012; Avortri, 2014). These institutions surmised that information irregularity produces market failures in Ghana. In total, access to credit from both formal and informal sources revealed that small businesses helped develop sustainable businesses that may lead to poverty alleviation as well as enhancing the economic well-being of the citizens of Ghana.

The private sector acknowledges that small business owners, with the proper business insight, possessed the tools in negotiating credit for their businesses. Fernando, Chakraborty, and Mallick (2002) revealed that some small business owner's characteristics were a critical factor in determining a lender's credit decisions (Nkuah, Tanyeh, & Gaeten, 2013). Zariani and Zaimer (2013) submitted that small business owners provided collateral to borrow funds as those with adequate experience in the functional areas of management. Small business owners who potentially possess sufficient knowledge of development programs were predisposed to manage viable small businesses while sustaining their businesses beyond 5 years. Small business owners

would obtain loans from financial institutions, especially if they matched the borrowed funds with collateral. If the borrower demonstrated practical knowledge in business operations, along with enough managerial competence, then that contributes to the collateral requirements.

Access to credit was contingent on positive relationships between the specific attributes of the small business owner. Researchers highlighted that business registration, business planning, and asset ownership influences small business access to loans and financial credit (Aborampah, 2012; Abubakar, 2015; Avortri, Bunyaminu, & Wereko, 2013). The literature on access to finance focused on significant factors and constraints that determined the free enterprise system in Ghana (Avortri, 2014; Cant, Erdis, & Sephapo, 2014). Small business owners perceived formal borrowing from the banks as expensive because of higher interest rates. Banks that communicated the introduction of new packages to small businesses such as letters of credit and confirmation of existence by the Ghanaian District Assemblies have sustained their growth and business. Financial systems increasingly require support for the banking system. The participants' responses during interviews allowed for data capture on their lived experiences in financial management that have contributed to sustaining their businesses.

Financing is a deficiency to small businesses in Accra, Ghana. Researchers have recognized that small businesses have difficulty obtaining long-term loans as a rule of thumb (Bamfo, 2013; Boateng & Boateng, 2018). Small business owners are aware that requesting access to long-term credit gave rise to high financing and operating costs. Consequently, short-term loans were a viable option.

**Micro finance funding.** Microfinance services allowed for transparency and integrity in institutions, operations, and their ability to increase growth. Ghanaian researchers and scholars advanced that products and services comprised of microcredit, micro-insurance, business management education, and money transfers (Bamfo, 2013; Boateng & Boateng, 2018; Etim, Heilman, & Pephrah, 2014). Microfinance services consisted of the provision of working capital, as well as informal and formal assessments of borrowers and investments. Microfinance services are the overall umbrella underlining the broad range of other financial services (Boateng & Boateng, 2018). The Ghanaian microfinance institutions enhance public awareness and activities through diverse promotional strategies. Microfinance denotes the development tool used in creating access for the economically active poor to financial services at an affordable price. Microfinance institutions' (MFIs) involvement in Ghana was necessary for addressing funding to social problems influencing small business development initiatives. Consequently, group guarantee insurance, streamlined loan disbursement, and monitoring techniques were essential for small businesses to survive.

The purpose of microfinancing sources is to serve small businesses rather than assessing poverty. Researchers have highlighted two approaches to credit: donor-based charity assistance for poverty and job creation and financial systems for the economically working poor (Bamfo, 2013; Etim, Heilman, & Pephrah, 2014; Ahmad, Halim, Ramayah, & Rahman, 2015). Policymakers have emphasized that the provision of financial support to microenterprises in Ghana should be sustainable. Small business owners shared their

lived experiences in accessing microfinance services as the participants to data collection for this study.

Microfinance services programs engaged many small businesses with inadequate financial resources. Researchers stressed that financing is significant, as it required the exclusive attention of small business owners in Ghana (Bamfo, 2013). The Ghana micro finance institution network (GHAMFIN) highlighted that microfinance programs in Ghana influenced enterprise-level while benefiting small businesses (Bamfo, 2013). Those benefits promoted small business solvency during challenging periods that may lead to sustaining their businesses.

The cash flow process influenced small business growth in Ghana. Researchers have highlighted that customers who made timely repayment of their loans rather than late repayments enhance their working capital and entrepreneurial venture growth (Bamfo, 2013; Etim et al., 2014). Thus, innovative methods were necessary for funding low-income family businesses and small businesses.

One way that MFIs assessed small businesses in funding their activities is through outreach. Researchers referred to outreach as an assessment of the number of thriving small businesses served by MFIs to determine if microfinance is reaching its social goal of making loans to women. Studies by Gonzales and Rosenberg (2006) highlighted that MFIs addressed the relationship between profitability-outreach and competition tradeoff in serving their clients. The microfinance exchange database identified five attributes for outreach measurement through an annual comparative analysis. Those attributes include: (a) some personnel and active borrowers; (b) the percentage of customers served below

the poverty line; (c) average loan balance per borrower; (d) the rate of woman borrowers; (e) and the number of savers (Boateng & Boateng, 2018; Gonzalez & Rosenberg, 2006; Kessey, 2014). Consequently, these attributes aided lenders in making funding decisions.

Microcredit institutions served clients based on group liability, lending, and pre-loan savings necessary for the provision of loans. Gonzalez and Rosenberg (2006) stated that MFIs assessed the tradeoffs in lending decisions by considering the loan size and client poverty against the loan size and profitability. In general, MFIs regard administrative cost and interest rates in making credit decisions for low-income people. Small business owners realized that MFIs used loan size and poverty levels to determine their lending rules.

**Financial literacy.** Researchers have highlighted the potential of the role of financial literacy in the implementation of various intervention programs in Accra, Ghana. This implementation aimed at improving knowledge and awareness of financial services as well as enabling access to low-income market finance. Conversely, measuring financial literacy was crucial in assessing the behavior of small business owners on financial issues (Abubakar, 2015; Adomako, Danso, & Damoah, 2016; Kibler, Fink, Lang, & Munoz, 2015). Consultants involved financial literacy indicators to model the need for financial education that defined variations in investing, savings, and debt behavior (Abubakar, 2015; Kibler, Fink, Lang, & Munoz, 2015). These commercial awareness activities supported small business owners by enhancing their abilities to manage their businesses. OECD (2004) defined financial literacy as the lack of access to credit resulting from inadequate knowledge and awareness of different financial products

as well as collateral crucial to access credit from financial institutions. The literature review of financial accesses highlighted the factors of small business success that needed replication in Accra, Ghana.

### **Innovation, Technology, and Partnership**

This section explored how small businesses benefited from innovation, technology, and partnership. In this section, I explored how these components may lead to sustainable businesses.

**Innovation.** The innovation policy comprises research and development activities. Small businesses were less committed to R&D than larger companies. Many researchers recognized that the basis of government intervention in research and development is justifiable on the economic theory of market failures (Belitz, Eickelpasch, & Lejpras, 2013; Gjini, 2014; Marcotte, 2014). Studies on government improvements on technology and innovation for entrepreneurial ventures could provide the trajectory on how those systems fulfilled their objectives. Researchers have recognized that the benefits of an innovation policy could give small businesses with diverse mentoring programs that promoted their research and development, which focused on the transfer of knowledge.

Small business innovation connects information-based competencies to deep-seated innovation. Various researchers were aware that innovation research integrated both external and internal oriented knowledge capabilities in small and medium-sized enterprises (Maes & Sels, 2014; Marcotte, 2014). Innovation provided the stimulus to the



success of entrepreneurial ventures. Those capabilities enabled the creation and redeployment of the business' resources in adapting to economic changes.

Small businesses in Ghana are predisposed to growth potentials. Small business owners in Ghana are ready to innovate, whatever the product, given the available local talent and the creativity of individuals (Mutoko, 2014). Therefore, improvements in ICT were necessary to support the demands of small businesses (Government of Ghana, 2013; Mutoko, 2014). Subsequently, various types of inclusive innovations have helped Ghanaian small businesses become sustainable beyond 5 years. The participants' responses during interviews about their lived experiences yielded insight into their survivability.

**Information technology.** Small businesses are predisposed to using technology and equipment that promoted innovation. Some small business owners lack the proper technical information to evaluate and implement the relevant technologies necessary for business performance (Bamfo, 2015; Neil, Singh, & Pathak, 2014). Small businesses that recognized creative avenues to obtain adequate financial capital acquired the necessary expertise in a technology collaborative and equipment for innovative processes. The Ghanaian information and communication technologies (ICT) and mobile infrastructure were effective and efficient in most cases, but improvements and subsidies were necessary to support small businesses. Entrepreneurial ventures and small businesses that shared those services despite the transaction cost avoided business interruption that may lead to sustainable businesses.

**Technology capabilities.** One way to promote business success is through technology capabilities; in the less economically developed countries, local resources were a concern. Empirical studies illustrated that small business success is a manifestation of differences in marketing and technology capabilities (Neill, Singh, & Pathak, 2014; Kiveu & Ofafa, 2013). The resource-based view (RBV) of the firm stipulated that the success of small businesses be contingent on resource capabilities. Several studies showed a small business assessment of technology, the contrast on the national institutional context such as social normative, cultural-cognitive, and political regulative (Kiveu & Ofafa, 2013; Singh & Pathak, 2014). These business success activities potentially enabled small businesses to become competitive. Small business owners benefited from technology, resulting from the learning that is predisposed to capability development. Capabilities are dependent on the organizational mechanism — those capabilities related to patterns that comprised small business owners' knowledge that may lead to competitive advantage.

**Partnership.** Researchers have emphasized managerial practices embraced partnerships in achieving business competitiveness. Association denotes those agreements that a firm collaborated with another entity. Hart (2015) and Nobre and Morais-da-Silva (2016) revealed the necessity of creating relationships with NGOs to better benefits from partnerships. Researchers have recognized the capabilities and unique strategies that the management of those competencies in concert with MNCs improved small business growth. Hietaporu and Halme (2015) and Riviera-Santos, Holt, Littlewood, and Kolk (2015) stated that partnership encompassed strategic alliances and

joint ventures with small businesses and local communities. The resource-based view concept of the network and strategic alliance suggested that businesses involving alliances gained access to valuable resources within their collaborative partnership. Generally, strategic alliances provided critical resources for the firm. For example, financial resources provided specific skills and legitimacy. Small business owners recognized that partnerships could reveal a relationship that increased the firm's resource base that may lead sustainable businesses.

Partnerships are predisposed to unique capabilities that included open innovation and cross-sector partnership networking. Researchers have suggested that engaging in a broader range of partnerships, is justified given that it improved the effect of poverty and research (Johnson, Adebayo, Atikpo, Essel, Awudza, & Tomlins, 2017). Partnership relationships between small business owners and MNCs are enduring. Partnerships were necessary for sustainable businesses, discussed later as an inclusive partnership. Policymakers have underscored those small business owners sustained their businesses, should they engage in partnerships with MNCs. Technology collaborative partnership illuminated the adoption of mutual values and the creation of sustainable processes between MNCs and small businesses (Meseko, 2014; Nobre & Morais-da-Silva, 2016). Overall, this viewpoint extended the capabilities of co-creation and NGOs engagement to broaden the marketplace. The literature review of the internal business setting highlighted the factors of small business success that needed replication in Accra, Ghana.

In summary, this section highlighted the significance of the cultural and institutional environment that should be conducive for small businesses to survive and

fostered sustainable businesses. The conceptual framework represented the reference point to this study. The theme identified from the literature review to address the phenomenon of this study encompassed business development, management skills, access to financing, and innovation and technology. Also, the significance of the institutional environment and the characteristics of small business owners were the management imperatives essential for small businesses to survive that may lead to sustainable businesses.

### **External Business Environment**

An external business environment comprises of all the outside influences affecting the operations of the business. This section addressed the enterprise support institutions that included financial and banking institutions, higher education institutions, and international institutions, involved in this section were government agencies, and entrepreneurial education and training programs.

#### **Financial/Banking Institutions**

Ghanaian small businesses express problems relating to finance. Financial institutions were necessary for promoting the growth of small businesses in less developed countries (Arjan, Stickers, Heijmans, Carsouw, & van Aanholt, 2016; Beck, Demircuc-Kunt, & Peria, 2009). Small business owners recognized the significance of a practical financial framework for small businesses and economic development (Scott, 2008; North, 1990). The government, through its agencies, implemented monetary policies to enable financial institutions to support small businesses. Financial institutions streamlined financial accessibility and affordability to provide business and management

support programs for small businesses (Bruton, Ahlstrom, & Li, 2010). Financial institutions experimented with impact investing: investing with a social impact rather than for profit-making (Arjan et al., 2016). The significance of the cognitive pillar to small business owners is the society's acceptance and encouragement of small businesses (Bosma & Levie, 2009; North, 1990). The normative pillar comprised knowledge and skills of small business owners that could provide the stimulus for sustainable businesses. The effect of financial institutions on small businesses required examination. The literature review of financial and banking institutions highlighted the factors of small business success that needed duplication in Ghana.

### **Higher Education Institutions**

Entrepreneurial education and training programs were essential for small business to survive as well as their viability in less developed countries. Luthje and Franke (2003) stated that a lack of business education and training among potential small business owners was the consequence of the low level of business intentions (Abereijo, 2015; Peprah, Afoakwah, & Koomson, 2015; Robb, Valerio, & Parton, 2014). Higher education institutions used cognitive and normative approaches to guide attitudes based on social situations. Small business owners in Ghana, with the proper perspective, could seek assistance through financing institutions that may lead to wealth creation for future small businesses (Bruton, Ahlstrom, & Li, 2010; Robb, Valerio, & Parton, 2014). The Ghanaian university's community service pathway ascertained enhancement and continuity of the support programs provided to small business owners. Researchers have recognized that small businesses were the engines of economic growth in Western

nations. A mechanism of social transformation in many less-developed countries, granted their capacity for poverty reduction and wealth creation (Roxas et al., 2008). The higher education institutions embraced the cognitive and normative approaches of the institutional theory. The literature review of higher education institutions highlighted the factors of small business success that needed replication in Accra, Ghana. These educational programs provided the management skills necessary for small business owners to survive.

### **International Institutions**

International institutions have contributed to the viability of small businesses in Ghana. International institutions operating in less-developed countries have supported the activities of enterprise support institutions (UNDP, 2012). International institutions offered financial support to small business owners (Busenitz, Townsend, Matusik, & Anglkin, 2017). The international organizations enacted agreements affecting small businesses through regulative approaches. UNDP and USAID have set up projects with seed money to assist small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures (Ghana News Agency, 2007). The regulative pillar of institutional theory (Bruton, Ahlstrom, & Li, 2010) influenced the role of these support institutions. Researchers have highlighted that the synergistic values accruing from these support institutions influenced the attitude of small business owners in Accra, Ghana.

### **Government Agencies**

Institutional theory is unique to the study of small businesses. Researchers showed that government agencies regulate the process and growth of small business

activities (Busenitz et al. 2017). Governments of less developed countries have realized that one way to enhance economic development is through an entrepreneurial capacity building initiative. An entrepreneurial development program improved the economic and social transformation of nations. The primary government agencies in Accra, Ghana, included the micro finance and small loans centre (MASLOC); the technology-based entrepreneur development agency (EMPRETEC); the regional project on enterprise development (RPED); NBSSI; the association of Ghanaian industries (AGI); VCTF; and EDIF (Appendix B) (Asante, Kissi, & Badu, 2018; Cant, Erdis, & Sephapo, 2014). These agencies were involved with financial facilitation; that denoted the promotion of access to banks and other financial institutions for small business loans. EMPRETEC required the assistance of small businesses in developing a capitalist management style business. EMPRETEC and other development institutions promoted a harmonious relationship between small businesses and their institutional settings, based on training in finance, technical assistance in the transfer of ideas, technology, and investment promotion (Asante, Kissi, & Badu, 2018). Financial education created a platform that enabled the banks to educate small business owners on the significance of their facilities of the financial institution. This regulative endeavor might be proper in supporting Ghanaian small business development. Overall, the literature review of government agencies highlighted the factors of small business success that needed replication in Accra, Ghana

## **Entrepreneurial Education and Training**

Researchers have underlined that entrepreneurial education and training (EET) programs for small business owners are pivotal for small businesses to survive. Ghanaian scholars advanced that entrepreneurial education and training programs (ETP) involved teaching and training for operations that may lead to sustaining small businesses. Luthje and Franke (2003) stated that a lack of EET among potential small business owners was the consequence of the low level of entrepreneurial intentions (Abereijo, 2015; Peprah, Afoakwah, & Koomson, 2015; Robb, Valerio, & Parton, 2014). These training and teaching programs assisted small business venture startups that sustained their business beyond 5 years. Small business education and training programs for potential small business owners through an intervention evaluation enhanced the wellbeing of the unemployed. Overall, a restructuring of formal education accentuated training.

Data collection that facilitated research in the process of enterprise startup was necessary for this study and crucial for business success. Mandel and Noyes (2016) stated that the development of the business mindset necessitated tactical and problem-solving mind maps, necessary in making decisions that sustained their businesses (Mandel & Noyes, 2016). The relationship between education and small business growth showed increasing growth in those businesses led by small business owners with higher levels of education (Gyamfil, 2014; Obeng, Bertson, & Haugh, 2014). Small business owners shared their lived experiences on the usefulness of EET programs, as respondents to data collection on this study.



Entrepreneurial education and training programs facilitated interaction among small business owners. Some researchers have discerned that the EET program fostered community trust and adult mentoring (DeJaeghere, 2016; Gyamfil, 2014). Maritz, Jones, and Shwetter (2015) suggested a multitude of philosophical and pedagogical approaches to small business entrepreneurial education (EE) and training for small business owners. The experiential nature of EET programs may lead to various pedagogical methods that foster management attitude and skill development.

Small business owners have recognized that entrepreneurial education and training programs potentially delivered relevant skills for business ventures within a supportive environment. Kirkpatrick (1994) proposed a four-level knowledge model that encompassed reaction, learning, transfer, and results. The model denotes that EET programs were sufficient to serve the business process (Oyebola, Irefin, & Olaposi, 2015). The literature review of EET highlighted the factors of small business success that needed replication in Accra, Ghana. Some small business owners, who recognized improve work quality, might attribute such to learning and results.

### **Socioeconomic Business Environment**

The socioeconomics environment also denotes social economics, which is the social science that studies how social processes shape and influence economic activity. Generally, this study analyzed how society progress or regress because of their local, regional, or global economies, in this case, the city economy of Accra, Ghana. The presentation in this section includes the Ghanaian economy and business policy, business

failures, economic systems and institutions, and the bottom of the pyramid and place-based market models.

### **The Ghanaian Economy and Business Policy**

The Ghanaian economy has rich resource bases that supported a thriving small business life cycle. The current economic institutions provide the fundamentals for a free market system. Ghana's government business policy is responsible for having in place a proper business environment. This section involved a literature review of the Ghanaian economy, business policy, small and medium-sized enterprises, characteristics of small business owners, and business success.

**The Ghanaian economy.** The literature on the Ghanaian economy involved assessing the trajectory to improve the growth of the Ghanaian economy with an emphasis on supporting the private sector. Small businesses are significant to the Ghanaian economy, about 85% in manufacturing and about 70% of Ghana's gross domestic product (GDP) (Abor & Quartey, 2010; Awiagah, Kang, & Lim, 2016). Figure 2 depicts the components of the conceptual framework involved in enabling small businesses to become sustainable businesses. Government expenditure defied the Wagner's law of advancing economic development and the Keynesian hypothesis coupled with exogenous factors (Rafindadil & Alayu, 2017). The Keynesian model was the basis of the financial and monetary policies before the financial reforms (Alagidede, Baah-Boateng, & Nketiah-Amponsah, 2013). These macroeconomic activities have enabled small business owners to make business decisions and predicting the business environment, thus capitalizing on potential business opportunities.

Ghanaian policymakers can eliminate all forms of financial repression (FR) to ease access to financing. Small business owners might be aware that the identification of financial repression along with financial mismanagement highlighted barriers to entrepreneurial endeavors in Ghana (Rafindadi & Yusof, 2014). The Ghanaian government ensured the provision of efficient and effective financial systems that fostered savings, pooling of risk, and reducing transaction costs. These specifics encompassed liberalizing the financial systems that provided accessible, affordable, and productive loans to improve entrepreneurial ventures. Those essentials included the provision of better regulations and the promotion of innovation and growth within the Ghanaian economy.

Financial liberalization is the most enduring option to improve savings and investment growth. Various researchers contended that economic growth in Ghana lacked survivability due to macroeconomic instability and the persistent financial crises (Rafindadil & Yusof, 2014). The emphasis is more on a need for modeling the link between real sector variables and financials (Rafindadil & Alayu, 2017). The improvement of the Bank of Ghana's supervisory functions was necessary for the promotion of nonbank financial institutions.

Business activities go beyond profit-making initiatives. Policymakers discerned that business and society benefited as they generate long-term wealth; in contrast, businesses can be detrimental to society as they draw off wealth through resource exploitation, absent the addition to local value (Elumelu, 2015). Some small business owners wrestled that the conversation of Africapitalism provided the stimulus to the

private sector's commitment to the long-term growth of business and society.

**The Ghanaian business policy.** The prevailing interest rates within the Ghanaian economy were critical to small business growth. The Ghanaian fiscal policy instrument is necessary for the economy as it forms part of the governments' primary policy instruments in generating revenue (Opuni & Asiedu, 2017). Small business venture size may be associated with managerial skill, technology, and the impact of the policy environment (Abor & Quartey, 2010). Figure 2 illustrates the elements of the conceptual framework in supporting small businesses that were necessary for sustainable businesses. Researchers have highlighted that fiscal policy affected the changes in disposable income, consumption, investments, and for small businesses to survive. The Ghanaian government has established a venture capital trust fund to serve the venture capital funding in Ghana. The venture capital fund guided small businesses to develop and gained credibility that might enable access to credit. Business angel finance is pivotal in contributing to the growth and development of small businesses (Bamfo, 2013). Overall, sustainable businesses have used business angel financing and transaction to enable their businesses to survive.

**Ghanaian small and medium-sized enterprises.** Researchers and scholars' definition of SMEs in Ghana differed depending on the source. Researchers have regarded small businesses as having 6 to 29 employees with fixed assets of less than US\$100,000 (Abor & Quartey, 2010; Mabe, Mabe, & Codjoe, 2013). There are two significant operational definitions of SMEs developed by two Ghanaian organizations. The Ghana statistical services (GSS) defined SMEs as a firm operating on a small scale

employing nine or fewer employees. The NBSSI stated that businesses with nine or fewer employees denote small businesses. The Bolton Committee (1971) first formulated an economic definition of small businesses managed by owners absent a formalized management structure and independent by forming part of a large enterprise. The 1998 revision of SMEs defined micro-firms as businesses with five or fewer employees and with fixed assets less than US\$10,000.

The definition of SMEs by some scholars relates to the objectives of their research. People who were successful in developing new businesses become entrepreneurs in Ghana (Bamfo, Asiedu-Appiah, & Oppong-Boakye, 2015). The World Bank definition created the RPED that has gained recognition in the research community. Researchers broadly used the World Bank definition to cite Ghanaian SMEs studies. The definition identified SMEs into three classes: (a) micro-firms: companies with five or fewer employees; (b) small firms: 6 to 29 employees; and (c) medium-sized firms: 30 to 99 employees. From the Ghanaian perspective, an entrepreneurial venture represented the creation of new investments and successfully managing the enterprise.

**The characteristics of small business owners.** Small business owners consist of managers who are experienced in managing a small business as well as business ventures. The small business owner denotes a sole proprietor who personally guarantees business financing, absent public equity trading. Scholars and researchers have discerned that business knowledge and skillsets were a critical factor in the success of a business enterprise. Human cognition, behavior modification, education, and training programs, as well as the perceptions of the small business owner, could provide insight into the would-

be successful small business owner.

The tenets of the survivability of a small business relate to the individual's identity and cognition. Rajasekaran (2013) stated that sustainable businesses emphasized the cognition and commitment of the individual. Koe and Migid (2014) indicated that integrating desirability and feasibility perceptions with cognitive characteristics highlighted a significant and substantial relationship through business intentions. These cognitive business inquiries could enable small business owner's attitudes and beliefs in determining their sustainable businesses. To bridge the gap, Shepherd, William, and Patzel (2014) suggested the necessity to explore in-depth the diverse processes that required small business owners to engage in sustainable business ventures. Those perspectives encompassed commitment, motivation, and cognition.

**Business success.** The concept of success is subjective, given that individuals' perception of success differed in the overall meaning. Rahman, Amran, Ahmad, and Taghizadeh (2015) revealed that some small businesses had introduced entrepreneurial ventures that promoted the development of sustainable businesses beyond 5 years. Small business survival is the prerequisite to achieving sustainable businesses and business management success (Cant, Erdis, & Sephapo, 2014; Rahman et al., 2015). Financial performance pointers included return on investment, profitability, and sales growth that is essential for an enterprise's success and survival (Cant, Erdis, & Sephapo, 2014; Rahman et al., 2015). Overall, private organizations that developed partnerships with small businesses contributed to the firms' success and economic development.

Individual's welfare recognized the essence of the hierarchy of needs and an

affluent lifestyle. Instant reactions to people's lives are functions of their cognitive judgments. Studies on wellbeing are subjective and had focused on measuring the quality of life (Rahman et al., 2015). These studies suggested that individual welfare is a function of people's longevity. The support from sizeable private companies ensured participatory democracy that included the welfare of small businesses. The literature review of business success highlighted the elements of small business success that can be duplicated in Ghana.

### **Business Failure Influences.**

The growth of the Ghanaian economy and its sociopolitical stability is rooted in the development of small and medium-sized businesses. Mudavanhu, Bindu, Chigusiwa, and Muchabaiwa (2011) stated that the failure rates of small businesses were the result of their smallness and their rate of turnover. The liability arising from a mismatch of both internal and external factors of small businesses placed those businesses in a lesser bargaining position (Fatoki, 2014; Legas, 2015; Ogutul & Kihongi, 2015). Figure 2 depicts the elements of the conceptual framework involved in enabling small businesses to become sustainable businesses. Researchers have highlighted that business failures also relate to the exit rate of small business owners (Fatoki, 2014; Ogutul & Kihongi, 2015). These failure claims by small business and society facilitated small business owners to seek other sources of livelihood, as their businesses were the primary source of subsistence. The survival of a small business owner is a product of the funds and the ability to succeed where others had failed. The availability of business data as necessary to support profit calculations of small businesses, absent this ability provides the recipe

for failure. Legal failure is a manifestation of the permitted liquidation of the business leading the owner to declare bankruptcy for business reasons.

The institutional environment influenced organizational outcomes. Policymakers maintained that the endowment of a stable and predictable setting for successful economic activity is a function of the geopolitical institutions (Fatoki, 2014; Ogutul & Kihongi, 2015). The political institutions embedded in this environment highlighted a critical role in which new businesses were born. The relationship of the business environment to high levels of civil and political unrest affected the survival of new businesses. A major challenge facing small businesses in Ghana is the increasing rate of business failure, a result of the low level of entrepreneurial orientation (Oyelede, Oluseyi, Olalekan, Kabuoh, & Elemo, 2014). Failure factors are both internal and external, mostly controllable by the firm that encompassed the lack of functional skills and management experience. The literature review of business failure highlighted the factors of small business success that needed duplication in Ghana. Generally, the failure of a business enterprise has a significant effect on the owner during the start-up process; incorporation limits personal losses.

### **Economic Systems and Institutions**

An exploration of the economic and institutional systems was significant and substantive in understanding sustainable businesses. The failure rate of some small businesses was due in part to the lack of knowledge of the economic systems rules and regulations and institutional incentives and constraints (Amankwah, 2015; Ogutul & Kihonge, 2015). A review of the literature in this knowledge area elicited opportunities



for small businesses. The economic and institutional systems of a given economy regulated the rules of the game through incentives, disincentives, and rewards. It is from this business win-win conditions that small businesses sustained their ventures beyond 5 years and offer insights to inspire other small business owners.

An economic system comprises structures of incentives and disincentives. In Ghana, banks received tax breaks or incentives so long as these banks lowered their lending rates to enable growth sectors. Access to credit by small businesses included tax rebates to banks granting about one-half of the net advances to small businesses (Bamfo, 2013; Krampah, 2011). Small businesses engaged in microfinance, claimed that the tax system affected sustaining their businesses.

Economic institutions served economic players. Economic structures, constraints, and incentives in social exchanges provide the impetus for economic activity and development (Dean, 2015; Erastus, Stephen, & Abdullia, 2014). Significant financial institutions to small businesses included property rights, legal status to corporations, patent laws, and intellectual property protection (Dean, 2015). Property rights leveraged the need for substantive capital borrowing. North (1990) stated that economic development in the West resulted from new institutions that stimulated productive business behavior (Dean, 2015). These economic and institutional frameworks could enable small business owners to gain access to financing advantages. The literature review of economic systems and institutions highlighted the factors of small business success that can be reproduced in Ghana. Generally, the relationship between sustainable

small businesses, relied on the principle that institutions and economic systems intertwined, as they evolved in response to the emergent needs of the society.

In sum, the conceptual framework (Figure 1 & 2) highlights that the socio-economic environment illuminated a crucial role beyond a business' internal and external environment. Small businesses may reveal a relationship between the survival of their businesses and the participants' responses to the interview questions — consequently, the responses to interview questions in Table 2 offered insights into the research questions.

### **Bottom-of-the-pyramid and Place-based Enterprise Market Sector**

This section involves an exploration of the BOP and PBE market model that elicited how small businesses in low-income markets could enable inclusive capitalism that may lead to sustainable businesses. The literature review comprises of the theories and concepts of the bottom-of-the-pyramid (BOP) market and the place-based enterprises (PBE) models that relate to the conceptual framework and the research framework. BOP business involves small businesses' pathways to possible sustainable business through local entrepreneurial ventures. The place-based enterprise engages the promotion of social and ecological viability in local communities' characteristics of the rural economies that included collaborative approaches, quality of life and lifestyle, and information technology. The provision of these artifacts was the catalysts necessary to transform rural-urban areas as well as endogenous territories into competitive territories.

**Bottom-of-the-pyramid (BOP) model.** President Roosevelt used the phrase the bottom-of-the-pyramid in a 1932 address in which he illuminated the significance of the forgotten as the BOP economic pillar. Singh (2015) and Tarafdar, Singh, and Anekal

(2013) highlighted that Prahalad in 2005 defined the BOP concept as a population of low-income communities with about four and a half billion people with the subsistence of less than \$2 a day. In another study, Shivarajan and Srinivasan (2013) highlighted that Hammond, Kramer, Katz, Tran and Walker in 2008 delineated the BOP as the four billion people living below \$9.05 a day. This assertion highlighted available opportunities that enabled small business owners to unearth unique, innovative businesses. Dean (2015) echoed Prahalad's contention that despite the low income of individuals in the BOP, the increasing buying power of poor communities is substantial. Prahalad and Hart stated that the perceptions of the poor as victims of multinational firms exploited in the BOP are fallacious, rather than the resilience of small businesses. Skeptics in academics analyzed the BOP paradigm as a falsehood. Karnani (2007) argued against the presence of a fortune at the BOP but suggested that poverty alleviation necessitated a focus on productivity, rather than consumerism (Dean, 2015; Singh, 2015). Table 1 below shows the BOP activities in the SSA.

Table 1

*BOP Models in Ghana and Sub-Saharan African Region*

Case study	BOP/Activities	Partners	Sector/Country	Sources
Barclays Capital Susu collectors initiative	Providing microfinance through informal financial systems of Susu collectors in Ghana	MNC/Ghana Susu Collectors Association. (NGO), Ghana Microfinance Institutions Network (NGO)	Financial services, Ghana	UNDP 2008
Freeplay Energy Weza project	Creating sustainable rural business that use a foot powered portable energy source, e.g. communication	Foreign SMEs/ Care Rwanda BOP micro-entrepreneurs, universities	Energy, Rwanda	Webb et al., 2010 Freeplay Energy
Integrated Tamale Fruit Company	Cultivating certified organic mangoes, farmers get interest-free loans through technical service	Local SMEs/ Farmers Assoc. and Org. providing funding	Agriculture, Ghana	UNDP 2008
Nokia Siemens Networks Village connection	Bringing voice and Internet connectivity to rural villages, Traditional GSM network, Operation costly than an IP based model	MNC/Operators, BOP micro-entrepreneurs, microfinance providers	ICT, Tanzania	Sharp et al., 2008 NSN website

Note. Adapted from “*Base of the pyramid: Sustainable development through Innovation and entrepreneurship*,” p. 149-152. by F. C. Caneque and S. L. Hart (2015), Sheffield, UK: Green Leaf Publishing, p. 149-152. Reprinted with permission.

In BOP 2.0 narrative, low-income small business owners exemplified business partners rather than consumers. Researchers have underlined that the integrative market involved serving consumers as well as their integration into value creation (Reiner, Gold, & Hahn, 2015; Shivarajan & Srinivasan, 2013). Two strategies helped to distinguish wealth creation and quality lifestyle improvement in the BOP market. These strategies encompassed, a) integrating the local communities and small businesses into production processes, and b) improving nutrition foods to serve the local community. Multinationals operating in this unique market created business ventures and partnerships with local small businesses that may lead to sustainable businesses. This new paradigm of doing business supported an innovative collaboration with MNCs. These collaborative partnerships provided the stimulus to co-creation of ventures with small business owners to improve and sustain their businesses.

The BOP impact assessment framework (IAF) is an all-inclusive guide for BOP initiatives to evaluate their survival impacts. Dean (2015) and Thompson (2008) concurred with Prahalad that social business is vital in the BOP to enhance society's health, as commerce were imperatives to a nation's economic vitality (Riviera-Santos et al., 2015). These shared inquiries aided small businesses to gain access to policy and programs' information necessary for sustainable businesses. Those debates and critiques of Prahalad's treatise have contributed to advancing the BOP concept. Global network partners who relied on profit-making business models engage the low-income communities. BOP business encompassed the potential to scale and replicate the business beyond the initial community of the local innovation to expand sustainable enterprises in

the communities that promoted a sustainable world (Caneque & Hart, 2015). Hart (2010) advanced the BOP global network that has brought innovation labs in several countries to generate and transfer knowledge around socially inclusive businesses. BOP businesses are transformational in quality, as they built on local capacity engaging members of the local community while sustaining their business. Bottom of the pyramid businesses comprised the embodiment of the political, social, and cultural impact in their business strategies. The upshot of BOP initiative was the offering of a better lifestyle for the residents of the community and future generations. I discussed some selected themes of the BOP model necessary in aiding sustainable businesses.

*Inclusive marketing strategies.* Marketing strategies are rooted in models in the financial services sector, such as frugal innovation, transformational, and open models. The concept illuminated small businesses possibilities and opportunities. Frugal innovation is typical in less developed nations and require that developers begin with customized designs that ensured customers' specifics, valued by the lower-income consumers included in the offering (Caneque & Hart, 2015; Ismail, 2015; Soni & Krishnan, 2014). Some scholars have recognized that small businesses experiment with various ways of designing high-quality products and services. Those designs matched the price points of the lower-income segment. In this case, frugal innovation is prevalent in the financial service, mobile money products, crop insurance, and smallholder farmers. Small business owners grasped how these models were necessary for the bottom of the pyramid business that focused on innovative marketing that may lead to sustainable enterprises and poverty reduction. The infrastructural and institutional dysfunction that

low-income communities faced in emergent markets highlighted social problems that required solutions. Researchers have stated that businesses that embraced the transformational model in developing the local markets have ensured a more sustainable business and a prosperous future for itself (Canaque & Hart, 2015; Ismail, 2015). Open business models involved nontraditional partnerships that were critical to the success of the firms in the low-income market realm (Ernst, Kahle, Dubeil, Prabhu, & Subramaniam, 2014; Ismail, 2015; Schuster & Holtbrugge, 2014). The previously identified research highlighted the embodiment of business models associated with business networks external to the firm in local economies. Overall, co-creation leveraged the development of significant market innovation. The effect of the development process is an affordable value innovation.

Researchers have recognized that small business owners involved marketing strategies for business survival in their respective sectors. High-performing firms developed market-centered cultures and executed marketing strategies that enhanced their financial performances (Everett, 2014). For example, SWOT analysis, strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats. The low-income market perspective fostered engagement of firms in market expansion rather than adopting marketing strategies. These marketing strategies allowed small business owners to engage in business opportunities with available markets for their services. Small business owners shared their lived experiences during interviews in marketing strategies that may lead to sustainable businesses that offered insight to other aspiring small businesses.

***Inclusive innovation.*** Innovation is a supplementary concept of frugal and inclusive innovation. Social or inclusive change in the BOP sphere challenges the traditional ways in which small businesses respond to social demands, as they improved economic profits. Researchers contended that innovation influenced income distribution by leveraging social innovators, which is (providing the solution for promoting the welfare of lower and medium income groups) - frugal innovators (Prahalad & Krishnan, 2008). Innovation illuminated how knowledge creation improved the well-being of low-income communities. Prahalad proposed a 12-principle framework of innovation in the BOP market. The relevance of this 12-step model is required to clarify misconceptions about delivering performance on price and value. Prahalad's principle recognized the design of processes and distribution channels as a better approach to serving low-income communities (Prahalad & Krishnan, 2008). Overall, social innovation (high skilled and risk-takers), increasingly presented a better alternative in engaging resources to generate social value.

Management literature involved the evolving nature of inclusive innovation. Small businesses that operated in communities trapped in a cycle of poverty served the poor at the bottom of the pyramid (Prahalad, 2005). Researchers have highlighted that inclusive innovation activities enhanced the social and economic well-being of people in rendering innovative solutions for affordable access to products and services. These activities narrowed the living standards gap between the rich and the poor in creating livelihood opportunities through outreach programs (Paunov 2013; Ansari, Munir, &



Gregg 2012). Overall, these innovations were empowering in nature, for the achievement of inclusive economic growth benefiting all of society.

Financial constraints significant to small businesses necessitated financing inclusive innovation. Qualitative researchers have recognized that inclusive innovation benefits involved different capabilities: (a) human capital and research; (b) institution-political environment and regulatory; (c) infrastructure (energy, ICT, general infrastructure); (d) market sophistication (credit, investment, microfinance, banks); and (e) business sophistication, technology, innovation, and clusters innovation (Chevrollier & Danse, 2015; Canaque & Hart, 2015; Mroczkowski, 2014). Researchers have identified four barriers to investing in long-term BOP markets (Cherolier & Danse, 2015; Mroczkowski, 2014). These barriers included institutional barriers, risk barriers, regulative and policy barriers, information skills knowledge, and training barriers.

The pioneer gap presented an obstacle to long-term investing. Small businesses must submit their business plan: a document outlining a business's future objectives and strategies to realize them, attitude, and entrepreneurial skills to persuade the investors to bridge the pioneer gap (Chevrollier & Danse, 2015; Mckenzie, 2015). The pioneer gap referred to investment at the valley of death (Chevrollier & Danse, 2015). The gap is the period between the formation of the firm and the generation of positive cash flow (Chevrollier & Danse, 2015; Van der Klein, Chevrollier, & Collee, 2012). Researchers have highlighted that new startup businesses were good candidates for the pioneer gap. Small business owners in less developed nations were not predisposed to financial access, given the missing middle between microfinance and the available financial instrument. In

total, most investors view small business owners as high risks and insufficiently able as investment-ready.

*Nontraditional partnership.* Small business partnerships necessary for BOP models involved innovation on sustainable businesses and poverty alleviation. A partnership, in a broader sense, denotes those agreements that a firm collaborated with another entity. Hietaporu and Halme (2015) and Riviera-Santos, Holt, Littlewood, and Kolk (2015) concurred that partnerships encompassed strategic alliances and joint ventures with small businesses in local communities. The resource-based view concept of the network and strategic alliance suggested that businesses involved agreement to gain access to valuable resources within their collaborative partnership. Generally, strategic alliances provide critical resources for the small business. For example, financial resources provide specific skills and legitimacy.

Jenkins and Ishikawa (2009) stated that businesses that operated in the BOP marketplace collaborate with small businesses that filled in pieces of the value-chain system. Consumers' imperatives necessitated the transformation of a business that is relevant to value and utility (Ismail, 2015; Goyal, Sergi, & Kapoor, 2014). Co-creation settings necessitated customers' creativity and participation in safeguarding deep respect for context, tradition, and language. For example, CEMEX helped customers with the complexities and technicalities of building homes, rather than merely selling their product: cement. The formation of partnerships is becoming significant in disperse locations, owing to the ineffective regulatory domain and low skills of individuals (Hietapuro & Halme, 2015; Simanis & Hart, 2008). Those collaborators included small

businesses such as civil society organization, traders, and microcredit institutions. Small business owners engaged in partnerships, in principle, enabled their businesses to become sustainable.

The BOP initiative comprised new operating capabilities that were necessary to fuel through the partnership. One capacity of small businesses is the integration with the BOP environment as well as the need for social embeddedness (Hietaporu & Halme, 2015; Simanis & Hart, 2008). A nontraditional partnership, including small business owners, possesses not only the local knowledge, but also the commitment and local understanding of the information on the local context, legitimacy, and relationships. Small business owners know how nontraditional partnerships and collaborative enabled legitimacy, thereby enhancing acceptance and market trust in the BOP (London & Hart, 2012). Partnerships allowed small business owners to share resources that micro franchising enabled sustainable businesses.

***Capacity building.*** Partnerships are practical for capacity building. The interactive business model, as well as open innovation, governed the development of essential partnerships (Ismail, 2015; Mezias & Fakhreddin, 2015). The concept of partnership increasingly changed the mindsets and improved collaboration, expertise and knowledge sharing, and a wholesale lowering of the required resources that may lead to sustainable businesses. Mutually beneficial partnerships unified with local capacity building provided the stimulus for small businesses' learning, local engagement, and growth within a low-income market. Small business owners recognized how local capacity building based on social marketing events might reveal a relationship among

small businesses for last-mile connectivity. Building capacity through support programs aided the introduction of small business owners to foreign ventures. Researchers have recognized that small business owners who create cost-effective business connections and learning from external business contacts become successful. The small business owners with the facilitation of the banks have sponsored foreign trips (Bamfo, Asiedu-Appiah, & Oppong-Boakye, 2015). Scholars and researchers have suggested that pursuing a broader range of partnerships is justified, given that it improved the effect of poverty and research (Johnson et al., 2017). Small business owners acknowledged that partnership players encompassed MNCs, government institutions, and NGOs.

*Rural communities.* The bottom of the pyramid market involved small business owners as distributors in their business models. Rural target markets encompassed an effective strategy of distributing products and services through these small business owners (Hietaporu & Halme, 2015; Mezias & Fakhreddin, 2015). The concept of micro franchising specified that operations are streamlined and replicated to scale to serve small businesses in rural communities (Christainsen, Parsons, & Fairbourne, 2010; Hietaporu & Halme, 2015). These distributing activities facilitated businesses to engage in sustainable businesses. The BOP market customer interface presented a broad range of functions at the distribution level. One way to engage suppliers and distributors was through micro franchising. Consequently, the mix of this market necessitated the standardization of processes in the distribution activities.

Figure 3 reveals the relationship between the core concepts of the BOP initiative to a positive socio-economic impact, the associated societal benefits of sustainable

businesses. The core components supporting local community involvement and development, as well as the visualization of the relationship between the survivals of small businesses are cases in point (Goyal, Sergi, & Kapoor, 2014). Small business owners' legitimacy and acceptance was the driving force. Figure 3 highlights the components necessary for an effective BOP initiative in a community.

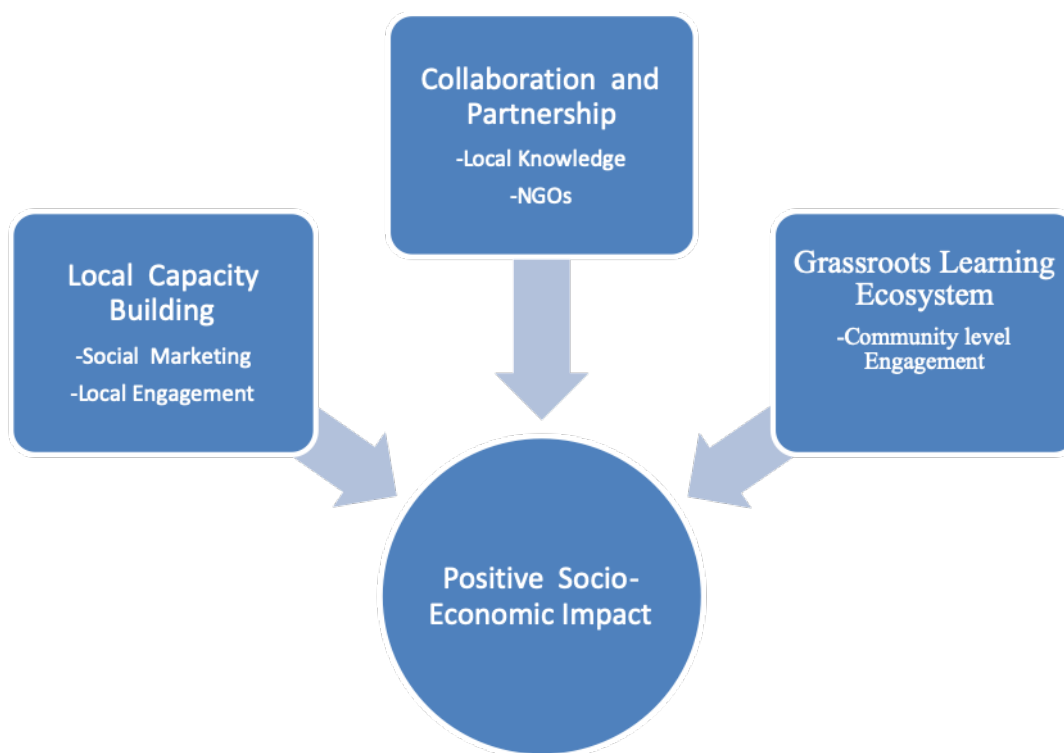


Figure 3. BOP concepts showing relationships to the socioeconomic domain in a cycle. (Self-compiled) (Goyal, Sergi, & Kapoor, 2014).

Bottom of the pyramid and community-based network created grassroots' learning-based ecosystem to leverage innovation in communities. Various researchers contended that the creation and delivery of solutions at the grassroots level addressed the

needs of the BOP segment through bottom-up learning approaches (Esposito, Kapoor, & Goyal, 2012). Yunus (2010) advocated the grassroots learning-based ecosystem that involved setting up the double-loop learning approach resulting in innovations and value co-creation. The creation of a grassroots learning-centered ecosystem was necessary to address the real needs in the BOP. The literature review of the BOP market highlighted the factors of small business success and sustainable endeavors that needed replication in Accra, Ghana.

In sum, the conceptual framework highlighted that the socioeconomic effect of the BOP markets included rural and community development, marketing and innovation, partnership and collaboration, embeddedness, and legitimacy. An exploration of BOP market models highlighted whether small businesses had used these models to sustain their businesses. The support for small enterprises may reveal a relationship between the survival of those businesses springing from the participants' responses to the interview questions based on Figure 2 and Table D1 that may lead to sustainable businesses.

**Place-based enterprises (PBE) models.** The place-based enterprise (PBE) business model referred to those attributes of the communities in rural areas that attract sustainable business ventures and investment. This model “promoted social and economic awareness in local communities” (Shrivastava & Kennelly, 2013, p. 83). The rural environment provides the premise for the place-based enterprise initiatives for small businesses. Space analysis involved ways in which distance and physical obstacles organized socioeconomic relationships as well as how one manage his or her World (Cairncross, 1997; O'Brien, 1992). Shrivastava and Kennelly have highlighted that spatial

inclusion, along with regional development, could provide pathways to multi-sectoral, place-based, and participatory development strategies. A place-based model to rural development illustrated the contributions in attracting the proper economic activities (AfDB, OECD, UNDP, 2015) (African development bank, organization for economic cooperation and development, united nations development program). These commercial activities supported small business owners to explore opportunities for small businesses to survive, which may lead to sustainable businesses. Regional development increased economic productivity across regions that needed replication in Accra, Ghana, as spatial inclusion improved the connectivity of those regions. The place-based enterprise model is weaved around the local community, which involved capacity building within the PBE market economy. Rural communities often provide goods and the environment for the population beyond their inhabitants, but the equitability of costs and benefits was doubtful (Bosse, 2000). These highlights were vital to the global economy. I discovered from participants' responses what strategies small businesses were using and associated linkages to become sustainable.

Sustainability emanated from the concept of resource conservation and intergenerational transfer, as articulated in the 1987 Brundtland Commission report. A definition of sustainability and its operationalization are arguably within community research in some contexts (Halseth et al., 2010). The PBE and BOP initiatives highlighted the socioeconomic impact, inspired by the role of small business owners at the city level through the interaction of small businesses with local community development programs (Guerrero, Urbano, Alain, Klofsten, & Mian, 2016; Milic, Stankovic, & Marinkovic,

2014 ). The impact produced on the innovative capacity that sustained socioeconomic wellbeing. The increasing significance of the city in light of its effects on the economy and small business landscape is insightful.

The place-based market model focused on the business environment, rooted in reductionism that has shifted the demands of sustainable business development (SBD). The claims of SBD encompassed attention to societal and community needs as well as the quality and lifestyle changes of residents (Halseth, Markey, Reimer, & Bruce, 2010; Rainey, 2010). These shared inquiries allowed small business owners to discuss innovative opportunities and addressed community and societal needs. These additional artifacts provided context and recognition of sought-after assets in the future rural economies. The PBE initiative provided the drive that enabled the rural community development intonation to preserve the artifacts of those places and anchor small businesses with the local community. Small business owners shared their lived experiences as research participants in their engagement with the rural community that enabled sustainable businesses.

***Innovation.*** Place-based enterprise innovation encompassed a dynamic, inclusive economy. Place-based dynamism is a function of modernism and attention. Innovation at the PBE denotes tactical procedures that promoted the collective interest and collaborative technological advancement of small business owners (Halseth, Markey, Reimer, & Bruce, 2010; Ratten, 2014). Knowledge cluster referred to an innovative interrelated group of small businesses that gained a competitive advantage as well as the ongoing collective exchange of knowledge and technology (Halseth et al., 2010). These



innovative activities gave rise to small business owners to collaborate and shared technology for business survival that may lead to sustainable businesses. PBE initiatives that focused on innovation grow from networks promoted by organizational learning and entrepreneurial skills. The development of clusters could provide the catalyst for local and regional economic development. Cortwright (2006) defined a cluster as a collection of small businesses and related economic agents that benefit from their mutual proximity. The benefit of clusters manifested in transmitting knowledge between small business owners and institutions using technologies that cross-industry boundaries.

***Rural development.*** These areas have benefited from the endogenous bottom-up development programs. Small business owners intending to regenerate their businesses were encouraged to consider place-based economies as a response to finding ways of using a place for economic gains (Halseth et al., 2010). The place-based enterprise notion forms the basis for a series of regeneration programs that could provide funding for rural development that, in principle, sustained their businesses.

Businesses that respond to globalization have gained a competitive edge by emphasizing their embeddedness and heritage. Small business owners sustained their businesses by legitimacy and identifying place-centered products and services for international markets (Halseth et al., 2015; Meagher, 2016). For example, the marketing of distinctive foodstuff, ginseng, white pepper, clothing companies, woodcraft producers, and bottled spring water from the unspoiled countryside highlight products and services that enhances global competitiveness. The originality of place-based sources, particularly in the agritourism, was critical for marketing and for small businesses to survive.

***Quality of life and lifestyle.*** The concept of the quality of life and lifestyle is vital to retaining businesses and residents in rural areas. Policymakers perceived that the quality of life and lifestyle were an economic good (Halseth et al., 2010). This notion is an asset required for the provision of innovative, creative people to self-create their reality. The wellbeing indicators in Newfoundland included (a) low crime, suicide-homicide, and self-reported stress levels; (b) high rates of homeownership; and (c) a unique culture (Halseth et al., 2010). Lifestyle issues in rural places were catalysts in attracting creative and innovative people as the next generation workers.

***Participatory approach.*** Place-based enterprise collaborative approaches accentuated on traditional top-down development paradigms. Policymakers recognized that a bottom-up centered approach replaces the conventional tactic on the active involvement of small business owners and residents manifested by the intonation of empowerment (CiesliK, 2016; Storey, 2010). A discount on the perspectives of the residents of local communities in a top-down paradigm gave rise to the bottom-up approach recognizing the concerns of local people to participate in developing local strategies (CiesliK, 2016; Storey, 2010). These shared approaches may assist small business owners to participate in decision-making and self-sufficiency. The argument is that this participatory approach is not just democratic but also more efficient. Entrepreneurial ventures and small businesses depend on customers' loyalty and participatory democracy. Small business owners shared their lived experiences with the influenced of lifestyle and business survivability. The literature review of the PBE market highlighted the elements of small business success that needed replication in Accra,

Ghana. In total, the conceptual framework highlighted that the socio-economic influence of the PBE markets included rural and community development, quality of lifestyle, and participatory approaches.

In sum, this section highlighted the significance of the Ghanaian economy and business policy, BOP and PBE market model, weaved around the local community involvement and development in promoting social sustainability in communities and embeddedness. Figure 2 and Table D1 of the conceptual framework, highlights the connection to the RQs and the interview questions. The importance of small businesses involved in the community and development in an institutional context may lead to sustainable businesses.

### **Formal Institutions – Small Business Environment**

Formal institutions denote the mechanism that comprised the set of economic, social, legal, and political fundamentals that set the rules offering incentives as well as regulations constraining the behaviors and offering incentives that benefit small businesses (Bamfo, 2013; Roxas et al., 2008). A small business is noted as a formal institution based on the services they offer as a requirement of their contractor license. The following institutional mechanisms include legal incentives and constraints, institutional attributes, structural support systems, and social support systems complemented with issues of policies and bureaucracy.

#### **Incentives and Constraints**

Incentives denote a set of institutional factors that promoted specific behaviors or activities of small businesses. Formal institutions promote productive behavior with

incentives; they discouraged unproductive behavior using rules (Bamfo, 2013; Roxas et al., 2008). The government has the capacity to providing incentives by financial and nonfinancial services as well as the provision of assistance to the private sector. Those incentives that promote small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures included financial, marketing, management development, and public procurement incentives.

Legal constraints and incentives involved requirements for doing business in Ghana that imposed a burden on small business owners. Small business owners who succeeded in fulfilling these legal and institutional mandates more efficiently move operations of the small business in a more sustainable direction (Bamfo, 2013; Dean, 2015). Figure 2 illustrates the elements of the conceptual framework involved in supporting small businesses to become sustainable businesses. Corruption is prevalent in Accra, Ghana, as it has introduced virtues of business ethics that undercut trustworthiness and financial credibility of small business owners (Bamfo, Asiedu-Appiah, & Oppong-Boakye, 2015). The society's acceptance of those practices becomes the de facto standard of doing business. Transparency is crucial in doing business in emerging economies. In total, the succeeding governments in Ghana have attempted to modify the behavior of officials to no avail.

### **Institutional Attributes**

Institutional attributes (IA) involved programs and processes that succeed in innovation and improvement in an organizational learning environment. IA distinguished businesses from other institutions and the business environment that they operate; the unique features included culture and structure, competition, innovativeness and

improvement, and ways of doing business (Philibert et al., 2010). These items were proper for this study, as they highlighted the insight necessary for small businesses to survive and provide support for the problem statement. Small business owners have recognized that their involvement with IA might reveal a relationship between their business operations and survival that enabled their businesses to become sustainable. Amede (2015) stated that IA enhanced innovation capacity for improving sustainable businesses. Those attributes increased competition, development, and the promotion of collective action to improve business efficiency. Ngo, Janssen, Leonidou, and Christodoulides (2016) stated that the core IA on export business performance involved enforceability, stability, and specificity. Researchers have included the role of the institutional-based view (IBV) in studying the export of products that may reveal an explanation that applies to small business survival in the consumer products industry. The IBV applies to small businesses in identifying the environment as comprising of the political, social, and cultural regulations necessary for the business operations. IA have governed the cooperation and competition of economic units

### **Structural Support Systems**

Every business operation requires some necessary infrastructure as components of production. Structural support systems denoted the physical infrastructure supports for small business development as well as entrepreneurial activities. Gordon (2005) and Eberts (2005) stated that the definition is consistent with those in the vocation of city and regional competitiveness, and urban and regional planning (Bamfo, 2013; Roxas et al., 2008). The city's physical infrastructure included transportation, water, power supplies,

and ICT — evidence of a favorable climate for small business activities comprised of the business support services. Small business owners have realized that infrastructure support systems provide the business with the capability to increase supply. These systems resulted in lowering production cost as well as facilitating the value chain that may lead to sustainable businesses.

### **Social Support Systems**

The social system supplements the structural support system, as it provides the foundational platform for small business growth in the city. The city's social support system denotes the instituted social institutions with its social capital and intangible resources supporting small business development along with entrepreneurial activities (Bamfo, 2013; Roxas et al., 2008). The city's social support system comprised of, (a) a local government leadership that encouraged participatory democracy of small businesses in city development planning, as well as the provision of incentives and other policies in promoting small businesses in the city, (b) the level of safety and security both to the people and their property, (c) business associations, trade, business networks, and linkages with other small businesses in the supply and distribution chains, and, (d) public and private institutions involved in R&D and manifested by the presence of colleges and universities (Bamfo, 2013; Roxas et al., 2008). Small business owners have realized that the conceptual framework could reveal a relationship between their involvement with social support systems and the ability of their small business to survive.

**Bureaucratic process.** The bureaucratic process denotes the level of efficiency and transparency of policies and rules governing transactions between the local

authorities and the small business owner (Roxas et al., 2008). For example, small businesses might have transactions with the local government, such as a renewal of business permit or registration. The length of time involved in these transactions, as well as the necessary degree of complexity, were indicators of the responsiveness of the local governance system to the needs of small businesses. Bureaucratic rigidities are likely to dampen the entrepreneurial spirit of small businesses as they suffered from unnecessary delays, unofficial fees, as well as frustration.

**Policies.** Local governance influences that supported a small business enterprise is a product of the policy framework. The OECD (2004) stated that small business development processes were served when there are consistency and transparency of policies. Policies designed for small business operations mirror those at the city level as well as national policies (Roxas et al., 2008). North (1990) stated that the conceptualization of formal institutions is the rules of the game, intended for behavior modification of business owners and economic players. Formal institutions functioned effectively; the absence of these institutions gave rise to traditional institutions with opportunities, springing from the dawn of decentralization (Myers & Fridy, 2016). Small business owners have recognized that governmental policies regarding small business operations were living written documents. Those artifacts became the de facto standard in their business environment that enabled their business to become sustainable. The literature review of formal institutions highlighted the factors of small business success that needed replication in Accra, Ghana.

In sum, formal institutions are crucial in promoting small businesses. Those

businesses that play by the rules of the game witnessed their businesses become sustainable. Figure 2 and Table D1 of the conceptual framework created a context for the RQs and interview questions.

### **Business Ethics**

Ghanaian researchers have underlined three settings of business ethics. Those settings included (a) when small businesses apply for permits, (b) when small businesses compete for contracts, and (c) when small businesses addressed issues with the taxation services (Sackey, Falholm, & Ylinenpaa, 2013). Ethical culture denotes acceptable business norms and values within the business setting that was the catalysts in promoting ethical conduct (Kangas, Muotka, Huhtala, Makikangas, & Feldt, 2015). The literature on corporate ethical virtues model (CEV) focused on a normative stand; strengthened by eight fundamental virtues. Researchers have recognized that an ethical culture is a product of the organization.

The basis of the endurance of the model relied on its normativity and multi-dimensionality that provided for interventions. The Aristotelian virtue approach is a derivative of the CEV model anchored on Solomon and Hanson (1985) and Solomon (2004) pragmatic business ethics (Hanson, Pimenta, & Ball, 2015). This approach stressed an individual's integrity that supports the firm's corporate social policies. One way that small businesses illuminated business ethics is by articulating the popular corporate virtues models. There are eight cooperate virtues models: (a) clarity, (b) uniformity in supervision, (c) consistency in managerial practice, (d) the ability to behave ethically, (e) the provision of avenues to shared commitment, (f) transparency denoting to



unethical behaviors, (g) conversation that involved an internal dialogue, and (h) sanctions on company's staff (Kangas et al., 2015). Kangas et al. (2015) adopted the 1984 Kohlberg model of moral reasoning to articulate levels of moral development, illustrated as conventional and preconventional levels of moral improvement in business.

### **Recommendations for Surviving Small Businesses**

The small business journey recognized that adaptability and flexibility were necessary for changing market conditions. The business plan is a roadmap that highlighted the activities required to achieve the goals of the business. The business plan required management skills involving the most effective methods that served as a strategic operating manual for the business as it grows (Dean, 2015; Kiznyte, Welker, & Dechange, 2016). Small businesses focused on their core mission that involved what the firm does and how it does it. A business plan enabled a small business owner to narrate their story in a meaningful way, interlacing, the when, and how much of the idea (Dean, 2015). The planning process allowed the small business owner to address tactical questions inherent in the course of the business operations. It defined how the company created value and how the venture becomes a viable enterprise. Successful small businesses asked whether the services provided solve the intended social problems.

Business partners, investors, and funders realized the interest in written business plans. An effective business plan is a testament that the small business owner has a clear synthesis of diverse business issues that led to successful endeavors (Barringer & Ireland, 2017; Dean, 2015; Ghezzi et al., 2015). A business plan identified the critical processes that the business can repeat and scale. A correctly written business plan showed

leadership and demonstrated sound business practices that led to goals accomplishment, given certain milestones (Barringer & Ireland, 2017; Dean, 2015). Small business owners used a *what* and *how* continuum to define the customer's value proposition: how the small business' services improved customers' lives and increased their utility. The resources necessary to execute the business plan were a function of the value proposition, connected to the business model. Small businesses that identified services to satisfy real customer needs have achieved customers' value proposition. The challenge of running a sustainable business is how to manage resources and processes that created value for customers and the company. A written business plan is necessary for small business management practice. The design of the said structure was beyond the scope of this study

### **The Gap in the Literature**

This study highlighted a necessity to explore knowledge gaps involving the behaviors and values of small business owners' expectations that promoted transparency in a sustainable enterprise. Luthje and Franke (2003) showed that a lack of entrepreneurial education and training (EET) among potential small business owners is the consequence of the low level of entrepreneurial intention (Abereijo, 2015; Robb, Valerio, & Parton 2014). One significant institutional barrier to economic growth in less developed countries was the absence of property rights for land in emerging nations. The lack of property rights has resulted in some business failures. It is the primary reason preventing the emergence of those countries from poverty through business ventures and small businesses as well as the survival of their businesses.

The literature highlighted a necessity to investigate the institutional context in fostering small businesses in Ghana (Erastus, Stephen, & Abdullia, 2014). Small business owners, as managers of their firms, contended that management incompetence was a major internal challenge. One critical gap to the survival of small businesses is the lack of technology capabilities that involved the use of obsolete and inappropriate technology (Opuni & Asiedu, 2017). Another major gap to the survival of small businesses was the necessity to identify consumer trends and established target market. Those that survived relied on personal savings for a time and showed signs of growth before they accessed finance (Bamfo, 2013). Access to financing presented gaps such as high-interest rates and lack of experience with financial intermediaries (Opuni & Asiedu, 2017). Small businesses were involved with barriers to accessibility to credit, political interferences, and inadequate national infrastructure.

The bottom of the pyramid and place-based enterprise models exhibited unmet needs in their appropriate roles. Knowledge of the BOP sphere along with the cooperation of traditional partnership concurrently necessitated unique capabilities and challenges in the BOP environment (Canaque & Hart, 2015; Hietapuro & Halme, 2015). BOP businesses lacked suppliers, distributors, and supply services that were absent in the BOP marketplace. The economic infrastructure required electricity supply, water, financing services, and information infrastructure (Hietaporu & Hamle, 2015; Riviera-Santos et al., 2015). Small business owners recognized that local businesses that were engaged in partnerships potentially witnessed the viability of their businesses. PBE initiatives were more successful at social development rather than economic

development. The PBE purview has helped form a focal point for community activities as well as the means through which residents have been expressing the sense of place in a globalizing countryside (Rohani & Shaliadini, 2015). The lack of private sector's action was usually a reason for public policy initiatives. Ghanaian small businesses have not benefited from the economic recovery program (ERP) designed to restore economic productivity through a reduction in inflation through monetary, trade, and fiscal policies.

A restructure of economic institutions, production incentives, and rehabilitating infrastructure provided an economic climate necessary to generate wealth (Bamfo, 2013; Boachie-Mensah & Marfo -Yiadom, 2007). The literature on savings at the BOP and wellbeing focused on marketing and consumer research that provided their financial wherewithal. The gap illuminated is to investigate how savings influenced wellbeing as well as household financial satisfaction (Ma, Zhao, Wang, & Lee, 2013; Martin, & Hill, 2015). The absence of robust institutional context may lead to natural barriers that hindered the survival of SME (Capelleras & Hoxha (2010). This study addressed the knowledge gap that required evaluation on how small businesses efficiently built their capacities to improve survivability and sustainable businesses.

### **Summary and Transition**

Small businesses have experienced high failure rates in Ghana during the past 20 years. This failure is due in part to the lack of management skills and access to credit financing as well as limited knowledge of the institutional framework. The government of Ghana, foreign direct investments (FDI) donors, and public sector's services proposed the role of small businesses as a mechanism for social transformation in less-developed countries in

creating opportunities, capabilities, and solutions to most social problems. The literature revealed that small businesses were the engines of economic growth in Western nations and a mechanism of social transformation in many less-developed nations. This outcome is because of their capacity for job creation, poverty alleviation, self-employment, and wealth creation. Small businesses have provided improvements in a country's GDP and possibly economic growth. The literature on BOP and PBE models attested to successful use in the developed nations, the translation of those success stories to Ghana was fair game. The literature discussions on the selected topics on how to support small businesses beyond 5 years were broad, requiring a holistic approach for a solution to the research problem. The gap in the literature review presented context that helped the researcher to assess how the results of this study narrowed the gap in reducing the high failure rate of small businesses. The literature review highlighted the determinants of small business success that needed replication in Accra, Ghana. Those dynamics encompassed macroeconomics and management topics rooted in the conceptual framework that grounded this study. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology.

### Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study design was to understand how to overcome the high failure rate of many small businesses in Accra, Ghana. The previous chapter focused on the literature on small businesses that calls for more research to understand the phenomena, which guide how small business owners sustain their businesses beyond 5 years. The qualitative research method is appropriate to study a sample of small business owners on how they have sustained their businesses beyond 5 years. The qualitative approach leverages a poststructuralist perspective toward the comprehension of the lived experiences of human occurrences (Moustakas, 1994). The qualitative research method is proper to investigate a phenomenon, contrary to a quantitative approach, which focuses on measurable factors (Kumar, 2015; Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). An analysis of both qualitative and quantitative factors will influence decisions.

This chapter presents the research methodology for this study. I will discuss the traditions, research design, and rationale for the method selected, the research question, followed by the sub-research questions. I will discuss five of the most common qualitative approaches that researchers have chosen for their research design and the choice of selection. I further examine the role of the researcher. I will discuss the methodology section that includes the participant logic selection, instrumentation, pilot study, procedures for recruitment, participation and data collection, and data analysis. I discuss issues of trustworthiness and ethical procedures.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

Researchers have used diverse methodologies to conduct studies. The institutional and planned behavior theories along with the phenomenological study design served as an appropriate strategy to address the following research questions: The general research question was: How have small business owners in Accra, Ghana, used the available institutional attributes to overcome the problems that cause many small businesses to fail within 5 years?

The following were the sub research questions:

Sub research Q1. How have small business owners, who are embedded in specific business locations in the metropolitan area of Accra, Ghana, sustained their businesses beyond 5 years?

Sub research Q2. How have small business owners adopted the management strategies that allow small businesses to grow and sustain their businesses beyond 5 years?

Small business survival is the phenomenon of this study. The research design allows a researcher to appraise a specific phenomenon where very little is known about how people experience a phenomenon (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). This descriptive phenomenological study design was proper as it allowed for an understanding of the how and what of human factors and perceptions involved in the lived experiences of a small business owner (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016).

I considered the qualitative research tradition and the selected research design, in this case: phenomenology as the preferred option for this study. The basis of the selection

choice was the research questions, the type of data collection, as informed by the conceptual framework of this study. Qualitative researchers strive to become the instrument of data collection who gathers the data from diverse sources such as interviews and observation (Lewis, 2015). Yin (2014) stated that a qualitative approach is unconstrained, descriptive, and flexible. Qualitative researchers have used triangulation in mixed methods to test if the findings were consistent across those methods. Triangulation provided the benefits of both approaches in one design (Kaczynski, Salmons, & Smith, 2014). Qualitative research highlighted that researchers were the instrument for data collection and analysis (Giorgi, 2009; Passer, 2015).

Qualitative researchers chose among five popular approaches for their selected research design. The most popular designs include: (a) a case study, (b) narrative, (c) grounded theory, (d) ethnographic, and (e) phenomenology methods (Creswell, 2014; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). I considered the phenomenology approach; the case study was another option as they all relied on interviews.

A case study provided a level of flexibility and study design to approach the case and the research questions. Data collection in multiple case studies used interviews, documents, and artifacts. A case study design was not appropriate because the type of data sought for the research problem may not be appropriate (Creswell, 2014). The narrative research focused on individual life experiences in story form that the researcher gathered in sequential order (Creswell, 2014). This study would be inadequate if a single personal story or restoring (Creswell, 2014) were the basis for data collection and



analysis. The ethnographic study describes and interprets the shared pattern of the culture of a group. Ethnographers studied cultures and involve a design process that generates information through observation and face-to-face interactions with the participants of the targeted population (Mutchler, McKay, McDavitt, & Gordon, 2013). Data analysis and collection used interviews and observation. Grounded theory methods comprised of systematic guidelines to collect and analyze qualitative data to construct theories from the data themselves (Charmaz, 2014). Grounded theory data collection primarily used interviews with 20-60 individuals (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Grounded theory study cannot address the research problem.

Participants' lived experiences during data collection allowed for qualitative data analysis. A choice of the phenomenology study design supports an in-depth study. The study explores the lived experiences of the participants and the meaning the participants gave the phenomenon, requiring data collection that led to thick and rich information (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology research involved the essence of the phenomenon, as the essential meanings of the phenomena were the lived experiences for the researchers (van Manen, 1990). Van Manen (1990) stated that the term essence referred to the essential meanings of a phenomenon; which made a thing what it was (Kafle, 2011). I assumed awareness of the investigation of the specific phenomenology. Phenomenology assumes that one would only know what he or she experiences by retrospective, reflecting the meaning that triggers one's awareness (Giorgi, 2009). The objective here was to unearth rich, detailed, and descriptive material about diverse views regarding the challenges of small business owners weaved around sustainable business activities. Many

researchers have recommended data processing in uncovering the thematic aspects depicted by van Manen (1990). Data analysis for the phenomenological study was for significant statements meaning units, textural, and structural descriptions as well as descriptions of the essence (Moustakas, 1994). The phenomenological approach allowed for the description and understanding of how small business owners have managed their businesses beyond 5 years.

A descriptive phenomenological study allowed researchers to explore similarities among the participants' experiences. Patton (2015) submitted that the core inquiry questions in phenomenological research included the structure, meaning, and essence of the lived experiences of small business owners. Data collection from the interview adds value to information acquired through the literature review. Patton stated that in a phenomenology study, one would isolate their experiences and conceptual knowledge to avoid biasing data collection and analysis. The researcher should possess previous experience of the notion; nonetheless, he or she needed a better understanding of the experience of other participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). Researchers might attempt to answer the question of what it was like to experience such and such.

Moustakas (1994) advanced the descriptive phenomenology model that encompassed epoche, attitude, free imaginative variation, and synthesis of structure and textual data. Giorgi (2009) stated that the epoche attitude in this phenomenological study induced bracketing and theme analysis. This attitude allowed one to develop assumptions to classify the data in pure forms and unaltered by any other means. The epoche attitude allowed one to refrain from ordinary ways of perceiving things, as epoche required a

unique way of looking at things that were a requirement to learn to see what stands. Free imaginative variation “denoted that one eludes an attribute of the phenomenon requiring articulation to observe if such removal changed what was presented, was indispensable” (Giorgi, 2009, p. 69). Researchers should design phenomenological interview questions that yield the type of data required to dissect the phenomenon. The questions are required before defining and analyzing the textual data in evaluating the elements and their essential structures.

### **Role of the Researcher**

A qualitative research study requires that the researcher become the critical data collection instrument. I examined a purposive sampling technique ranging from 5-25 participants comprising of small business owners who had the experience and knowledge of the small business survival (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005). My role as the researcher of this study was to select the appropriate research methodology and design, recruit potential participants, gather, and analyze the data. I forwarded e-mails and made telephone calls to 20 small business owners in Accra, Ghana, to ask for their voluntary participation. I had never been a small business owner, and I have never worked for a small business in Accra, Ghana. I knew some small business owners and entrepreneurs and some local people. This topic was of interest to me. I have always had a passion for and interest in small business survival in the city and community.

There were no personal, supervisory, or other types of relationship between the researcher and the participants. I used the NBSSI database and referrals from previous participants, in addition to a few local people in Accra to help access the potential

participants after receiving IRB approval. I offered incentives as a “Thank you” for participating. Patton (2015) described a researcher as an instrument of inquiry and data collection who preserves their official responses from participants. A qualitative researcher should collect data as well as protect the participants from ensuring a credible research process. Patton emphasized that qualitative researchers need to protect human subjects to ensure a smooth research process. I protected the confidentiality of the participants.

Researchers should avoid bias, as the potential is significant to a qualitative study. Researchers explain biases when inquiring on the topic; the researcher should not lead the participant or gestured the perspective the researcher wanted them to share (Yin, 2014). I used bracketing to eliminate all forms of personal bias from the study. Kumar (2015) and Leedy and Ormrod (2016) suggested that researchers acknowledged biases by thinking about what their biases were, and then extrapolating on how these affected given actions regarding the data collection and interpretation. Van Manen (2014) stated the basis of the researchers’ perspective and reflexivity of what is experienced, and how the phenomenon manifests was in identifying facts and determining the truth. By understanding, the facts and the truth allow the researcher to write and interpret the experience of the research. To mitigate the potential of bias, I used member checking and other techniques to validate the data collected to reduce bias. Member checking enabled researchers to improve the accuracy, credibility, and transferability of a study (Kumar, 2015; Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). Data saturation reduced the participants’ bias. I was aware of striving for some

level of saturation to validate the interview process. I avoided bias by not sharing stories with the participants.

Qualitative researchers recognize the requirements of proper approaches for successful interviews. A “rapport with the participants should be established without manipulation” (Ryan & Dundon, 2010, p.5). Leedy and Ormrod (2016) suggested that “phenomenological interviews are unstructured where the participant and the researcher worked together to arrive at the heart of the matter” (p. 256). I considered those elements that contributed to building empathy and rapport in the relationship between the interviewee and the researcher. It was proper to audio record each item of the interviews to ensure accuracy.

### **Methodology**

The research methodology was different from the research method as it included the broader strategy of conducting as well as conceptualizing an inquiry of the phenomenon in question. The research method referred to a set of techniques and procedures necessary to select tools and the participants to process and analyzed gathered data (Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2011; Kumar, 2015). The methodology for this research was qualitative with a descriptive phenomenological design. This section described the participants’ logic selection, instrumentation, the pilot study, data collection, and analysis for the study.

#### **Participant Logic Selection**

Purposeful sampling involved the participants for a particular purpose. In purposeful sampling, the chosen sample was according to the specific objective of the

study (Kumar, 2015; Leedy & Ormrod, 2016; Passer, 2015). This sample of the participants fits this study, as small business owners in business beyond 5 years possessed the required experience. Snowball sampling was a recruitment technique that encourages current participants to refer members to this study (Perez et al., 2013). This study involved snowball sampling. Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) suggested a minimum sample size interviews of 20 respondents was proper to ensure theoretical saturation. Kumar (2015) stated that in qualitative research, one does not have a sample size in mind; instead, one collects data until the saturation point. The researchers' insight into the meaning of the sample size is pivotal to the results of a study.

The participants for this study were small business owners in the consumer products industry in the metropolitan area of Accra, Ghana, who have been in business beyond 5 years. I targeted small business owners in the consumer products industry, who met the recruitment criterion for this study. NBSSI was the sponsoring agency that provided a list of volunteers from their database. The initial participant recruitment process started with a letter of invitation that highlighted the details. I received acceptance letters from potential participants that triggered the recruitment process. I followed the interview protocol and interviewed eight potential participants from the NBSSI database. I then used a snowballing technique for referrals of 12 more participants. Snowballing sampling was a recruitment technique that served hard-to-reach populations (Dusek, Yurova, & Ruppel, 2015; Perez, Nie, Ardern, Radhu, & Ritvo, 2013). Participating in small business owners, who offered stimulating responses to interview questions to this study referred to another qualified participant. I asked those

participants to provide names and contact of others whom they trusted were a fit into this study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016; Passer, 2015; Perez et al., 2013). I inspired current participants to refer to other small business owners from their social networks. Through the referral and network process, the selection of twelve additional potential participants met the criteria for the sample size.

The site for the research was beneficial to this study, because Accra, Ghana, is the metropolitan capital city with many small businesses that provided self-employment. Access to the participants was through telephone calls and e-mails of research participants and referrals from other participants. Qualitative phenomenological research required saturation of data should recruitment results to a few participants who met the objectives of this study (Marshall et al., 2013). Data saturation ascertained that in-coming data themes do not yield added data (Mason, 2010; Onwuegbuzie & Byers, 2014). The identified themes satisfied the goals of this study. Descriptive phenomenology helped in describing the depth and meaning of the participant's lived experiences (Giorgi, 2009). The descriptive phenomenology approach is consistent with a realistic view, as it was more comprehensive.

### **Instrumentation**

Semistructured interviews to collect data were necessary to explore the skills of small business owners to become viable beyond 5 years. Qualitative research was the instrument for data collection and analysis (Giorgi, 2009; Passer, 2015). Small business owners were the participants in this study; they all resided in the metropolitan area of Accra, Ghana. In this descriptive phenomenological study, I was the principal data

collection instrument. One objective of this study was to explore the lived experiences of the respondents, the basis for this research.

Participants reviewed the transcripts of the collected data to ensure amendments and accuracy. One technique to ensure the accuracy of the respondents' responses was through member checking. This process discerned the credibility of an account of an occurrence (Harper & Cole, 2012). For example, reestablished information from the participants, and then request verification of the meaning of the words. Interview protocols provided the participants with freedom and flexibility during the interview process. I took notes and tape-recorded the interviews. These interviews comprised of semistructured interview questions that elicited lived experiences data of small business owners required to succeed beyond 5 years.

### **Pilot Study**

Pilot studies provided reliability and feasibility to the approach used for data collection. A pilot study was a trial run, required for a small number of participants, before the actual interviews (Passer, 2015). I tested procedures use on a broader scale, on the pilot study to show that those methods and procedures worked (Kumar, 2015; Passer, 2015). The pilot study process included three participants from the NBSSI agency and one experienced small business owner who tested the interview questions for data collection for this study. A pilot study served to test respondents who closely resemble the population of interest. This approach was helpful to the success of the study and improved reliability and validity of the research design and interview questions.



The information gathered from the pilot study refined the data collection. The pilot study helped a researcher to identify limitations and possible weaknesses within the design of the interviews and made the required changes before performing the actual research (Turner, 2010). The pilot study indicated flaws in some of the interview questions. I then determined if the identified themes and categories addressed the research questions and problem statement. If the results of the pilot study were not accurate, then the sample size is misled; this is typical of treatment effects. Given the importance of the pilot study, as well as identifying flaws in the design, the benefit of conducting a pilot study for the dissertation is meditative.

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

Qualitative researchers use their judgment to select experienced participants with the phenomenon. Eligibility for participation requires that persons met four criteria: (a) must be full-time self-employed aged 26-65 years, (b) must have a level of education ranging from some high school training to a post-doctoral program to ensure literacy of the participants, (c) must have been a small business owner beyond 5 years to ensure the participants' experience, and (d) must be doing business in the consumer products industry, as the participants of this study were selected from this industry. Leedy and Ormrod (2016) stated that the frequent use of purposive sampling in qualitative research was a valid option for achieving a sample size for a given population of the study. I used this approach to determine the selection of the participants who provided the most validated input for research evaluation. In Appendix D, Tables D2-D4, shows the participants' follow-up interview questions that supported the capture of information-rich

data on the lived experiences of small business owners. The participants' responses to interview questions involved concepts, constructs, and the conceptual framework. Those participant's interview responses reflected their exposure to the gap in the literature and the research questions.

The recruitment strategies for the participants in this study incorporated the snowball sampling process. This study included initial contacts via phone and email or gatekeepers: these were the individuals who managed access to target the participants (Darbi & Hall, 2014). NBSSI was the gatekeeper or sponsoring agency that has recruited small business owners as participants in the past. The second gatekeepers were previous NBSSI interview participants who made referrals to other individuals who participated in the study. I maintained confidentiality, as no names of contacts were referenced, thus preserving the anonymity of the would-be participant (Darbi & Hall, 2014). The research abided to IRB regulations and the participant's rights and privacy.

**Data collection.** In qualitative research, data collection techniques encompassed interview planning, data saturation, transcription, and transcription reviews. In Appendix D, Table D1, I involved thematic analysis in identifying patterns that unfold from the collected data in Chapters 4 and 5. Thematic analysis was a technique used to analyze, identify, and report unfolding patterns from the collected data (Jugder, 2016; Thomas & Harden, 2010; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). The data collection method involved a cross-sectional group of small business owners in the consumer products industry in Accra, Ghana. The provision of specific details of data collection was necessary on the intent of the research, the basics of informed consent and time

commitment. In Appendix D, Table D2-D4, the participants' responses to interview questions involved follow-up questions that connected the gap in the literature, and the conceptual framework. Data collection effectiveness necessitated the establishment of a working relationship and maintaining rapport with the participants.

In Appendix D, Table D1 highlights the institutional framework matrix for this study. The matrix illuminated the relationship between the conceptual framework, problem statement, purpose statement, background, and RQs. The matrix also illustrated the connection between the CF, RQs, interview questions, and data collection and respondents' evaluation tool in a nutshell.

In Appendix D, Table D1, highlights an institutional matrix that illuminated the relationship between the conceptual framework and the interview question, developed from the literature. Many researchers have proposed that the institutional framework highlighted the relationship between the survival of small businesses and the owners' perspectives in promoting small businesses in Accra, Ghana (Erastus, Stephen, & Abdullia, 2014). I used participants' follow-up interview questions to capture information-rich data on the lived experiences of small business owners based on the gap in the literature and the conceptual framework sections of Chapter 2. I identified the participants' response patterns that elicited shared knowledge and strengthened their relationship to the conceptual framework and the interview questions grounded on the research questions. Thematic analysis identified patterns that unfold from the collected data. Thematic analysis was useful in Chapters 4 and 5 to classify the core data from the interview transcripts. This pattern identified filaments that transverse the set of

interviews.

In Appendix D, Tables D2-D4, institutional attributes might enable a more responsive business environment to small businesses in Accra, Ghana. The follow-up interview questions validated the gap in the literature review relative to the conceptual framework and the methodology, ensuring alignment (Erastus, Stephen, & Abdullia, 2014). The conceptual framework enabled a more responsive business environment to small businesses in Accra, Ghana. The interview questions from the collected data addressed significant small business's survival factors that sustained their businesses beyond 5 years. The thematic analysis effectually elicited data from the participants to enable the researcher to compare the participants' responses to the literature review and the conceptual framework. I encouraged the participants in ways that their answers to those interview questions enabled an association with the conceptual constructs highly sought. The time allotted for each interview was about 30-45 minutes.

The participants' data collection required excellent interview skills from the researcher. Researchers have suggested that the participants do not have specific ways to describe their lived experiences; both oral and written reports are adequate (Walter & Block, 2014). I attempted to be non-directive in the interview instructions. For this study, I asked the participants to describe their experience without directing their description. The data collection was a cross-sectional study at one point in time. I expected to capture the participant's thoughts, feelings, and sensations. I used the follow-up question technique to request for further detail description without suggesting the responses.

This descriptive phenomenological research design approach to science relates to

two principles that shaped data collection. Giorgi (2009) highlighted that Husserl suggested in 1913 that every legitimate source of cognition is a derivative of intuition, as “All individuals accepted intuition simply as what it is presented; the presentation was within limits presented”(p. 69). Husserl emphasized that what is presented was a legitimizing source of cognition. Such a presentation is accepted only within the limits in which it is presented. The implications were that nothing is added or subtracted from what is presented.

Husserl articulated the principle of free imaginative variation, with the illustration of the discovery of essence. Giorgi (2009) highlighted that Husserl in 1913 posited that the trajectories for philosophical investigations should not be factual; it was fictive. For example, an active imagination was helpful as one attempted to clarify the exact situation of an experience. Free imaginative variation necessitated a cleansing or invocation of the mind to determine if the reverse was true. The removal causes the given to lean towards the essential. The given was a contingent part if it was still recognizable. Openness to experience was a legitimate topic for investigation, and the process of free imaginative variation highlighted the given. I was sensitive to the meaning units where psychological richness existed, a lived experience. Most researchers plumed the meaning units for their psychological sense.

To sort the experiential world of the participant, I captured the alternative points of their experiences; the key was the discovery of the meaning contained within the experience via a report. Qutoshi (2018) highlighted that Heidegger stated in 1993 that phenomenology is a science of learning from the experience of consciousness.

Phenomenology is a way of constructing meaning based on experience requiring interpretation. With the Giorgi (2009) Husserlian phenomenology and its theory of meaning, the criterion to analyze data was met; they required intrinsic qualitative empirical data.

Giorgi (2009) proposed the following data collection procedures:

- Qualitative research necessitated that both the participant and researcher were proficient in linguistic abilities. The participants need to be specific and more detailed in the universal language. The participants who ascertained precision in the meanings of the expression delivered specificity in descriptive phenomenology.
- Research participants were required to give a detailed and concrete description of the experiences sought after by the researcher. The participants accomplished this request by written descriptions of those experiences. The participants whose written descriptions were incomplete, then specific instructions addressed those limitations, through a tape recorder. A transcript recorded the participant's interview experience.
- Best practices to conduct interviews are scant in extant phenomenological studies in Accra, Ghana. The participants recognized that research interviews in descriptive phenomenology strived for their complete descriptions of the lived experiences.
- The participants may be subject to the difficulties developed from the initial interview questions at the end of the interviews. Here, I attempted to

use common sense and kept the criterion in mind.

- In this descriptive phenomenological study, I categorized interview participants as directing the participants and leading the participants. I directed the research to ensure that participants spoke about their lived experiences on small businesses to become sustainable beyond 5 years. The discovery approach led the participants to specific zones of experience, given that researchers sought the actual relevancy of the experience.
- Qualitative research necessitated the development of rapport with the participants. Researchers, who strived for the profoundly self-revealing articulation of the lived experiences, recruited an intimate friend to be the participant. A researcher established a relationship higher than that of acquaintanceship. Strangers were participants necessitating the establishment of rapport. General psychological sensitivity, as well as potentially embarrassing situations, required establishing rapport. Many researchers recognized the necessity of the best relationship to obtain in-depth, relevant data.
- Research participants needed awareness of what length of the interviews was adequate for the phenomenon studied. Novice interviewers tend to go overtime for fear of insufficient data. The participants acknowledged that interviews would end at the agreed time; nonetheless, an interview could go overtime at the request of the participant. This gauge avoided anxiety

on the part of the interviewer rather than the contents of the participants.

The research participants were aware that the interview data collection focused on specific situations as to how small businesses have survived beyond 5 years. Giorgi (2009) suggested a fundamental question in phenomenology, where a researcher asked the participants for a description in which the participants have experienced learning. With such a question, descriptions were manageable. The concept of the situation determined critical limits and ensured that the descriptive material was relevant to the research questions.

**Data coding.** Data coding is a sound technique for data collection and analysis in qualitative research. There were several tools for capturing data for coding purposes. In this qualitative research study, I collected data from a chosen list of a purposeful sample of 20 participants in a semistructured interview. The research design involved interviews with an interview guide in serving the respondents who were small business owners.

The administration of the semistructured interview questions via telephone required the assistance of a laptop computer, an audio recorder software, and the Yeti Blue microphone. I coded and analyzed the collected data using an inductive theory development. The practical approaches included open coding, axial coding, selective coding (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016). In open coding, I split data into meaning units and evaluated the similarities and differences that reflected significant themes and categories. After identifying and assessing meaningful categories, I examined the data for properties or subcategories that shared a relationship with each category. At this point in the



analysis, data collection continued until theoretical saturation, notably when no new information occurs. I used Nvivo 12 software edition for this analysis.

Precoding and postcoding were two well-known coding practices. Chen (1998) stated that precoding distinguished between forms of questions and interview questions designs. Open-ended and closed-ended coding allowed respondents to give their answers as well as answer multiple type questions, respectively. Chen (1998) suggested that it was easier to learn how to layout precoding by finding interview questions designed by experts for directions. Semistructured questions cannot be precoded since one cannot predict responses. I treated the bracketed data as identical in value in a process known as horizontalization with the organization of data in meaningful clusters. I identified the invariant themes within the context to perform a free imaginative variation (Giorgi, 2009). The phenomenological analysis is a structural description that contained the skeleton of the experience for the overall studied group. In the structural analysis, a researcher searched for deeper meanings for the individual and group. The synthesis of the essential component required a combination of structural and textual accounts that provided the essences and meanings of the experience.

Qualitative researchers have used coding as a sound technique for data collection and analysis. There are several tools to capture data for coding purposes. Coding involved scientific research if one recalled that the primary goal of grounded theory study is to develop a new theory. Data analysis techniques become second nature to the entire research endeavor.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

Data were ready for analysis after the contents have been collected, recorded, and transcribed. The thematic analysis involved data analysis and data collection from interviews. The completion of data collection required an audio software recorder in reifying the data (Giorgi, 2009). A descriptive analysis of the data enhanced the meaning based on the data presented. The attitude of the participants accounted for in the analysis of the data itself. Giorgi suggested that researchers narrowed the gap in the results by obtaining more data rather than by theoretical speculation. The results of the descriptive analysis were a second-order description requiring the scientific attitude in the description, given the preservation of the findings in these procedures.

Some researchers wrestled that new strategies were necessary for the analysis of phenomenological data (Waters, 2016). Qualitative researchers have used a standard approach to sort out themes that ascertained the similarity of experience of the participants, through a deep understanding of the meaning of data (Waters, 2016). The themes that contributed to the narrative retained the components of their meaning. Many researchers contended that some essential themes encompassed shared themes of a given setting. Thematic analysis improved the precise meaning of the data. Thus, descriptive elements such as emotions, attitudes, beliefs, and attitudes highlighted the physical surroundings of this study site.

Some researchers presented themes in novel ways that were essential to the experience. Waters (2016) stated that such experience differed from other similar experiences requiring a clear articulation in any themes analysis. Qualitative researchers

have distinguished two types of themes, common themes that occurred across a group of participants and individual themes that were unique to a few individual participants (Waters, 2016). Therefore, in theme analysis, meanings relied on socio-cultural and linguistic context, requiring an in-depth contextual narrative.

**Procedures in the data analysis plan.** In descriptive phenomenological psychology, the researcher noted the association of variables that gave rise to meaning units. An act of identification enabled the satisfaction of the meaning. The signifying action is the meaning units from the “phenomenological psychological perspective” as the transformation occurred at some point (Giorgi, 2009, p.133). This process was necessary to obtain rational expressions when changing the real-life meaning units. The following steps guided the data analysis for this descriptive phenomenological research design. I used Nvivo software for this study to analyze the data. Due to complexity, data analysis required an understanding, experience, and tact in descriptive phenomenology.

**Read for a sense of the whole.** A transcript presented the description of small business owners. The steps that I delineated were those that any qualitative researcher used regardless of his or her views, except that I implemented them with phenomenological guidelines. I read the description from within the phenomenological scientific reduction.

**Determination of meaning units.** I narrowed the description from the transcript for holistic purposes; I broke them up into meaning units for clarity. Differences emerged on partializing and the understanding of the other parts. Because the fundamental goal of phenomenology analysis is the meaning of the experience, the parts to be established

should be sensitive to that goal. I developed some meaning units containing the description. As the analyses must be psychological, I ensured the meaning units should be sensitive to small business owners. I determined meaning units from the phenomenological psychological perspective, giving them relevance to the phenomenon. Sentences are required: a sentence is a unit of grammar, sentences were psychological neutral, and sentences were not the primary way to reveal expression. As one reread the description, I made an appropriate mark each time I experienced a significant shift in meaning. The resultant analysis was the break down into a series of meaning units. The meaning units correlate with the attitude of the researcher. The crux of the analysis was the transformation of the meaning units and to what extent they needed reintegration into the structure of the experience of small business owners.

**Phenomenological psychological sensitive expression.** These expressions resulted from the transformation of respondents' ordinary sensitive thoughts. They could be business secrets, as one participant alluded. I recognized that the task of carefully describing the transformation of a small business owner's raw data was not an easy one. A justification of the descriptive epistemological assertion is reflective. Here no speculation or factor influenced the findings. I checked the allegation by critical order. I recognized that the results of the descriptive approach implied strong knowledge claims because the results included descriptive findings rather than theories. The second-order descriptions that constituted structures have the strength of facts, even though they were not pure facts.

Phenomenological expression resulted from the analysis of small business owners' raw data. An interpretation of raw data occurred securely, using the procedure of free imaginative variation (Giorgi, 2009). By adopting the free imaginative variation, I discriminated and clarified the psychological meaning for the meaning unit, and then I attempted to express it as necessary.

Qualitative researchers have used the phenomenological analysis and representation of the data. Moustakas (1994) had advanced specific structural methods of analysis for the phenomenological study. Moustakas' modification of the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen model provided a better practical approach to phenomenological analysis and representation (Creswell, 2014). I considered the thematic analysis method for this study in Chapters 4 and 5. The procedure involved a broad guideline of data analysis in phases and themes.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

The usage of truthfulness forms the basis of the scientific research method. Qualitative research is incomplete absent an assessment of the significant components of trustworthiness, such as dependability, credibility, transferability, and confirmability. An evaluation of these components gave credence to this study.

#### **Dependability**

Research data is dependable when such data retained its value in comparable settings. The concept of reliability in quantitative research is like dependability used in qualitative research, referring to the stability of the research data (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Polit & Beck, 2012). Research data attained dependability when

there is evidence of proper thoughtless notes and the audit trail of field notes (Charach, Yeung, Volpe, Goodale, & dosReis, 2014; Cope, 2014; Houghton et al., 2013). Studies are dependable when there was an agreement between researchers at each point in the research process.

Qualitative research comprised a proper audit trail for safekeeping of documentation of required components of the study. The judgment of the researcher promoted the audit trail objectivity through the decisions made during the research process (Houghton et al., 2013). Qualitative researchers must retain interview field notes and journals of all components of the audit trail. Member checking provided the participants the occasion to deduce the data. Member checking ensured that data analysis was congruent with the participants' experience. I provided transcripts for the participants' interview sessions to verify for truthfulness. The concept of member checking ensured that research participants had access to their narratives to verify reasonableness before publication.

### **Credibility**

Credibility is vital as the researcher engaged in a study to ensure that the findings were accurate. Houghton et al. (2013) stated that credibility is evaluated based on the acceptability of the research results. The outcome involved careful execution of the research and the ability to illuminate the trustworthiness of the processes. Credibility is a function of the trustworthiness of a study. Yin (2014) stated that building rapport with participants was one significant commitment of the research necessary to collect accurate data to strengthen the credibility of the study. I established credibility through the

engagement with the 20 participants during the semistructured telephone interviews based on the context of the study. I used member checking and data saturation to increase the credibility of the study. Theoretical saturation happened in qualitative data analysis when the one continued to sample, analyzed data until all concepts, in theory, were developed, and no new data appear.

The member checking process required the participants to verify or correct additional information from the participant's interview transcripts conducted by a researcher (Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). I used transcript reviews by providing participants copies of the transcription to verify and return with any corrections to ensure that I captured member checking meanings. Participant's subjective interpretation did not establish the ground of the findings and conclusions, a result of transcribing interviews verbatim.

The concept of triangulation could establish the credibility of a study. Silverman and Marvesti (2008) defined triangulation as a comparison of different methods and various sources of data. Triangulation helped minimize biases as those methods and data sets have the potential to negate the weaknesses of each. I used one data source (interviews) that did not benefit from triangulation. Qualitative researchers have recognized that they were predisposed to constructing a reality of an issue by seeking different sources, asking different questions.

### **Transferability**

Transferability denotes the internal validity of a study that focused on the impact

of disseminating the findings of the research beyond the limits of a study.

Generalizability of transferability of the research resulted to a different context.

Transferability happened with the researcher providing his or her database to enable other researchers to transfer their findings to other locations (Marton, 2013). Transferability referred to applying the research findings to similar groups (Houghton et al., 2013; Polit & Beck, 2012). The completion of the transferability of the research resulted in the recognition of a broader context; the practical usefulness relates to both qualitative and quantitative studies.

The goal of the researcher in descriptive phenomenology focused on studying the lived experiences of the participants rather than statistical generalizations (Yin, 2014). I used the frequencies of words and themes within NVivo software to confirm the data. I utilized transcript reviews, and member checking to achieve data saturation and enhanced the credibility of the study results (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

Qualitative researchers have used standard criteria to assess methodological consistency: external validity and reliability (Goffin, Raja, Claes, Szwejczewski, & Martinez, 2012). The conversation of transferability provided information about the participants and the research environment that facilitate findings for truthfulness (Cope, 2014).

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability illuminated the conclusion that the findings originated from the data. The conversation of confirmability highlighted that the research data is an accurate representation of the participant's responses rather than researchers' biases perspective



(Cope, 2014; Polit & Beck, 2012). Researchers have submitted that the neutrality and precision of data could be the connection between verification and dependability (Cope, 2014; Houghton et al., 2013). Data quality and control were significant to ensure the trustworthiness of this study.

Confirmability in this study supported the alignment with reflexivity.

Some researchers with personal biases and roles have shown reflexivity (Cope, 2014).

Confirmability derives from audit trail accuracy promoted by the choices of this study. In the report portion of this study, I illuminated confirmability by providing quotes from the participants to highlight some themes.

### **Ethical Procedures**

The IRB permission that approved this study reflects Walden's commitment to ethical procedures. I obtained access to the sample for this study from the Director of the Ghanaian NBSSI. I addressed ethical procedures that were available to NBSSI. Typical ethical procedures to be discussed included the participant's inform consent forms that related to collecting data from minors as well as the participant's interview restraints. The provision of the inform consent form should spell out what guidelines to take when: (a) a participant refused to participate or, (b) a participant intended not to participate, and (c) the respondent's rights.

**Informed consent form.** The form notified the respondent of the study and in seeking their consent to participate. The form also notified the participants that their withdrawal was optional without any adverse judgment. The participation required

respondents' intentions by his or her free will by signing the form. I preserved the confidentiality of these responses without risk.

**Maintaining the confidentiality of the participants.** I preserved each participants' anonymity by designating the alphanumeric code rather than identifying the actual names of the participants on the data collection instrument and equivalent informed consent form. I preserved all records, consent forms, collected data, and study protocol in a locked box for 5 years after completion of the dissertation. I ensured the destruction of all contents after 5 years.

**Protection of human participants.** I was committed to protecting and respecting the rights of the participants during this study. I ensured that the participants were aware of the voluntary nature of the interviews. The informed consent form is a testament that the participants withdrew from the interviews without incurring adverse effects. Interview recordings took approximately 30-45 minutes; a lock-box protected the transcripts, and confidential information involved tagging with numbers to conceal the identity of the participants. The data was password protected in a computer system and safeguarded for 5 years before discarding.

### **Summary and Transition**

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study design was to explore the experiences of small business owners who have been in business beyond 5 years. This descriptive qualitative study examined the lived experiences of small business owners in Accra, Ghana, to analyze if the findings contributed to future sustainable businesses and positive social change. In this chapter, I illuminated the research method along with the

research design, rationale, and the role of the researcher. In the chapter, the methodology section involved the data collection logic and procedures required to obtain information. The data analysis section highlighted the analysis plan as well as issues of trustworthiness and research ethics. Chapter 4 presents the data and its analysis.

## Chapter 4: Results

Chapter 4 presents the results of the study. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study design was to analyze how to overcome the high failure rate of many small businesses in Accra, Ghana. The following research questions guided the study.

### General Research Question:

How have small business owners in Accra, Ghana, used the available institutional attributes to overcome the problems that cause many small businesses to fail within 5 years?

### Sub RQ1:

How have small business owners, who are embedded in specific business locations in the metropolitan area of Accra, Ghana, sustained their businesses beyond 5 years?

### Sub RQ2:

How have small business owners adopted the management strategies that allow small businesses to grow and sustain their businesses beyond 5 years?

Chapter 4 describes the pilot study, research setting, and data collection and analysis. Evidence of trustworthiness highlighted data collection, analysis, and concluding with the study's results and summary.

### **Pilot Study**

A pilot study was necessary to validate the clarity of all proposed interview questions conducted to ensure the reliability and feasibility of the interview questions, given that the audiences were international participants. The reliability of the data gathered for the research involved a set of interview questions (Appendix A). The choice of three participants for the study included PS1, PS2, and PS3. PS1 and PS2 were officials of the NBSSI in the metropolitan area of Accra, Ghana. PS1 was the lead official involved in vetting the interview questions, given her knowledge in determining the relevancy and transparency of the study's questions. PS3 was a managing director of a personal care consumer products enterprise, with 14 years in the business. I selected PS3 because of the participant's business insight into small business management in Accra, Ghana.

I excluded the pilot study participants in the final study sample; their views allowed for the refinement of the interview questions ahead of the phenomenological study. The pilot study was necessary to validate the research questions for reliability. The approach ensured that the questions were relevant, open-ended, and semistructured to collect data. I interviewed the pilot participants on a teleconference call in Accra, Ghana. I asked the participants of the clarity of the questions and their thoughts from reviewing the questions, as they were encouraged to make suggestions. PS3 said all the interview questions were clear, requiring no changes.

The NBSSI official and I conducted a broad enough question-by-question assessment of all twelve interview questions required to collect data. PS1 raised an issue

with interview question #1, which required rephrasing by deleting the word “successful.” PS1 explained that small business owners, who respond to questions relating to government policies, could not associate their business as being successful, as it has tax implications. To resolve the issue, PS1 suggesting removing the word “successful” from Interview Question 1. PS2 concurred with PS1 observation, and the matter concluded. PS1 indicated that the scheduled interview time needed an adjustment, given the potential international telephone network issues. To address this concern, I provided strategies to address the impasse by forwarding copies of the interview questions ahead of the interviews. This effort allowed the participant’s time to review the questions that provided the needed data. Per the interview protocol, the study volunteers received a letter of invitation and the consent form to participate in the study. Issues of question length and understanding necessitated some follow up questions that gave the participants a chance to describe their lived story. Table 2 presents the pilot participant’s responses to the study.

Table 2

*Pilot Participant’s Response Summary*

Pilot Study Participants (P1)	Are the interview Questions clear	If not suggested changes
PS1	No	Question 1: Removed the word successful, Time allotted to questions across unreliable international networks were counterproductive
PS2	No	Concurred with PS1 matter was concluded
PS3	Yes	

### **Research Setting**

The research setting was in the metropolitan area of Accra, Ghana. The selected small business owners for the interviews were those engaged in the consumer products industry. The scope of the study explored how small business owners have overcome the problems that caused a small business to fail within 5 years. Small business owners were interested in sharing their experiences in an interview setting. The NBSSI was the sponsoring government agency that set the guidelines for domestic and international researchers conducting researches in Accra, Ghana. Most of the participants had an affiliation with NBSSI and were part of the Accra, Ghana, metropolitan small business owners, and entrepreneurial venture ecosystem. I contacted the participants by telephone and introduced the study, followed by a letter of invitation. If they volunteered to participate in the study, I forwarded the consent form and arranged for interview schedules options. Upon confirmation, I scheduled the interviews based on international time zones, as some weekends and late weekday afternoons were proper for the participants. The volunteer participants met the purposeful sample criteria. Given that it was a telephone interview, the interviews took place in the privacy of the participant's home after business hours on weekends at an agreed schedule.

### **Demographics**

The participant selection process involved the purposeful sampling standards. The participants were from various small business types in Accra, Ghana, as highlighted in Table 4. The basis of the selected participants was on the procedures for recruitment specified in Chapter 3. The selected participants were from the consumer products

industry who were experienced and understood the small business life cycle, as well as having been in business beyond 5 years. The institutional, socioeconomic, political fundamentals, and management strategies served as the basis for primary sources of data for the study. The recruited participants addressed all the many-sided areas. I initially obtained a list of eight volunteers from the NBSSI agency. I interviewed six out of eight participants as two volunteers refused to participate as they turned down my request. A telephone call to NBSSI yielded two more volunteers, resulted in interviewing eight participants. I completed the interview transcripts in MS Word from the audio recordings. I e-mailed the responses for the participants to review for correctness and confirmation by reply e-mail stating “YES” or modify and return the correction.

Given that I received eight volunteers from the NBSSI's database, it allowed for using the snowballing technique to obtain referrals from previous NBSSI participants. These persons made referrals to other small business owners from their social networks, who were experienced but not necessarily associated with NBSSI. I used the interview protocol with the data collection workflow that involved a letter of invitation, the consent form, and the interview questions to complete the interviews to arrive at 17 participants. I achieved data saturation by the 17th participant; to reinforce the collected data findings, the interview process continued with three more participants to complete the 20th participant for the indicated sample size.



Table 3

*Participant Demographics and Their Percentages*

Characteristics	N=20	%
Gender		
Male	14	70
Female	6	30
Age range		
26-35	8	40
36-45	7	35
46-55	3	15
56-65	2	10
Type of small business		
Food processing	4	20
Personal care products	3	15
Foot wear	3	15
Consulting	8	40
Pharmacy	2	10

Table 3 is a presentation of the participant's demographics in the collective format that was useful in learning about the participant's background. For example, twenty participant's interview transcripts were analyzed: six from female participants (30%) and 14 from male participants (70%).

Table 4

*Participant's Demographics*

ID	Age Range	Business Type	Gender	Title	Education	Years in Business
P1	26-35	Personal care Products	Female	CEO	BA	10
P2	36-45	Food Processing	Female	Owner Manager	BA	5
P3	36-45	Personal care products	Female	CEO	BS	5
P4	36-45	Cosmetics products	Female	Owner Manager	BS	10
P5	26-35	Foot wear	Male	CEO	BA	5
P6	26-35	Consulting	Male	Managing Dir	BS	5
P7	36-45	Consulting	Male	CEO	Doctorate	11
P8	46-55	Consulting	Male	Managing Dir	Masters	5
P9	46-55	Food processing	Female	Owner Manager	BS	5
P10	26-35	Foot wear	Male	CEO	BA	5
P11	36-45	Fruit Drinks	Male	CEO	S. College	10
P12	36-45	Pharmacy	Male	CEO	Masters	9
P13	26-35	Consulting	Male	CEO	BS	10
P14	36-45	Consulting	Female	CEO	Masters	6
P15	36-45	Foot wear	Male	Managing Dir	High School	13
P16	56-65	Consulting	Male	Managing Dir	Masters	17
P17	46-55	Consulting	Male	Managing Dir	Masters	15
P18	56-65	Food processing	Male	Managing Dir	High School	14
P19	46-55	Pharmacy	Male	Managing Dir	BS	13
P20	26-35	IT Consulting	Male	CEO	S. College	6

Table 4 shows the participant demographic as people reviewed the demographics to make sense of quotes or responses to interview questions.

## **Data collection**

### **Participants**

Upon conditional approval from Walden University IRB (No. 12-10-18-80189782), I contacted NBSSI, Accra, Ghana, and introduced the study. I recruited 20 small business owners who met the eligibility criteria from the consumer products industry in Accra, Ghana. After the IRB final approval, I sent the letters of invitation (Appendix C) to 20 potential participants. The receipt of a letter of cooperation from NBSSI allowed access to the list of volunteers from their database. The volunteers received a letter of invitation to participate. If the potential participants expressed interest and accepted the letter of invitation, I followed the interview protocol. This effort lets the participants complete the consent form and reviewed the interview questions section ahead of the scheduled interviews. This workaround was necessary to avoid communication problems with international telephone calls and network problems, given the allotted interview time.

### **Data Collection Technique**

Data collection started after receiving a confirmation on the consent form. I used the participant's contacts to set up a date and time at the convenience of the interviewee for the interviews. I ensured that the participants were comfortable with the overall interview process before the interview scheduled date. I encouraged the participants to speak freely about their business management lived experiences and how they have

succeeded in surviving in business beyond 5 years. The participants acknowledged at the beginning of each interview that they would want to see their responses before publication. I conducted international telephone interviews with all 20 participants who volunteered in the interview process.

I was the data collection instrument, as the interviews were conducted based on guidelines recommended by Patton (2015). I used semistructured interview questions with follow-up questions (Appendix A and D, Table 7) for the interviews. The use of telephone interviewing allowed for capturing of lived experiences and information sharing of the participants. The interviews length ranges from 30-45 minutes because some of the participants were speaking slowly, due to network problems and other participants who might start to discuss unrelated subjects. When that happened, I redirected them back to the interview questions while posing a follow-up question.

Given that the phenomenological inquiry was specifically telephone-interview based, all 20 participants used this medium. In total, I collected data that took 6 months interviewing 23 small business owners who included three participants for the pilot study. I received eight volunteers from the NBSSI database; it allowed for using the snowballing technique to obtain referrals from previous NBSSI participants. These persons made referrals to other experienced small business owners from their social networks, but not necessarily associated with NBSSI.

I used an audio recording of the interviews that allowed for the capture of some significant comments made by the participants in the field notes during the interviews. I used the Yeti Blue microphone, iPhone, and a laptop supported by the Audacity audio

recording software to record all the participant's interviews. The Audacity audio software allowed for manual transcription of the audio files into MS Word transcript. After completing the word transcript, I reviewed the manual MS Word transcription with the notes and the audio as the process was confidential, and the truthfulness of the results was accurate. I masked the names of the participants to prevent identification while assuming alphanumeric confidentiality letters. The IDs that identified the participants were in a safe lock-box, which I used to determine the participants throughout the research process.

The transcription of the audio recording of the gathered data from the participants occurred after the interviews. The participants received the transcriptions of the interview responses via email for review, corrections, and feedback on the transcripts. The process of member checking confirms that the gathered data were relevant and correct to the study. Given that some of the participants were not computer savvy, I gave them the option to reply "YES" if the transcript was correct for member checking. Participants made no change during the member checking process. I saved the transcripts interview files on a portable hard drive in a locked box.

**Data coding.** I used the interpretation-focus coding strategy (IFCS) to explore the lived experience of the participants. I prevented my background and biases from influencing the interpretation of the data. IFCS involved the purpose statement that focused on how to overcome the high failure rate of small business owners. I used the individual base-sorting strategy to examine what the codes represent and comparing them to each other and categorizing them based on shared similarities. Related codes required a sorting technique to combine the codes. I used this sorting strategy of grouping codes

based on the meaning of the codes in ways that addressed the RQs (Adu, 2017). After assessing the features of each code, I put them into clusters based on the (Nvivo) RQs and then labeled (anchor code) each cluster based on the characteristic of the codes within. I selected the presumption-focused coding strategy for the generation of categories and themes using anchor code for the general research question and sub-research Q1 and sub-research Q2 (Saldana, 2016). This process involved generating themes based on data review and selecting evidence or codes from the data to back the claims. I conducted manual coding using MS Word.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis process consisted of interview transcripts to help understand how small business owners became successful while sustaining their businesses. The patterns extended the themes and helped highlight a depiction based on the results of the study. Granted, qualitative analysis is mostly a subjective experience; it was compelling to illustrate the realization of the findings to allow a reader to follow the presentation of the data analysis steps (Levitt et al., 2018).

Qualitative data were analyzed using detailed descriptions, correspondence and patterns, direct interpretation, categorized by aggregation, and development of naturalistic generalization (Stake, 1995). To achieve clarification, I provided a full description of the data and the meanings that emerged. By direct interpretation, the identified meaning is a finding from an idea or concept that appeared in the single instance of a participant's comment. In categorical aggregation, impressions or cases were collated to form a meaning. The establishment of patterns required that I coded the

transcripts to aggregate how often a concept or idea appeared in a particular context to establish patterns.

Using Nvivo enabled relational patterns that were relevant in organizing the data for mapping as well as highlighting target repetition within the participant's responses. I used Nvivo software to help with the data analysis process for coding to identify themes that assisted with data analysis and categorization necessary for manual coding. Nvivo automatic processing was useful in data analysis of each code. The tool helped in finding patterns highlighting the multi-dimensional meaning in the participant responses. The software allowed for reducing the data into patterns, categories, and themes based on the research questions and the conceptual framework. I prepared significant statements by directing my focus on the word verbatim spoken by the participants. The basis of creating nodes on data collected to connect nodes allowed for emerging themes. These patterns and relationships within the data illuminated how small business owners described their lived experiences. This effort may shed more light on how they became successful and sustaining their businesses beyond 5 years. Qualitative results determine the findings derived from using the five approaches to qualitative interpretation (Stake, 1995). Not all the approaches were applied to these study findings; only one method was used to a finding. By itself, claims supported by evidence manifested as themes or categories.

Given that the findings only used one data source, interviews, the study achieved a detailed, thick description. I used qualitative thematic analysis for analyzing the 20 participant's interview responses, as depicted in Chapter 3. Pope, Mays, and Popay (2007) indicated that thematic analysis comprised searching an in-depth review of data to

reflect the “primary ideas and conclusion found in the data evidence” (p.96). A qualitative thematic analysis approach is a method that is oriented to “identify, analyze, and report patterns” (Braun & Clarke, p. 79, 2006). The thematic analysis of the interview transcripts and references highlighted the institutional, sociocultural, and political-economic foundations, and management strategies. The outcome helped small business to survive that might lead to sustainable businesses. This outcome may be the catalyst for promoting small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures’ life cycle and customer retention. The research design, the purpose, and the research questions of the study allowed for an evaluation of the participant’s perceptions and experiences. The essence was to discover the socio-economic and institutional services associated with small business growth and survival. Qualitative thematic analysis elicited the most vital information from the participant’s responses that fit with the research questions. I used code aggregation to form patterns of the participant’s responses, identifying the essences of their experiences and perceptions as well as grouping them in different themes (Saldana, 2016).

I adopted Braun and Clarke (2006) six stages of effecting a thematic analysis. A researcher should recognize that the first stage in implementing thematic analysis is to immerse oneself in the data process, compelling a review of the collected data (Jason & Glenwick, 2016). Reviewing the data in preparation for labeling with codes served in the next stages. The second stage involved generating the initial codes; I listed those codes and units required to construct responses to the research questions. The third stage involved searching for themes that included identifying and organizing the codes derived



from the previous steps to determine the patterns from the participant's responses. At that point, themes emerged, as I discarded irrelevant themes (Appendix E). The fourth stage involved reviewing the established themes from the responses. Crosschecking of all the data and coded themes ensured quality control. The fifth stage involved naming and defining themes; also, at this stage, the relationships of the themes become more evident, requiring further identifying and naming of themes.

The naming of themes becomes more misleading, necessitating the clustering of the data via follow-up questions. The sixth stage involved reporting the data findings that appear in the next section. Therefore, significant themes were those with the most occurrences, while minor themes were those with lesser appearances. I used bracketing to keep my beliefs and opinions from influencing the study (Vagle, 2014). Patton (2015) highlighted that Husserl in 1962 proffered that during the data analysis stage, *epoche* is engaging in self-reflection to identify and set aside one's history, preconceived ideas, and thoughts from influencing the research process. I was aware of the potential for biases about the phenomenon of the study, as I disclosed them and blocked them from affecting the analysis process. Moustakas (1994) stated that checking on the influence of a preconceived idea during coding is to investigate interpretations of the significant information highlighted in the area. I used the conceptual framework or conceptual lens of the institutional and planned behavior theories based on the post-structuralism worldview. I used this lens to analyze the lived experiences of small business owners on how they have overcome the problems that cause small businesses to fail within 5 years. The basis of coding transcriptions was on the research questions; thus, the study revealed

no evidence of discrepant cases in the research data. Discrepant data are data from a study that did not align with the findings of the study.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness demonstrates the testing of the analyzed data as it relates to their credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The member-checking test involved letting the participants to review responses and to clarify or explain their responses as needed. Member checking served to validate the authenticity of the participant's responses to the collected data. The truthfulness of the results was consistent with the institutional, socio-economic, and political fundamentals. The results were associated with small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures in the private sector of Accra, Ghana. The transferability of data is another qualitative characteristic of the study. The audio recordings and transcription from the interviews had involved the description of 20 participants that were thick, rich, and meaningful. The contents and interpretation of the interviews emanating from actual responses from collected data had established impartial and unbiased findings. Confirmability and dependability of the data are the products of the systematic organization of the interviews. In total, I used audit trails to ensure that the gained information was part of this study was trustworthy, as reflected below (Streubert & Carpenter, 2011).

### **Credibility**

Credibility involved the inclusion of various measures such as member checking, triangulation, and crosschecking in the study. The process involved accurate transcribing of the interviews to ensure the accuracy of the data collected by performing member

checks with the participants to validate the data captured. I achieved validation and confirmation as the participants were provided transcripts of the recorded interviews for member checking purposes. Participants reported no changes during the member-checking process. I recognized that as a researcher, I carefully bracket my experience and background by following the interview guide and avoiding irrelevant communication with the participants that might influence their responses during the interviews (Cilesiz, 2011). The credibility of the study improved the validity of the findings using member checking. The pilot study was beneficial in testing the procedures before the research, as it strengthened the research. The sample of 20 participants allowed me to reach saturation with the interviews as I documented the thick, productive descriptive responses contributed by the participants.

### **Transferability**

The findings can be transferable within small business owners in the private sector in Ghana. The sample size of the 20 participants, drawn from a cross-section of the consumer products industry, might be challenging to transfer the data to the business in different institutions. The similarities between small business ecosystems in Accra, Ghana, allowed for transferability within other cities. The institutional structure that promotes the legitimacy of small businesses is better served from a city's perspective. I interviewed six females out of twenty participants that contributed to an increasing degree of transferability.

**Dependability**

I achieved dependability by incorporating several repetitions of coding and analysis. The thematizing data ascertained that data were dependable. By involving the participants in the data validation and member-checking process, using follow-up questionnaires ensured the objectivity of the study. The basis of the IRB approval focused on controls of the study that provided I had the tools required to establish trustworthiness. The relationship of the interview questions to the small business owner's experience increased the dependability of the study. The conceptual framework informs the study's dependability as well as the research questions. The focus of the study was to ensure the selection of the proper participants to participate in answering the questions, enabling them to give relevant data. Researchers have highlighted that data collection should be transparent in mind to create the fundamentals for future research on similar subjects.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability occurred as I bracket my background and experience during the interview process. Member checking with each participant allowed for the confirmation of the information captured during data collection. Member checking helped in establishing confirmability of the study. I improved confirmability using established qualitative methods that ensured stability to the research (Vagle, 2014). The interview guidelines included semistructured interview questions, given that all the participants were aware of the phenomenon under study. Participants did not need clarification of the interview questions; due to international telephone network issues, I had to read some of the questions more than once. This event did not affect the quality of the collected data. I

reviewed the interview transcripts twice to correct errors and ascertained an optimal level of accuracy during the transcription process.

I completed the dictation of the interviews in Word and forwarded the responses to the participants for their confirmation. The 20 participants confirmed the transcripts without modification, which improved the confirmability of the data. The findings of the study reflected the collected data as well as the interpretation that guided the analysis, emerging patterns or themes, and conclusion - the ability to confirm the data relied on accurate collection and analysis procedures. Previous researchers striving to achieve confirmable outcomes on the approved methods and structure used the basis.

### **Results of the Study**

The completion of the thematic analysis of all the gathered data from the participant's responses resulted in the emergence of parent themes and several child themes that addressed all the research questions. I used vital information from the participant's transcripts and queries related to the general research question and the sub-research questions. This section involves the developed themes with accurate descriptions supporting the participant's perceptions and experiences about the general research question and the sub-research questions.

#### **General Research Question**

The general research question was as follows: How have small business owners in Accra, Ghana, used the available institutional attributes to overcome the problems that cause many small businesses to fail within 5 years? The external environmental factors and the role of formal institutions associated with small business survival life cycle were

vital for sustainable business growth in Accra, Ghana. The conceptual framework highlighted the impact of the institutional attributes on the socio-economic, rural community development, competition, and legitimacy of small businesses. The presentation of the results was as follows: the research question, themes, meaning, and evidence. Five significant themes developed that addressed these factors for the provision of products and services that helped small businesses to survive. Table B1 shows the relationship between the coded themes and the anchor code that identify the significant information addressing the general research question. Table B1 also highlights the number of cases (participant's responses) depicting the references for the nodes.

Table B1

*Breakdown of the Results Addressing the General RQ*

Category and themes	<i>n</i> =20
Small business owners have used the available institutional attributes (anchor code for the general RQ).	
Formal factors affecting business survival	2
Developing workshop for small businesses	4
Improving systems for essential services	6
Identify institutional business support	
Support from Family	
Encouraging a more business-like climate	4
Financial access and credit from Banks	4

**Major Theme 1: Formal factors affecting business survival.** This theme illuminated the fiscal and macroeconomic policies that hindered or enhanced the survival of small businesses. The emergence of these external factors introduced incentives and disincentives to the small business life cycle in Accra, Ghana. These incentives

manifested through financial and nonfinancial business development services, such as financial, marketing, management development, and public procurement incentives. Government rules and mandate imposed a burden on the small business owner. One hundred percent of the participants interviewed discussed formal factors affecting business. The following blockquotes provided support to the themes.

Participant P19 is a managing director who explained formal factors that influenced small businesses. The tax system and economic policies created limitations with business involvement in foreign exchange rates. P19 expressed:

Changes in disposable incomes affected the demand for products and services that may lead to small business failure. The usual interest rates were critical to business growth, given that those rates increased the cost of capital. Formal policies have improved efficiency and transparency in managing the business as well as programs that educated business owners sought to fund the business.

Policies set standards that required the production of safe products for consumers.

Participant P7 is the CEO who explained that business goes in cycles. Thus, affordable access to financing was handicapped due to external barriers, as the problem was not the customers who need the funds, but the system. P7 explained:

To strengthen the financing sector, the government had set consistent and transparent business operating rules, with policies on governance structure and risk management. Microfinance funding for small businesses charged high-interest rates and collateral. Financial institutions have not been helpful to small

businesses, in a meaningful way, due to policies that both reduced credit and increased the required documentation.

**Major Theme 2: Developing workshops for small businesses.** This major theme highlighted interventions through entrepreneurial training and teaching programs organized by government agencies to improve small business operations. These workshops included incubators that support youths engaged in entrepreneurial ventures.

Participant P15 is a managing director expressed government agencies and NGOs have helped with entrepreneurial training. P15 echoed P20, P11, and P7 revealed that training small business owners to create a business plan, improved business processes, and innovativeness has helped businesses to survive. P15 indicated:

The training on a business plan, bookkeeping, and business management helped in seeking funding to support the business. The national entrepreneurship innovation program (NEIP) trained small business owners to create useful proposals needed for a proper bid. This effort has helped small businesses to survive. NBSSI and NGOs introduced other professionals with knowledge on business development, performance management, and best practices.

Entrepreneurship programs that involved intervention evaluation and incubators helped businesses to survive.

**Major Theme 3: Improving systems for essential services.** This major theme illuminated infrastructure and business services necessary to enable other small business operations. Enabling those services was the responsibility of the public sector and society.



Participant P18 is a managing director who indicated that competition and innovation highlighted insights required for small business success. P18 echoed P17, and P7 explained that businesses needed innovation and improvement in financial inclusion, accessibility, and affordability. P18 explained:

Regulations, compliance, and rules levied on the small businesses were to improve quality. Food products required certification by FDA for meeting quality before marketing. These standards promote competition that may lead to innovativeness. Infrastructure and law enforcement services are required to corroborate the legitimacy of small businesses as beneficial entities of the city.

***Sub Theme 3.1: Identifying institutional business support.*** This theme underlined the unique features of institutional foundations that included culture, structure competition, and ways of doing business that enabled small businesses to survive.

Participant P10 is a CEO who expressed NEIP supports young entrepreneurs with access to capital and business opportunities. P10 echoed P5, P7 on government-assisted development in district factories, cluster centers for businesses have created visibility to businesses. Financial institutions have supported small businesses by streamlining financial accessibility and affordability to provide management support programs. P10 expressed:

NBSSI has given access to capital with business opportunities. Agency programs and processes that succeeded in innovation and improvement through mentoring and coaching have helped the business-learning environment. Competition and the way of doing business have sustained the business.

***Subtheme 3.2 Support from family.*** This subtheme accentuated the role of the family in overcoming business failures as well as the catalyst to sustaining family-owned businesses. One hundred percent of all the participants interviewed discussed the role of family support as critical to the success of their businesses.

Participant P15 is a managing director who agreed with all the participants that they relied on family help to manage and sustain the business. P15 expressed:

My family supported the business as it resulted in sustaining the business. The business supported dependents, mostly family members, with their incomes. The family kept my motivation and strength going.

**Major Theme 4: Encouraging a more business-like climate.** This theme underscored how small business owners require complementary and social services to operate a business. The socio-cultural and politico-economic foundations have improved the business climate that helped small businesses to survive.

Participant P6 is a managing director who agreed with the participants of the necessity of a stable political and diverse environment to operate a business. P6 echoed P12, P10, and P5 expressed that innovative programs acquired from Western expertise in partnership with business development services have helped businesses to survive. P6 explained:

African business is changing to a new paradigm shift for Africans who required transformational leaders who are involved with the business, society, and the environment. NEIP policies are efficient and transparent, yet the politicized services also encouraged innovation that has helped the business to survive. Rural

enterprise programs have given support to technical equipment to small business owners.

**Major Theme 5. Financial access and credit from banks.** This major theme accentuated financial access to credit and loans from financial institutions, necessary for small business survival. One hundred percent of the participants interviewed discuss financial accesses from external sources for lending.

Participant P15 is a managing director who explained the challenges of lack of access to credit, collateral, and interest rates difficulties. P15 echoed P17 and P16 agreed that access to affordable credit was a barrier to financing business as well as high-interest rates to loans. Business planning and asset ownership have influenced small business access to loan and financial credit. P15 explained:

It was difficult to access financial support from banks. The microfinance services gave loans to small business, but their interest rate was high, despite their high margin. The lack of suitable collateral was a problem in accessing finance credit, just as the lack of access to credit was a barrier to business. We made loan repayments that improved access to credit finance and histories. We increased advances in credit scoring results to reduce collateral and additional credit to support the business. Credit financing activities assisted small business owners in building their credit histories and financial management skills.

### **Sub-research Question 1**

The sub-research question was as follows: How have small business owners, who are embedded in specific business locations in the metropolitan area of Accra, Ghana

sustained their businesses beyond 5 years? The establishment of small businesses in the social structure of community-based enterprises has benefited the private sector in Accra, Ghana. Those benefits included the core components supporting business operations and the relationship between cultural, social, economic, political, and community involvement.

The conceptual framework highlighted the socio-cultural effect of rural and community development through collaboration, embeddedness, and legitimacy of small businesses. The presentation of the results was as follows: the research question, themes, meaning, and evidence. Five major themes developed that addressed the factors for the provision of products and services for the survival of the business enterprise. Table B2 shows the relationship between the coded themes and the anchor code that identified the significant information addressing the research question. Table B2 also highlights the number of cases (participant's responses) depicting the references (Nvivo) (empirical indicators) for the nodes.

Table B2

*Breakdown of the Results Addressing Sub-RQ1*

Category and themes	<i>n</i> = 20
Small business owners embedded in specific business locations (anchor code RQ1)	
Engaging in community development	8
Involving City and community development	
Contributing to poverty reduction	1
Identifying business opportunities	7
Maintaining customer loyalty	
Improving quality of life	3
Partnership with big companies	1

**Major Theme 6: Engaging in community development.** This theme underlined how small business owners immersed themselves as partners involved in the development of the local community with the mindset of establishing long-term business relationships and survival.

Participant P16 is a managing director who expressed the involvement of the business in the community development in diverse ways. P16 concurred with P8, P10, and P17 expressed that the business integration in the social structure of the city and embeddedness in the local community and development has helped the business to survival. The participants agreed that the location was a critical success factor for the businesses as the basis for marketing strategies on visibility accorded the business. P16 explained:

I have a competitive edge with other persons by the business location and engagement with the community. The customers who patronized the business in

the local community have been partly responsible for the success of the business. The location strategy involved competition and image. The integration of the business in the social structure of the local community was the reason for sustaining the business.

***Sub theme 6.1: Involve the city & community development.*** This subtheme highlighted the role of the small business in the city and local community development that involved participatory democracy in fostering a culture of business and society. The city provided the foundational platform for small business growth.

Participant P18 is a managing director who indicated that the strategic location of the business was essential. The setting has expanded the business to other local areas in the city, enabling women farmers' products to the market for the city's consumption. P18 echoed P3, P4, and P13 expressed that their involvement in Bazaars events had advertised their products to customers. The city's social support systems highlighted the social enterprises and social capital with resources and solutions supporting small business growth. P18 stated:

My products helped women who supplied the raw products for processing and in turn, helped market their products in the city. The business helped the community with most retail grocery shops and donations for the upkeep of local programs. The products are in most retail shops that provided groceries. We served informal and formal customers who spoke the local language along with the familiarity of the customers, as the business operated in a residential area of the city. Small

businesses are involved in the local community and development in an institutional context that may lead to sustainable businesses.

**Major Theme 7: Contributing to poverty reduction.** This major theme stressed the role of small businesses in helping with social problems through self-employment, economic growth, and social enterprise programs, given their role as the agent of social transformation in emerging countries. One hundred percent of the participants interviewed discuss poverty reduction as the reason they become self-employed.

Participant P7 is a CEO who indicated the necessity of checking the poverty level of the potential customer based on the progress out of poverty (POOP) model. All the participants agreed that they paid taxes if judiciously used; it can reduce poverty.

I designed the program based on that persons' cash flow changes in their level of poverty. The basis of repaying the loans was a function of the level of improvement, ensuring their child was in school. The ability to move from one room to a three-room home indicated the achievement of a social mission. Given that, the child attended school and graduated from college. These policies were designed to progress people out of poverty while running their business with oversight from the financial institution that may lead to sustainable businesses.

**Major Theme 8: Identifying business opportunities.** This major theme emphasized the possibilities of identifying business opportunities for new products through social inclusion. Addressing the numerous social problems was an opportunity for the business enterprise in its quest to market affordable and available products.

Participant P11 is a CEO who indicated that there was a need to identify business opportunities to have a competitive edge that may lead to superior performance. P11 concurred with P9 and P5 expressed that marketing strategies have increased demand. The business has enhanced the socio-economic and cultural foundation of the customers due to the products' customization. We invested in the business to satisfy customers' demand. P11 explained:

Packaging size and labeling have increased demand in low-income markets, which has increased sales. Package resizing is typical of big companies that scaled the products to local markets that increased sales. We have improved packaging materials due to collaboration with a third-party firm. I have designed the products so that consumers with lower income afforded the product and reasonably patronized the low-income markets.

***Subtheme 8.1: Attracting varieties and customer loyalty.*** This subtheme underlined access to customers and customer's choices in terms of their loyalty and patronage. Participants agreed that quality customer services were vital, as a business enterprise cannot exist absent customers. All the participants interviewed to discuss the need for customer attraction and retention.

Participant P3 is a CEO who explained that customer satisfaction and retention were pivotal to the success of the business enterprise. P3 concurred with P20 and P6 on their marketing orientation on the packaging to maintain brand and customer loyalty. P3 stated:



My motivation to satisfy customers demand was to stock inventory to meet future requirements. The business retains customer retention. Customer's loyalty was vital as it resulted in increased sales and satisfaction. I earned customer trust in understanding and building customers' loyalty.

Participant P19 is a CEO who explained that customer service was valuable per the

Testimony: One of my customers said, "Add Pharma always meets my medication requirement. Their prompt delivery services are highly appreciated, its commitment, especially for our office workers and the elderly who cannot easily commute to the pharmacy. The medication made available to our doorstep.

Thanks to Add Pharma."

**Major Theme 9: Improving quality of life.** This major theme accentuated how society and the community benefited from the business' products and services by way of the quality of life and lifestyle improvement.

Participant P5 is a CEO who specified that the quality of life and wellbeing of customers as part of customers' services, as customer retention is elemental to the business to survive. P5 echoed P11, and P15 expressed that the quality of life and lifestyle, as an economic good was crucial in retaining businesses and residents in peripheral areas of the city. Shoe wearing is medicinal as to design, granted I have return customers who patronized the business enterprise. P5 expressed:

Inclusive innovation, coupled with inclusive marketing strategies, has enhanced the social and economic wellbeing of people through innovative solutions for affordable access to products and services. The customers benefited from

improving their lifestyle and increased customer satisfaction. The business involvement in footwear also included consumer consulting that offered services that improved the customer experience and wellbeing that resulted in returning costumers.

**Major Theme 10: Partnerships with big companies.** This major theme underscored how networking through partnerships and alliances with other big businesses created benefits by reducing cost and risk exposure to a business operation. Some of the participants interviewed to discuss the necessity of forming partnerships with other businesses. Some small business owners were involved with inclusive businesses referred to as the BOP and PBE market models.

Participant P16 is a managing director who indicated that forming a partnership with big companies was proper for the business to survive. P16 echoed P17, P5, and P11 expressed a need to raise funds from joint ventures with foreign companies. Given that the partnership has capabilities that included open innovation and cross-sector partnership networking. P16 expressed:

The business' involvement with partnerships revealed a relationship that increased the business' resource base, which helped the business to survive.

Partnerships have helped to get more significant projects and identify businesses on a large scale. We have improved packaging materials due to the partnership.

Partnerships are beneficial as they identified businesses on a large scale.

### Sub-Research Question 2

The research question was as follows: How have small business owners adopted the management strategies that allowed for small businesses to grow and sustained their businesses beyond 5 years? The management strategies of small businesses in Accra, Ghana, relied on management skills, marketing strategies, competent financial knowledge, and the available human capital. This endeavor highlighted the elements of a successful business.

The conceptual framework underscored the internal business environment, the socio-cultural and political fundamentals of the business enterprise. The presentation of the results was as follows: the research question, themes, meaning, and evidence. Five essential themes developed that addressed these factors for the provision of products and services for businesses to survive. Table B3 shows the relationship between the coded themes and the anchor code that identified the significant information addressing the research question. Table B3 highlights the cases (Nvivo) depicting the references (empirical indicators) for the nodes.

Table B3

#### *Breakdown of the Results Addressing Sub-RQ2*

Category and themes	<i>n</i> =20
Small business owners have used management strategies (anchor code RQ 2)	
Avoiding business failure through lessons learned	4
Managing financial data through effective book-keeping	6
Loans repayments for business finance	
Improving business processes	5
Availability of products in demand	

Managing and monitoring of business operations	3
Ensuring technology support and innovation	2

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**Major Theme 11: Avoiding business failure through lessons learned.** This major theme underlined the personal experiences and the competencies of the small business owners in managing a business to avoid failure as well as taking responsibility for the survival of the business enterprise. I analyzed the personal experiences and the prior business failure experience of the small business owner. The high failure rate of many small businesses was the specific management problem. One hundred percent of the participants interviewed discuss business failure as part of doing business. All the participants agreed one major lesson to avoid failure was to have a solid background in business management with an effective business plan.

Participant P10 is a CEO who indicated that personal experience and self-motivation were critical to survival rather than planning to fail in business. P10 echoed with P12, P7, and P17 expressed that facing failure is not the issue; instead, the issue was challenging. Setting better goals about the relationship with customers through planning and recognizing the business cycle, especially the pitches and ups, helped a business to survive. Self-motivation and experience were the product of patterns of observation of other colleague's business. People prevented failure by avoiding losses by implementing tools to monitor and track staff's roles and responsibilities. P10 reiterated:

If failure was imminent, one must restructure and stay above the curve. My passion and motivation to serve my customers increases when I listened and satisfy those demands with the products. I avoided failure by signing contracts

and agreements that were binding and negotiating a payment percentage of the merchandise with a foreign company. We believed that failure gives the owner strength; it strengthened the business.

Participant P11 is a CEO who expressed that one can avoid failure by being persistent, particularly within the Ghanaian private sector. P11 echoed P7 explained that one required commitment and motivation to avoid failure. P11 reiterated:

The current success of the business did not come easy; it was challenging. I adopted the business pattern to start small, Coca Cola began small, and today, it is a giant company. My mother inspired me to think and start small, with low price products. I started a small pattern with thriving, small businesses. The lessons learned were that failure made people strong. Thus, failure was a learning process.

**Major Theme 12: Managing financial data through effective bookkeeping.**

This major theme emphasized how the business managed its cost, revenues, and ensuring proper bookkeeping of the business accounts and how expenses are controlled. The participants concurred keeping proper documentation and records for personal expenditures and personal accounts, which are different from business accounts. One hundred percent of the participants discussed financial management and bookkeeping practices.

Participant P15 is a managing director who explained that managing financing was pivotal for the business to survive. In business, manager-owner intentions to succeed necessitated drawing the line between the business, the family, and personal expenses. P15 echoed P5, P6 expressed financial management decisions that helped with cost

control and the monitoring of revenues and expenditures. Managerial finance skills have helped to improve on the bookkeeping accounts, internal credit and records keeping, the advice in business documents, and audits check of papers. Banking advisory services helped with financial management. P15 explained:

The survival of the business required the separation of business expenses activities from those of the family. For financial management, savings, investments, cost reduction, and maintaining a constant stream of cash flows have enabled the business to survive. We applied managerial finance to improve on bookkeeping accounts, internal credit, the advice in financial records, and audits check of records. We used bank advisory services to understand accounts and a better financial posture of the business. My financial knowledge, experience, and solvency over the years have been foundational to the daily savings, reinvestments of profits, and reporting.

Participant P13 is a CEO who indicated that managing financials and bookkeeping is crucial to the business enterprise. I used profits from one business area to support the core business segment. P13 echoed P6, and P19 expressed that financial management helped one to understand how to cut costs and controls in managing a business through affordability and availability. Knowledge in business finance on cash flows gave a better financial clue of the firm's fiscal posture. P13 reiterated:

We used financial models to assist in decision making as to the reliability of the low-income housing project considering taxes and gross margin. We evaluated the cost and services then I presented to the financial consultants to test models

for NPV, IRR, Basic Cost Ratio, and the completed financial model. I used analytics to determine what products people buy most and how to eliminate cost. I sought employees who multitasked, thus reducing the overhead cost. We sustained the business by recruiting youths to take over, as they are committed employees. I do not make payments by cash; I paid by check, which includes record keeping, banking advisories insurance, and banking advisories group. I obtain knowledge from a friend who has helped the business to survive.

***Subtheme 12.1: Loans repayments for business finance.*** This subtheme highlighted the repayment of affordable loans by small business owners who obtained loans from financial institutions with and without collateral.

Participant P8 is a managing director who explained that loan repayments are a critical function in financial management as it improved access to credit without collateral. We needed software to streamline the product, and managed loan portfolios repayments that helped to finance customers. P8 echoed P2 expressed that one can request for long-term loans rather than short-term loans, long-term loans were preferred, given that the monthly repayment spread was good for the budget. To meet financing obligations, should sales plummet for the financing period, it does not affect the monthly loan repayment. P8 expressed:

The lack of suitable collateral prevented business from obtaining the required financing to support the operations. I budgeted for my business to maintain cost control. I reinvested free cash that I drew on to support business operations. One was not predisposed to financial access because of the barrier between

microfinance and the available financial documents. Repayment of loans improved access to credit finance by enabling advances in credit scoring resulting from reducing collateral and more credit access for additional loans without collateral.

**Major Theme 13: Improving business processes.** This major theme underscored how small businesses had improved their bottom line by introducing inclusive marketing strategies and innovativeness on their products. The endeavor had increased sales as well as developing their markets. Business process improvement promoted inclusive marketing that created new affordable products for customers at all levels of income. Small business owners examined their production processes to identify areas that require efficiency or effectiveness and then redesign those processes to realize the improvement. One hundred percent of the participants interviewed discuss business improvement processes.

Participant P13 is a CEO who explained that they had improved the products' marketability by involving management programs. P13 echoed P14 and P10 expressed that customers who buy products that required redesign receive those services on-premise. Customers who offered Gifts forward the completed packages to the recipients on-premise in a timely fashion. Marketing strategies that involved packaging and branded items enabled the business to engage in business opportunities with available markets for their services. P13 expressed:

My management team traveled overseas in Turkey to visit factories and viewed comparable products, learning, and identifying product lines that were performing



abroad. To implement this knowledge, we redesigned the products to serve the customers. The visitors brought back ideas, feedback, and opportunities. The team identified businesses and the nature of operations. We used that knowledge to improve our business processes.

***Subtheme 13.1: Availability of products in demand.*** This subtheme stressed that inventory planning of products to ensure customer satisfaction reduced losses due to inventory shortages. The basis is on the marketing strategy and management functions that focused on customer service and retention.

Participant P12 is a managing director who indicated that the marketing strategy was vital to the business and the customers. P12 echoed P19, P3, and P20 explained that the availability of products ascertained the satisfaction of the customers and those of their families. Knowledge of the demand for the products was crucial for its marketability. P3 explained using the cost, focus, and differentiation-marketing strategies, as her organic products used the focus model. We approached target customers with market solutions and access to market models and validation through market research. P12 expressed:

Different types of costumers were noted, the low-income customers who required affordable services and generic medications, and those who afforded the branded variety. We stock an adequate inventory of both generic and branded medication to serve the diverse clientele. The price adjustments do not carry those markups; we maintained the markup to keep prices competitive. We employed well thought out management skills and marketing strategies that identified the elements that helped the business to survive.

**Major Theme 14: Managing and monitoring of business operations.** This major theme underscored the daily management, monitoring, evaluation, and performance reviews of the business operations and strategies based on core management functions necessary to support the survival of the business enterprise. One hundred percent of the participants interviewed discussed management and business operations.

Participant P20 is a CEO who indicated that the management strategy involved a lot with technology, record keeping, and management staff. The strategies helped to determine if the business operation was achieving set goals. P20 echoed P11, P17, and P10, explained that marketing strategies involved identifying trends and establishing target markets that enhanced the financial performance of the business. Managerial expertise helped with effective business planning. Innovative ideas in management helped to track and monitor employees' motivation. Managerial competence helped with effective business planning. P20 indicated, business is a process:

One must track all performances on every one of the processes. Management strategies with a team should have empathy with costumes. Market segmentation by products was an essential management strategy for the business. I learned to manage the business using finance and marketing skills. Cash flows were vital to the company; the regular monitoring of cash flows ensured the cash flow projections where spending aligned with the bottom line. Market target-setting task monitored and evaluated employees, tying employee performance with setting targets. We built credit for the business to raise funds. I have auditors who checked the financial records and methods that I used for improvement.

**Major Theme 15: Ensuring technology support and innovation.** This major theme accentuated the usage of technology to improve business operations. Emphasis on the use of technology for business objectives as well as how inclusive marketing strategies was the springboard to innovative marketing models. For example, a backup of vital records or files of the business were stored offsite in case of fire.

Participant P15 is the CEO of a footwear lightweight manufacturing business which indicated technology and innovation was vital to business survival. P15 echoed P5 using graphic designs to create captivating images of products to advertise to customers.

Internet sales have improved service delivery to customers. P15 expressed:

We used social media platforms to promote the product to customers. The graphic design allowed for customers to view and place orders online. Technology capabilities were necessary for businesses to survive. The mobile money apps have helped with loan repayment. The Ghanaian information and communication telecommunication systems (ICT) and mobile infrastructure were practical and efficient in most cases. But, improvement and subsidies were necessary to support small businesses. Thus, the available technology capabilities have helped the businesses to become competitive.

### **Summary**

Chapter 4 provided the details of the data collection, data coding, data analysis, and results obtained from diverse data themes. I explained thematic analysis for the discussion of the findings of the interviews with the 20 participants. The study included appropriate steps to adhere to the ethical bounds set forth by the IRB, as the study

incorporated an informed consent approach, which served to protect the rights of the participants. The purpose of this exploratory, descriptive study design was to analyze the factors associated with the sociocultural, internal environment, and institutional context with the high failure rate of small business in Accra, Ghana. The specific management problem addressed how to overcome the high failure rates of many small businesses that may lead to sustainable businesses that improved the small business life cycle. A pilot study occurred using three experts to test the validity of the interview questions for the study. The qualitative thematic analysis led to fifteen major themes and six sub-themes developed for the general research question and sub-research questions. The analysis revealed various institutional, socio-cultural, internal management issues, and business and society fundamentals, as evidenced in support of the findings that affect the small business life cycle in Accra, Ghana. Participants validated the findings of the study and reinforced the critical failure factors that influenced the small business life cycle. Chapter 5 will explain the interpretation of findings, limitations, recommendations, and opportunities for future research as well as the contribution of this study to social change.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study design was to analyze how to overcome the high failure rate of many small businesses in Accra, Ghana. The qualitative research method with a descriptive phenomenological design was used for this study. The study included 12 open-ended semistructured telephone interview questions to collect data from 20 participants operating small businesses in the consumer products industry in Accra, Ghana. The findings of my study revealed that themes such as adopting formal factors affecting business survival, developing workshops for small businesses, improving systems for essential services, encouraging a more business-like climate, financial access and credit from banks, engaging in community development, contributing to poverty reduction, identifying business opportunities, improving quality of life, and partnerships with big companies, avoiding business failures through lessons learned, managing financial data through effective bookkeeping, improving business processes, managing and monitoring of business operations, and ensuring technology support and innovation are the strategies for ensuring that small business owners survive and sustain their business beyond 5 years. The results further showed that one hundred percent of the participants expressed the need for more government intervention to provide better infrastructure and sufficient regulatory controls in Ghana. This chapter describes the interpretation of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, implications for positive social change, and the conclusion.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study design was to analyze how to overcome the high failure rate of many small businesses in Accra, Ghana. The analysis of the small business owners' lived experiences offered a rich set of themes emerging from discussions, findings, and conclusions that improved the small business survival life cycle. This section included a discussion of the results of the literature on the subject based on Chapter 2. The general research question, along with the sub-research questions, was pivotal to this study.

General research question:

How have small businesses owners in Accra, Ghana, used the available institutional attributes to overcome the problems that cause many small businesses to fail within 5 years?

Sub research Q1: How have small business owners, who are embedded in specific business locations in the metropolitan area of Accra, Ghana, sustained their businesses beyond 5 years?

Sub research Q2: How have small business owners adopted the management strategies that allow small businesses to grow and sustain their businesses beyond 5 years?

#### **Emergent Theme 1: Formal Factors Affecting Business Survival**

I found out that formal factors affecting small business survival imposed regulatory frameworks and standards that were necessary for these businesses to acquire legitimacy from an institutional context. Small business owners sought government

assistance for incentives and disincentives to businesses. Regulation and constraints on the people's behaviors propose incentives that benefit small businesses (Bamfo, 2013; Roxas et al., 2008). Formal factors that included financial services have introduced incentives and disincentives throughout the small business life cycle. Previous studies by Basu, Calamitsis, and Ghura (2000) and Asiedu (2006) stated that investments in physical infrastructure need government policy representation that targets small businesses. This infrastructure is necessary to attract foreign direct investment in Accra, Ghana (Blankson, Cowan, & Darley, 2017).

The government provided those incentives through business development services along with the provision of assistance by the public. Those incentives that promote small businesses and entrepreneurial ventures included financial, marketing, management development, and public procurement incentives. The findings of this revealed that most participants claim that high-interest rates, high tax rates, import duties, and economic policies created limitations to businesses involving exchange rates. The study findings disconfirmed Ghanaian government efforts in formulating fiscal and monetary policies aimed at reducing the high interest and inflation rates.

The usual interest rates were critical to business growth, given that those rates increased the cost of capital. Financial institutions have not been helpful to small businesses, in a meaningful way, due to policies that reduced credit and increased the required documentation. The study findings confirmed that to influence small business growth, institutional factors highlighted the availability of assistance programs by way of financial incentives and management training programs (Erastus et al., 2014). Erastus et

al. (2014) stated that the nation of Mauritius implemented tax reforms that reduced corporate tax rates. They further removed exemptions and allowances in the short-term as positive corporate income tax revenues grew in the next year. An assessment of Ghana's tax system required identification of the available areas to reduce tax rates and create win-win situations for both the state and small businesses.

### **Emergent Theme 2: Developing Workshops for Small Businesses**

Most small business owners were engaged in entrepreneurial training and early intervention programs offered by government agencies to improve business operations. These workshops also included weekly entrepreneurial incubation programs in different locations in Accra, Ghana, which supported youths engaged in entrepreneurial ventures. The training on the business plan, bookkeeping, and business management helped in seeking funding to support the business within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Ghanaian scholars advanced that entrepreneurial education and training programs (ETP) involved teaching and training for operations that may lead to sustaining small businesses. The challenges faced by female small business owners included concurrently managing the interface between business and the family. This barrier requires the development of specific training and educational programs to assist them in adopting better work-life strategies (Jones, Maas, & Dobson, 2018). Luthje and Franke (2003) stated that a lack of EET among potential small business owners was the consequence of the low level of entrepreneurial intentions (Abereijo, 2015; Peprah, Afoakwah, & Koomson, 2015; Robb, Valerio, & Parton, 2014). I found out that entrepreneurial motivation through teaching



and early interventions modified behaviors that promoted growth and the overall effectiveness of the small business enterprise.

Incubators are regional innovation systems that served as good candidates for entrepreneurial ventures. A business incubator is an environment that enabled new startups, the development of new ideas for the promotion of sustainable and scalable enterprises (Ogutul & Kihonge, 2015). Salem (2014) stated that the concept of incubation identified the provision of boot camps rooted in economic and social development (Meru & Struwig, 2015). Business incubators are the magic bullet that would arrest the high failure rate among small businesses in the developing world estimated at approximately 75% (Bamfo, 2013; Ogutul & Kihonge, 2015; Wirtz & Volkmann, 2015). The use of incubators by small business owners, especially for micro and small businesses, enhanced the survivability of small businesses beyond 5 years. The literature review of EET highlighted the factors of small business success that needed replication in Ghana. Some small business owners, who recognize improved work quality, might attribute such to learning and results.

### **Emergent Theme 3: Improving Systems for Essential Services**

Physical infrastructure and essential services were necessary to improve other small business operations. Regulation, compliance, and rules were vital services levied on small businesses to improve quality. These standards promoted a competitive environment that may lead to innovativeness. The structural support system denotes this study as the physical infrastructure support for small business development as well as entrepreneurial activities. Price, Stoica, and Boncella (2013), as cited in Easterly,

indicated that infrastructure facilities both physical and organizational provided the optimal linkage between the business and its markets for the growth of small enterprises (Ombi, Ambad, & Bujang, 2018). Gordon (2005) and Eberts (2005) stated that the definition of essential services is consistent with those in the vocation of city and regional competitiveness, and urban and regional planning (Bamfo, 2013; Roxas et al., 2008). I found out that government-assisted development in district factories had improved systems for essential services. Cluster centers for businesses have created visibility for small businesses. The development of clusters provided the catalyst for the city's economic growth. Cortwright (2006) defined cluster centers as a collection of small businesses and related commercial agents that benefit from their mutual proximity. The benefit of clusters manifested in transmitting knowledge between small business owners and institutions using technologies that cross-industry boundaries.

#### **Emergent Theme 4: Encouraging a More Business-like Climate**

Theme 4 resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from the semistructured interview questions. I found out that most small business owners involved in lightweight manufacturing operated their businesses with the mindset that this product is made in Africa as well. African business is changing to a new model for Africans that required transformational leaders who are involved with the business, society, and the environment. Africapitalism necessitated a paradigm shift, a new kind of business culture. Africapitalism referred to sustainable business investment in the informal sector that generates social wealth and economic prosperity (Edoho, 2015; Elumelu, 2014). The findings in the study confirmed that Africapitalism is a unique model of social renovation

for the 21st century that may serve Accra, Ghana. The basis is on transformational leaders of the government, institutions, and small businesses who are committed to a model that associates business and society. The ongoing transition in Africa is a depiction of the rise of Africapitalism as the governance of entrepreneurial paradigm that is fostering economic renaissance in Africa: impact investing and conscious capitalism (Edoho, 2015; Hile, 2014). Innovative programs acquired from Western expertise in partnership with business development services have helped businesses to survive.

#### **Emergent Theme 5: Financial Access and Credit from Banks**

Theme 5 resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from the semistructured interview questions. I found out that most small business owners acknowledged that the lack of suitable collateral was a problem in accessing finance credit. The lack of access to credit was a barrier to business. Access to credit was contingent on positive relationships between the specific attributes of the small business owner. This study confirmed that business registration, business planning, and asset ownership influences small business access to loans and financial credit (Aborampah, 2012; Abubakar, 2015; Avortri, Bunyaminu, & Wereko, 2013). The credit rationing theory enabled financial institutions to make better financing decisions. The credit rationing theory advanced by Stiglitz and Weiss (1981) offered a model, which provided context for market inefficiencies analysis. Financial institutions are watchful of credit risks as they raised interest rates to compensate for those risky business loans (Avortri, 2014; Nkuah, Tanyeh, & Gaeten, 2013; Zariani & Zaimah, 2013). Studies by Koomson and Ibrahim (2018), as cited in Akudugu, 2013; Demirguc-Kunt and Klapper (2012),

have identified financial inclusion as pivotal to sustainable growth. This occurrence was the result of increased savings that attracted small businesses into the formal sector.

Microfinance services are the overall umbrella depicting credit. Besides, underlining the broad range of other financial services though used interchangeably (Boateng & Boateng's 2018). The findings of this study aligned with Boateng and Boateng (2018) assessment of microfinance involvement in Ghana was necessary for addressing funding to social problems influencing small business development initiatives. Evaluating the financial literacy of financing services was crucial in appraising the behavior of small business owners on financial issues (Abubakar, 2015; Adomako, Danso, & Damoah, 2016; Kibler, Fink, Lang, & Munoz, 2015). The study results confirmed that small business owners recognized those improvements of access to credit finance by advances in credit scoring results reduced the dependence on collateral (Fraser, 2015).

### **Emergent Theme 6: Engaging in Community Development**

The sixth theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found out that most small business owners who have survived beyond 5 years had engaged in community development operations. Engagement in community development involved business integration in the social structure of the city and embeddedness in the community that has helped the business to survive. Engaging in community development by small businesses also required civic engagement. Engagement is operationalized by way of involvement to address local problems and community development planning through a sense of responsibility and

reflection to the community in participating in political parties (Frimpong & Adamtey, 2018).

The study findings confirmed that the PBE and BOP initiatives highlighted the socio-economic impact, inspired by the role of small business owners. These initiatives also manifest at the city level through the interaction of businesses with community development programs (Guerrero et al., 2016). Institutions foster the interactions between small business owners and community involvement and development. This effort may lead to sustainable businesses through legitimacy and embeddedness, as well as offering insight into other aspiring businesses. The city's social support systems identified the social enterprises and social capital with resources and solutions that support small business growth. The findings aligned with the city's social support system. They are comprising of local government leadership, encouraged participatory democracy, of small businesses in city development planning, along with the provision of incentives and other policies in promoting small businesses in the city (Bamfo, 2013; Roxas et al., 2008).

### **Emergent Theme 7: Contributing to Poverty Reduction**

The seventh theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from the semistructured interview questions. I found out that the contribution to poverty reduction by small business owners in Accra, Ghana, helped their survival in business beyond 5 years. Poverty reduction benefited from the provision of financial services by the availability of microfinance institutions through savings and credit to low-income small business owners (Aina-David, Adejonwo, & Makinde, 2019). One

significant role of small businesses was to improve social problems through self-employment, economic growth, and social enterprise programs, given their role as the agents of social transformation in emerging countries. The study findings confirmed that small businesses that operate in communities trapped in a cycle of poverty served the poor at the bottom of the pyramid (Prahalad, 2005). The study findings confirmed that inclusive innovation activities enhanced the social and economic wellbeing of people in rendering innovative solutions for affordable access to products and services. The study findings confirmed that these creative activities narrowed the living standards gap between the rich and the poor in creating livelihood prospects through outreach programs (Paunov 2013; Ansari, Munir, & Gregg 2012). The findings in this study aligned with Prahalad (2005) conceived BOP in his seminal work. The concept established that multinational corporations (MNC) gained market share and improved economic growth in emergent countries while earning pro-poor corporate revenues. The realization of outcome-alleviated poverty through inclusive capitalism is the initiative that provided pathways to collaborate with the continent's poor into unique value chains and global networks (Dolan & Rajak, 2016). In effect, poverty alleviation stems from developmental economics, which is beyond the scope of this paper as the study takes on an institutional perspective.

### **Emergent Theme 8: Identifying Business Opportunities**

The eight themes resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from the semistructured interviews. I found out that small business owners who have survived in business beyond 5 years had identified business opportunities throughout the

business cycle. The findings of this study confirmed that small business startups engaged the current institutional environment for business opportunities and survival (Bamfo, Asiedu-Appiah, & Oppong-Boakye, 2015). The findings of this study confirmed that business growth improved processes that foster growth opportunities in the business enterprise. Thus, an institutional context was necessary for business growth in a small business's survival life cycle. Macroeconomic processes that involved financial assistance were critical in shaping the growth of the business ecosystems (Meru & Struwig, 2015). The findings confirmed that the small business ecosystem offered significant opportunities as well as enabling the exploration of new grounds along with the development of expanded relationships in the sphere of sustainable businesses.

#### **Emergent Theme 9: Improving Quality of Life**

The ninth theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data gathered from the semistructured interviews. I found out that most small business owners who have helped their businesses survive beyond 5 years had improved the quality of life and wellbeing of their customers. Inclusive innovation, coupled with inclusive marketing strategies, has enhanced the social and economic welfare of people through innovative solutions for affordable access to products and services. The findings of this study confirmed that the social norms of the communities' improved Ghanaian small business marketing strategies, managerial policies, and lifestyle. Thus, the wellbeing had promoted the relationship between business development, social and cultural geography (Agyapong & Obro-Adibo, 2013; Ikupolati et al., 2017). The concept of the quality of life and lifestyle was vital to retaining businesses and residents in rural areas. Policymakers

perceived that the quality of life and lifestyle are an economic good (Halseth et al., 2010). The study findings aligned with the demands of sustainable business development (SBD) that encompassed attention to societal and community needs as well as the quality and lifestyle changes of residents (Halseth, Markey, Reimer, & Bruce, 2010; Rainey, 2010). The study findings confirmed that studies on wellbeing are subjective yet focused on assessing the quality of life and participatory approaches (Rahman et al., 2015).

### **Emergent Theme 10: Partnerships with big Companies**

The tenth theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found out that a few small business owners who have helped their businesses survive beyond 5 years had joined or planned to form partnerships with big companies. Some small business owners recognized that local businesses that are engaged in partnerships might potentially witness the viability of their businesses. The study findings confirmed that some small business owners pursuing a broader range of partnerships are justified, given that it improved the effect of poverty (Johnson et al., 2017). The findings of this study confirmed that the interactive business model, as well as open innovation, governs the development of essential partnerships (Ismail, 2015; Mezias & Fakhreddin, 2015). The study findings aligned with small business owners that nontraditional partnerships and collaborative enabled legitimacy, thereby enhancing acceptance and market trust in the BOP (London & Hart, 2012). The findings confirmed that some small business owners were involved with inclusive businesses or the BOP and PBE market models that may lead to sustainable businesses. The findings confirmed that open business models involved nontraditional partnerships



that were critical to the success of the firm in the low-income market realm (Ernst, Kahle, Dubeil, Prabhu, & Subramaniam, 2014; Ismail, 2015; Schuster & Holtbrugge, 2014). The findings of this study aligned with Hietaporu and Halme (2015) and Riviera-Santos, Holt, Littlewood, and Kolk (2015), stating that partnership encompassed strategic alliances with small businesses and local communities.

### **Emergent Theme 11: Avoiding Business Failure Through Lessons Learned**

The eleventh theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found out that most small business owners who have helped their businesses survive beyond 5 years had avoided business failure through lessons learned. I analyzed the personal experiences and the prior business failure experiences of the small business owners, where applicable, as the high failure rate of many small businesses was the specific management problem of this study. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016) stated that new business failure rates in the USA resulted from age, firm size, births, and deaths that eventually may lead to failing businesses. Still, small business ventures in Accra, Ghana, have the potential to become viable businesses beyond 5 years. To engage in sustainable business ventures, one requires commitment, cognition, and motivation.

The study findings confirmed from participants' data analysis about those who have experienced failure; I learned what leads to failure, as well as avoiding such future failures. The findings of this study confirmed that small business owners perceived business failure as a learning process that contributed to economic growth (Olaison & Sorensen, 2014). The study findings confirmed that small business owner's perception of

failure and the management of emotions inherent in failures improved the learning experience (Gartner & Ingram, 2013; Ogutul & Kihonge, 2015; Olaison & Sorensen, 2014). Some small businesses in Accra, Ghana, who are engaged in these activities, have experienced some failure at the startup stage. The study findings confirmed that the impact of management mistakes, inadequate management skills, and stiff competition as well as being in business for the wrong reasons aided small business failure (Gombarume & Mavhundutse, 2014; Shane, 2005). This failure rate is comparable to those countries of Malaysia 60%, Mexico 75%, and USA 30%, as they failed to survive within the first three years (Failure Institute, 2014; Fatoki, 2014; Ogutul & Kihonge, 2015). The study findings aligned with the literature reviewed that the institutional context, small business activities, and management practices are complex interconnections that influenced the survival or failure of businesses in Ghana (Erastus, Stephen, & Abdullai, 2014; Ogutu & Kihonge, 2015).

### **Emergent Theme 12: Managing Financial data Through Effective Bookkeeping**

The twelfth theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found out that most small business owners had implemented prudent financial management and bookkeeping practices in Accra, Ghana. The study findings confirmed that small business owners' managerial finance skills have helped to improve on the bookkeeping accounts, internal credit, documentation, and records keeping. The study findings confirmed that financial performance pointers included return on investment, savings, profitability, cost control, and sales growth. This effort was essential for an enterprise's success and survival (Cant,

Erdis, & Sephapo, 2014; Rahman et al., 2015). The study findings confirmed that high-performing firms were sustainable by emergent market-centered cultures that execute marketing strategies enhanced their financial performances (Everett, 2014). Ombi, Ambad, and Bujang (2018), as cited in Price, Stoica, and Boncella, submitted that marketing strategies that resulted from innovation in products and processes provided the catalyst for small business survival and growth.

The study findings confirmed that small business owners-managers were those who exhibited competent financial knowledge, management skills, effective bookkeeping, and expertise in the relevant practice area of marketing (Bamfo, 2013; Maes & Sels, 2014; van Scheers, 2016). Previous studies by (Agbemava et al. 2016; Rahamon and Adejare, 2014) indicated that small business owners who prepared financial statements for their business have contributed to business survival. There is a strong positive relationship between bookkeeping and the survival of small businesses (Aladejebi & Oladimeji, 2019). Managerial competence, in general, gave rise to efficacy in business planning and strategic management. The study findings confirmed that the inability of some small business owners to sustain their ventures related to lack of financial knowledge, lack of institutional information, management skills, and proficiency in innovation and marketing (Bamfo, 2013; Lighthelm & Cant, 2002). The study findings confirmed that small business owners who made timely repayment of their loans enhanced their working capital and entrepreneurial venture growth (Bamfo, 2013; Etim et al., 2014).

**Emergent Theme 13: Improving Business Processes**

The thirteenth theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found out that most small business owners who have helped their businesses to survive beyond 5 years had implemented business improvement processes in Accra, Ghana. The study findings confirmed that institutional attributes were those features that differentiate the institution from other institutions by underlining the process that enhanced their programs and policies. These policies helped in achieving innovation and improvement in their business environment (Philibert et al., 2010). The study findings confirmed that small business owners have realized that striving for success necessitated improvement performances in their offerings.

Those improvements require adopting best management practices to benefit their customers, likewise sustaining and increasing the longevity of the business enterprise. Rural target markets encompassed an effective strategy of distributing products and services through these small business owners (Hietaporu & Halme, 2015; Mezas & Fakhreddin, 2015). The study findings confirmed that small business owners sustained their businesses by legitimacy and identifying place-centered products and services for international markets (Halseth et al., 2015; Meagher, 2016). In total, small business owners experimented with various ways of designing high-quality products and services in their quest to improve business processes for superior performance.

**Emergent Theme 14: Managing and Monitoring of Business Operations**

The fourteenth theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found out that most small business owners had implemented effective management and monitoring techniques for business operation and survival based on a business plan. The study findings confirmed that managing and the monitoring of business operations required a business plan; a roadmap identifies the goals of the business enterprise. The business plan involved management skills connecting the most effective methods that served as a strategic operating manual for the business as it grows (Dean, 2015; Kiznyte, Welker, & Dechange, 2016). A business plan enabled a small business owner to narrate their story in a meaningful way, interlacing, the when, and how much of the idea (Dean, 2015). The planning process allowed the small business owner to address tactical questions inherent in the course of the business operation. It defined how the company created value and how the venture became a viable enterprise. The study findings confirmed that small business owners embraced governmental policies regarding business operations as living written documents. Those policies become the de facto standard in their business environment necessary to grow sustainable businesses (Myers & Fridy, 2016). The study findings confirmed that readers visualized the core components supporting business operations and the relationship between culture, social, economic, political, and local community involvement.

**Emergent Theme 15: Ensuring Technology Support and Innovation.**

The fifteenth theme resulted from an analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the semistructured interview questions. I found out that most small business owners had implemented the proper technical support and innovation for the business operations in Accra, Ghana. Frugal innovation is typical in less developed nations and requires that developers begin with customized designs that ensure customers' specifics valued by the lower-income consumers included in the offering (Caneque & Hart, 2015; Ismail, 2015; Soni & Krishnan, 2014). On this occasion, frugal innovation is prevalent in the financial service, mobile money products, crop insurance, and smallholder farmers. Technology capabilities were necessary for businesses to survive. Technology capabilities served business objectives based on inclusive marketing strategies as the springboard to innovative marketing models.

The study findings confirmed that the Ghana capacity development center (CDE) promoted business management skills, technical support and upgrades, joint ventures, innovation, and technology transfers (Government of Ghana, 2013; Mutoko, 2014). Western companies created partnerships with local businesses for the provision of unique markets in Accra, Ghana. The study findings confirmed that Ghanaian information and communication technologies (ICT) and mobile infrastructure are effective and efficient in most cases. Improvements and subsidies were necessary to support small businesses. Government improvements on technology and innovation for entrepreneurial ventures offered the trajectory on how those systems could fulfill their mission. The study findings confirmed that the basis of government intervention in research and development and

innovation was justifiable on the economic theory of market failures (Belitz, Eickelpasch, & Lejpras, 2013; Gjini, 2014; Marcotte, 2014). Amede (2015) stated that IA enhanced innovation for sustainable businesses.

The study findings confirmed that one way to promote business success is through technology capabilities; in the less economically developed countries, local resources were a concern. Small business owners benefited from technology, resulting from the learning that was disposed to capability development. The study findings confirmed that empirical studies illustrated that small business success is a manifestation of differences in marketing and technological capabilities (Neill, Singh, & Pathak, 2014; Kiveu & Ofafa, 2013). Capabilities are dependent on the organizational mechanism. Technology collaborative promoted the adoption of mutual values and the creation of sustainable processes between MNCs and small businesses (Meseko, 2014; Nobre & Morais-da-Silva, 2016).

### **Limitations of the Study**

The findings of the study, sample participation, and issues of trustworthiness, presented certain limitations to the study. The research involved only one form of data collection that included open-ended, semistructured telephone interviews. The conditions of the interview process presented some limitations in this study. One barrier to this study was the honesty of the participants, although the participants were encouraged to be trustful to their answers to the interview questions. I encouraged the participants to speak freely about their business management lived experiences and how they have succeeded in surviving in business beyond 5 years. The member checking process helped with the

verification of the recorded and transcribed responses of the participants' perspectives.

The process allowed the participants to check their transcripts should they contain all the issues discussed.

The sample size of 20 participants presented another limitation, given the selection from the same metropolitan area of the city of Accra, Ghana. The sample size reduced the transferability of the study findings beyond the study participants. The chosen participants were a purposeful sample of small business owners from the consumer products industry identified from the NBSSI database, restricted to Accra, Ghana. Snowball sampling was a limitation due to the participants' referral process, as locating other participants was a challenge. All in all, a participants' views might not represent the views of most small business owners in Accra, Ghana.

### **Recommendations**

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study design was to analyze how to overcome the high failure rate of many small businesses in Accra, Ghana. The study revealed the specific political and socioeconomic environment in which small businesses operate provided for exploring proper methods of institutional attributes. Those methods further the understanding of small business owners concerning their survivability. I developed some recommendations for practice and future research.

This study may be relevant to the small business owners in Accra, Ghana, who lack the strategies to manage their businesses to grow and survive. Government agencies that offer and regulate advisory services could help improve small business owners' operations, through their participation. This study may also be relevant to policymakers



in the government in formulating policies to promote small business survival and growth. Government intervention in enforcing regulatory standards and compliance could improve small business survival. The results of the study did not highlight the Ghanaian's government efforts at reducing the high-interest and inflation rates. A reduction may support small business owners who lack strategies to access affordable credit as well as collateral for those loans. Further research is necessary on the effects of government policies on the high interest rate to create a better business environment for small business owners.

During the study, some participants highlighted the importance of the business plan. The business plan is a roadmap to achieve the goals of the business. It is vital that small business owners understand, manage, and evaluate the business plan. A business plan identifies the critical processes that the business could repeat and scale. This study aims at a more business-like climate to benefit the operation of small businesses in Accra, Ghana. The study also revealed that small businesses that had identified viable business opportunities in sustaining potential customers' needs and challenges reported gains in sales and customer retention in Accra, Ghana. Further research could highlight how the small business ecosystem offer opportunities to explore new grounds in the sphere of sustainable businesses.

The study may be relevant to small business owners who want to avoid failure to sustain their businesses. The high failure rate of small businesses is due in part to the lack of knowledge of the economic systems rules and regulations and institutional incentives and constraints. Lessons learned from failure have helped small businesses survive to

survive. Further research is necessary on how to guide startup ventures to operate in ways that prevent business failure. The study did not reveal a relationship between business failure and the lack of property rights. The lack of property rights for land in emerging nations has resulted in some market failures. Future studies are required on how small businesses failed to survive due to poorly defined and enforced property rights.

Through the study, some participants highlighted the lack of entrepreneurial education and training for small business owners as a dissuasion to entrepreneurial purposes. Interventions through entrepreneurial programs and incubators, especially for micro and small businesses, have improved the competitiveness of small businesses. I recommend the coordination of the objectives of government agencies and regulators to restructure entrepreneurial education and teaching programs. Those programs involved intervention evaluation and incubators in helping small businesses to survive.

Small business owners with appropriate financial literacy training could make decent financial decisions as well as managing their finances better than those without such training. I recommend financial literacy training in modeling the need for financial education for small business owners. The outcome could serve low-income small business owners. The study results did not highlight whether small business owners who received assistance from government agencies were aware of the BOP and PBE strategies. Knowledge of these strategies might have sustained their businesses by providing the catalyst to inclusive businesses. Further research is required that integrates both approaches in Accra, Ghana, and the SSA region.

Spatial inclusion is related to BPE by regional development in the city government. Spatial inclusion refers to accessible public space to all persons. Spatial inclusion could provide pathways to place-based and participatory development strategies in community involvement and development that needed replication in Accra, Ghana. This place-based model to local development illustrated the contributions in attracting the proper economic activities in disadvantaged and underserved peripheral urban areas. I recommend the harmonization of the objectives of BOP, PBE, spatial inclusion, and regulators in serving the low-income market in the domain of sustainable businesses.

The selected small business owners from Accra, Ghana, who operate established businesses that have survived beyond 5 years is not enough to reach this conclusion for the study. Further research should expand the scope to involve a broader group of participants with more data sources from industries across regional levels. This endeavor should allow for the use of triangulation of the research data that might offer better reliability and credibility to replicate the study to other emerging nations.

### **Implications**

The significance of social change involved the uniqueness of sustainable businesses to the Ghanaian private sector as a possible pathway to improve their economic growth. The importance of practice highlighted the application of models to address challenges in managerial practice. The implication for positive social change involved the potential that small business owners apply improvement performance to increase profitability. Small business sustainable efforts for the provision of increased self-employment, poverty reduction, and wealth creation for future generations are cases

in point. The BOP and PBE models highlight the issue of social change as it reflects on small businesses through innovation, co-creation, and inclusive businesses. President Nana Akufo-Addo's policy statement on sustainable business growth was influential in nurturing an environment that may well improve the lives of small business owners in Accra, Ghana. One primary avenue to exploit this opportunity by small businesses is the recommendation to encourage established small business owners to participate more in the Ghanaian procurement contracts. Positive social change is good business, as management and leadership involve business and society in carrying out their mission.

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

This study could contribute to positive social change by helping to reduce redundancies in small business operations as well as potentially creating pathways independent of the government for wealth creation. The private sector small business ecosystem is one of the most significant pillars of economic growth within a country. An appraisal of the sociocultural, politico economic, community involvement and development and management strategies, was pivotal in moderating business failures. This study involved an exploration of the sociocultural, politicoeconomic, local community and management factors that were critical to surviving small businesses at the individual, community, and the private sector level. The findings of this study, in part, might benefit Ghana as well as other countries in the SSA region that may share similar cultures. The location of small businesses in the social structure of community-based enterprises is proper. BOP and PBE models in principle, could provide the impetus to social change and sustainable businesses. This study could provide policymakers with the

capacity to enable economic and noneconomic benefits for the people, the community, and future generations.

### **Significance to Theory**

Institutional and planned behavior theories provided a lens to view small business owner's survival strategies from an institutional and human behavior context. The viability and survival of small businesses could be an attribute of the institutional setting (North, 1990; Scott, 2008). Small business owners have recognized the significance of a practical financial framework for small businesses and economic development (Scott, 2008; North, 1990). The TPB highlighted that motivational factors shaped the entrepreneurial intentions of small business owners. Sustainable businesses offer unique opportunities within the small business marketplace potentially. As a holistic management solution could help to create the future through inclusive innovation partnership, strategy, and leadership (Caneque & Hart, 2015; Gupta, Pouw, & Mirjam, 2015; Rainey, 2010). The study findings, in combination with the institutional and planned behavior theories, contributed to the body of knowledge related to how small business owners improved and survived in business beyond 5 years.

### **Significance to Practice**

Small businesses could provide services to customers in the most cost-effective manner. Small business owners realized that striving for success necessitated improvement performances in their offerings by adopting best management practices to benefit their customers. Small business management may indicate the strategic dimensions required for opportunity-relating behaviors. The study findings offered the

small business owners and decision-makers an understanding of diverse survival and failure factors. Small business owners could integrate management models to address the challenges presented by competitive environments (Bengasi & Roux, 2014; Maes & Sels, 2014). Small business owners who recognized the proper management strategies may improve the productivity and job satisfaction of their staff. This occurrence may well lead to improving the quality of services and life unleashing real positive social change to society.

### **Conclusions**

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive phenomenological study design was to analyze how to overcome the high failure rate of many small businesses in Accra, Ghana. I gained an understanding of how small business owners have overcome the problems that cause their businesses to fail within 5 years from a startup in Accra, Ghana. I explored the existing literature. I used a qualitative research method with a phenomenological study design. Participants were served twelve open-ended semistructured telephone interview questions to gather data for the study. Fifteen themes developed from the interview responses that connected to the general research question and the sub-research questions of this study. The findings of this study revealed that adopting themes such as: (a) formal factors affecting business survival; (b) developing workshops for small businesses; (c) improving systems for essential services; (d) encouraging a more business-like climate; (e) financial access and credit from banks; (f) engaging in community development; (g) contributing to poverty reduction; (h) identifying business opportunities; (i) improving quality of life; (j) partnerships with big

companies; (k) avoiding business failures through lessons learned; (l) managing financial data and effective bookkeeping; (m) improving business processes; (n) managing and monitoring business operations; (o) and ensuring technology support and innovation that might assist in helping small business to survive beyond 5 years based on the sociocultural, politico-economic fundamentals, and internal management strategies thus enhancing self-employment, poverty reduction, and wealth creation. Policymakers involved with decision-making must consider the influence of those fundamentals associated with a small business survival life cycle that provided the impetus for sustainable businesses. The findings of this study may provide pathways for future research in small business survival strategies. The basis is on inclusive businesses, the society, and Africapitalism that served as a new business model for the nation-states of the Sub-Saharan African region.

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## Appendix A: Interview Guide for Small Business Owners

Interview questions on phenomenology research design

These interview questions will help explore how small business owners could sustain their businesses beyond five years. The following is a tentative list of interview questions

What is your Sex and Age?

Sex  Male  Female

Age  26-35  36-45  46-55  56-65

What is your level of education?

- High school graduate  Some college  College graduate
- Some High school  Graduate of master's program
- No High School  Post - Doctoral work  Doctorate degree

How many employees do you have? \\_\_\_\_\_

Please check which sector of the Services Industry does your business venture belong?

- Food processing  Personal care products  Consulting  Pharmacy
- Footwear  Fruit drinks  Cosmetics products

## Interview questions

### General Research Question

*How have small business owners in Ghana used institutional attributes to overcome the problems that cause many small businesses to fail within five years.*

1. Are there government policies or institutions that have influenced your business? If so, please identify which policies and or institutions?
2. Could you please, tell me about your personal experience and motivation as a successful sole proprietor in the services industry in Accra, Ghana?
3. Have you experience business failure in one way or another since you began operations? And how have you avoided business failure beyond 5 years, please Explain?
4. Are there financing accesses to credit and or banking institutions that have influenced the success of your business? If so, please identify the financing access or banking institutions?

### *Sub Research RQ1*

*How have small business owners who are embedded in specific business locations in the metropolitan area of Accra, Ghana, sustained their businesses beyond five years?*

5. How has your business been involved with the city or local community development that has influence the success of your business? Please, indicate if the location of your business has been a factor for success.
6. Are there business' services that have improved your customers' lives? and or increase their usefulness that helped to sustain your business?



7. How have you used management programs to help identify business opportunities that enable your business to become sustainable?
8. Are there entrepreneurial training & teaching programs and or Agencies' programs that have influenced the success of your business. If so, please identify those training and teachings programs and explain?

*Sub Research RQ2*

*How have small business owners adopted the management's strategies that allow small businesses to survive and sustain their businesses beyond five years?*

9. What management strategies and or technological capabilities did you find useful that helped to sustain your business?
10. How did you use financial management knowledge and or banking advisory services to help sustain your business? Please identify which services you have used.
11. Are there technology capabilities and or ICT that have influenced the success of your business? If so, please identify the technology.
12. How are small businesses in Ghana contributing to alleviate poverty and economic growth?

## Appendix B: Abbreviations

AfDB	African Development Bank
AGI	Association of Ghanaian Industries
BOP	Bottom of the pyramid
CEV	Corporate Ethical Values
CDE	Capacity Development Center
EDIF	Export Development and Investment Fund
EET	Entrepreneurial Education and Training
EMPRETEC-	Technology-based entrepreneur development Agency
FR	Financial repression
IA	Institutional attributes
IAF	Impact Assessment framework
IBV	Institutional-based view
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
GHAMFIN	Ghana Micro Finance Institution Network
GR	Great Recession
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GSS	Ghana Statistical Services
MASLOC	Micro Finance and Small Loans Centre
MFI	Micro finance institutions
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
NGOs	Non-government organization
NBSSI	National Board of Small-Scale Industries

NEIP National Entrepreneurship Innovative Program

OECD Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

PBE Place-based Enterprises

RPED Regional project on Enterprise development

RBV Resource Base View

SEE Shapiro's Entrepreneurial Event

SMEs Small and Mid-sized Enterprises

SSA Sub-Saharan African Region

TPB Theory of Planned Behavior

UNDP United Nations Development Program

USAID United States Agency for International Development

VCTF Venture Capital Trust Fund

## Appendix C: Invitation Letter

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear: \_\_\_\_\_

My name is John W Atanga and I am a doctoral student conducting a research at Walden University. I am inviting you to participate in a research study that I am leading to explore the strategies and experiences of small business owners in the consumer products industry who have been in business beyond 5 years.

You are being contacted to participate, given that you are a small business owner in Accra, Ghana Metropolitan area.

Your participation is voluntary, and the data collected will be confidential.

Should you decide to participate in the study, I have enclosed an Informed Consent Form for your review, please ask all questions you consider necessary. In my role as the researcher, I would ensure that all aspects of the research are clearly explained to each participant, thus clarifying any doubts before the participant consent to the interview.

The maximum time for the interview is 30 minutes and it will include interview questionnaires about your strategies and experiences. I will record the interview responses and you will be able to review the transcribed interview for accuracy before they are included in the study. Your participation is highly appreciated for the success of the study.

Thanking you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Regards,

John W. Atanga  
Doctoral Student  
Walden University

## Appendix D: Conceptual Framework Relationship to Data Collection.

Table D1

*Conceptual Framework Relationship to Data Collection*

<b>Conceptual Framework</b>	<b>Concepts /Constructs <i>Data collection evaluation</i></b>	<b>Research Objectives</b>	<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
		The objective of this study is to explore the experience of small business owners who have been in business beyond 5 years.	<i>How have small business owners in Ghana used institutional attributes to overcome the problems that cause many small businesses to fail within five years?</i>	
Ghanaian economy & Business policy  Economic systems & Institutional	<i>High interest rates, collateral, financial repression, Tax rebates, productive loans policies, Support programs, Gov't involvement, affordable credit, culture. property rights, venture capital fund</i>			Q1. Are there government policies or institutions that have influenced the success of your business? If so, please identify which policies and or institutions.
EET, Higher Educ Institutions  Motivation and intentions, marketing	Knowledge and experience, Small business owner survival, <i>Culture, structure innovativeness,</i>			Q2. Could you please, tell me about your personal experience and

strategies Structural support systems, social support systems,	<i>improvement, self-employment, poverty alleviation, business support services</i>			motivation as a successful sole proprietor in the services industry in Accra, Ghana?
Business Failure Business development/ Gov't Agencies	Business failure, failure at startup lesson learned ( <i>Key forms of Assistance: financial, programs , technical, training, Knowledge base</i> )			Q3. Have you experience business failure in one way or another, since you began operations? And how have you avoided business failure beyond 5 years, please Explain?
Management skills & Marketing strategies  Financing Accesses  Innovation Information tech & partnership	<i>Focus &amp; Cost leadership strategies Financing/control Access to Financing, Microfinance, Innovativeness &amp; technology</i>			Q4. Are there financing accesses to credit and or banking institutions that have influenced the success of your business? If so please identify the financing access or banking institutions?
EET programs  Gov't Agencies- programs  Higher Edu, Inst  International Inst	Entrepreneurs' education and training programs For practice/ professionals ( <i>Role of management training, knowledge</i> )			

	<i>programs, business plan, business development Role of MNCs and small businesses dev. Agencies, university's community programs, NGOs, MNCs)</i>			
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<b>Conceptual Framework</b>	<b>Concepts /Constructs <i>Data collection evaluation</i></b>	<b>Research Objectives</b>	<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
		The objective of this study is to explore how small business owners may have used these strategies to survive in business.	<i>How have small business owners who are embedded in specific business locations in Accra, Ghana metropolitan area sustained their businesses beyond five years?</i>	Q5. How has your business been involved with the city or local community development that has influence the success of your business? Please, indicate if the location of your business has been a factor for success

<p>BOP/PBE model</p> <p>Economic systems and institutions</p> <p>Social support systems</p> <p>Structural support systems</p>	<p>Inclusive marketing, innovation, and partnership</p> <p><i>Role of socio-economic impact, Rural Dev, small businesses participate in city dev planning participatory approaches, Innovativeness, improvement, capacity building, quality of life, participatory approach)</i></p>			<p>Q6. How has your business been involved with the city or local community development that has influence the success of your business? Please, indicate, if the location of your business influences your business success?</p>
<p>Business Development</p> <p>Marketing strategies</p> <p>Technology</p> <p>Partnership, Innovation</p>	<p>Marketing trends, Identify service/product</p> <p>Business plan, <i>costumer value proposition, test model, Role of Socio-economic, impact,</i></p>			<p>Q7. How have you used Mgt programs to help identify business opportunities that enabled your businesses to survive and become sustainable?</p>
<p>BOP/PBE model</p> <p>International Inst</p> <p>Constraints/Incentives, Gov't Agencies</p>	<p>Partnership &amp; collaboration,</p> <p>Inclusive marketing</p> <p>Rural dev</p> <p>MNCs &amp; NGOs</p> <p>Management training,</p> <p>Incentives,</p> <p>Rewards, <i>social</i></p>			<p>Q8. Are there entrepreneurial training &amp; teaching programs and or Agencies' programs that have influenced the success of your</p>



	<i>problems, as opportunities, microfinance funding)</i>			business? If so, please identify those training and teaching programs.
Financing accesses to credit Financing/Banking Institutions	Access to Financing, Microfinancing, <i>(community lending Role of personal savings and family support, business development, Tax breaks, tax rebates, Property rights, local communities, collateral, incentives programs, Angel financing</i>			

<b>Conceptual Framework</b>	<b>Concepts /Constructs <i>Data collection evaluation</i></b>	<b>Research Objectives</b>	<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
		The objective of this study is to assess what factors have small businesses used to improve the quality of business	<i>How have small business owners, adopted the management strategies that allow small businesses to survive and sustain</i>	Q9 What management strategies and or technological capabilities did you find useful that helped to sustain your business?

		and enable these small firms to sustain their businesses beyond five years?	<i>their businesses beyond five years?</i>	
Management skills, Banking/ Financing Marketing Financing accesses	Financial planning, control & management business plan, Knowledge and experience ( <i>Role Management education, , tax system, legal requirements, compliance, financial literacy</i> )			Q10. How did you use financial management knowledge and or banking advisory services to help sustain your business? Please identify which services you have used
Innovation, Information technology, Partnership/, Technology capabilities	Business development, inclusive innovation, mentoring programs ( <i>Role of, innovation, collaboration and partnership, information technology, technology collaborative/partnership</i> )			Q11. Are there technology capabilities and or ICT that have influenced the success of your business? If so please identify the technology.
Business development, Institutional attributes,	small business owners attributes, self –reliant, self- employment poverty alleviation, promote			Q12. How are small businesses in Ghana

BOP/PBE model	business linkages ( <i>Role of the sustainable Businesses/development Quality of life &amp; Lifestyle Sustainable business mindset</i> )			contributing to alleviate poverty and economic growth?
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Table D1 Design, 2018(Erastus, Stephen, &amp; Abdullia, 2014)

Table D2

*Follow-Up Interview Questions (italic) to RQs from Appendix A*

Question Number	How have small businesses owners in Ghana used institutional attributes to overcome the problems that cause many small businesses to fail within five years?
Q1	Are there government policies or institutions that have influenced the success of your business? If so, please identify which policies and or institutions? <i>What about Gov't involvement, affordable credit, culture, property rights?</i>
Q2	Could you please, tell me about your personal experience and motivation as a successful sole proprietor in the services industry in Accra, Ghana? <i>Small business owners' perception, beliefs, patterns, family support Describe this lived experience? Patterns</i>
Q3	Have you experience business failure in one way or another since you began operations? And how have you avoided business failure beyond 5 years, please Explain? <i>What lessons did you learn from failure that could benefit others?</i>
Q4	What management strategies and or technological capabilities did you find useful that helped to sustain your business?  <i>What about the role of partnership with MNCs and financing? How have marketing ideas helped sustain your small business?</i>
Q5	Are there entrepreneurial training & teaching programs and or Agencies' programs that have influenced the success of your business? If so, please identify those training and teachings programs and

explain?

*What about a business plan? What about the role of management training programs, from Gov't agencies and support services, MNCs and small business development agencies? NBSSI, AGI, EMPRETEC, Motivation / intentions*

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Table D3

*Follow Up Questions to SRQ1*

Question Number	RQ1: How have small business owners who are embedded in specific business locations in the metropolitan area of Accra, Ghana, sustained their businesses beyond five years?
Q6	How has your business been involved with the city or local community development that has influence the success of your business? <i>Please, indicate if the location of your business has been a factor for success</i>
Q7	Are there businesses' services that have improved your customers' lives and or increase their usefulness that helped to sustain your business? <i>What about the role of socio-economic impact, customer value proposition, Quality of life and lifestyle?</i>
Q8	How have you used management programs to help identify business opportunities that enabled your businesses to survive and become sustainable? <i>What of social problems as opportunities. Marketing and costumers. What of community service pathways to improve your business?</i>
Q9	Are there financing accesses to credit and or banking institutions that have influenced the success of your business? If so, please identify the financing accesses or banking institutions.  <i>What about access to and affordable financing through community banks, micro financing. What about financial literacy, planning and control?</i>

Table D4

*Follow Up Questions to SRQ2*


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Question Number	RQ2: How has small business owners, adopted the management strategies that allow small businesses to survive and sustain their businesses beyond five years?
Q10	<p>How did you use financial management knowledge and or banking advisory services to help sustain your business? Please identify which services you have used?</p> <p><i>What about knowledge and experience gained over the years?</i></p>
Q11	<p>Are there technology capabilities and or ICT that have influenced the success of your business? If so, please identify the technology?</p> <p><i>What about the role of services improvement for performance and competition?</i></p>
Q12	<p>How are small businesses in Ghana contributing to alleviate poverty and economic growth?</p> <p><i>What about the role of sustainable businesses growth? What of the role of business values and ethics?</i></p>

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## Appendix E: Sample Data Coding Table

## Qualitative Thematic Analysis: Sample Data Coding

Data	Assign Codes	Themes formed	RQs
<p><b>-Participant 19</b>  “<u>Changes in disposable income</u> affect the demand for products and services that can lead to small business failure.”  “Formal policies have <u>improved efficiency and transparency in managing</u>”  <u>financial, marketing, management development, and public procurement incentives</u>”</p> <p><b>-Participant 7</b>  “government set <u>consistent and transparent business operating rules, with policies on governance structure and risk management</u>”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Financial, marketing, management development incentives</li> <li>-Disposable income</li> <li>-Interest rate</li> <li>-Tax system</li> <li>-efficiency &amp; transparency</li> <li>-Policies standards</li> <li>-policies on governance structure &amp; Risk management</li> </ul>	<p>Major Theme  1. Formal factors affecting business survival</p>	<p>Gen RQ</p>
<p><b>Participant 15</b>  “<u>The training on business plan, bookkeeping and business management</u> helps in seeking funding to support the business.”  “ Other training -<u>business development, performance management, and best practices. Entrepreneurship programs</u> involved, incubation, intervention evaluation”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Bookkeeping</li> <li>-Business plan</li> <li>-Business management</li> <li>- Intervention evaluation</li> <li>-_Entrepreneurship programs</li> <li>-Incubation</li> </ul>	<p>Major Theme  2. Developing workshop for small businesses</p>	<p>Gen RQ</p>

<p><b>Participant P18</b>  “Regulations, <u>compliance</u>, and <u>rules</u> levied on the small businesses are to <u>improve quality</u>. “These standards promote <u>competition</u> that can lead to <u>innovativeness</u>.    ‘improvement in <u>financial inclusion, accessibility, and affordability</u>,’  “<u>Infrastructure</u> and <u>law enforcement services</u> are required to corroborate the legitimacy”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Competition</li> <li>-Innovativeness</li> <li>-Financial inclusion</li> <li>-Accessibility &amp; affordability</li> </ul>	<p>Major Theme  3. Improving systems for essential services</p>	<p>Gen RQ</p>
<p><b>Participant 6</b>  “<u>Innovative programs</u> acquired from <u>Western expertise in partnership with business development services</u> have helped businesses to survive”  “<u>policies are efficient and transparent</u>, yet those services are politicized as they <u>encouraged innovation</u> and have”  “<u>African business</u> is changing to a new paradigm shift for Africans that require <u>transformational leaders</u> who are involved with business, society and the environment”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Innovative programs</li> <li>-business development services</li> <li>-encouraged innovation</li> <li>African business</li> </ul>	<p>Major theme  4. Encouraging a more business-like climate</p>	<p>Gen RQ</p>
<p><b>Participant 15</b>    “It is difficult to <u>access financial support</u> from banks. The <u>microfinance services</u> gave loans to small business, but their <u>interest</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-interest rate is</li> </ul>		

<p><u>rate is high</u>, despite their high margin. <u>The lack of suitable collateral</u> is a problem in accessing finance, just as <u>the lack of access to credit is a barrier to business.</u>” Business planning and <u>asset ownership</u> have influenced small <u>business access to loan and financial credit.</u></p>	<p>high, -the lack of suitable collateral -the lack of access to credit is a barrier -asset_ownership -_access to loan and financial credit</p>	<p>Major theme 5. Financial accesses &amp; credit from Banks</p>	<p>Gen RQ</p>
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Data	Assign Codes	Themes formed	RQs
<p><b>Participant 16</b> I have a <u>competitive edge</u> with other persons by the <u>business location</u> and engagement with the community. The <u>customers who patronized</u> the business in the <u>local community</u> have been partly responsible for the success of the business” “<u>location is a critical success factor</u> for the businesses as the <u>basis for marketing strategies</u> on visibility accorded the business”</p>	<p>-business location - -customers who patronized competitive edge -_location is a critical success factor - basis for marketing strategies</p>	<p>Major theme 6. Engaging in community development</p>	<p>SRQ1</p>
<p><b>Participant 7</b> “I design the program based on that persons' <u>cash flow changes in their level of poverty.</u> The basis of repaying the loans is a function of <u>the level of improvement,</u> ensuring their</p>	<p>-cash flow change  -indicates the achievement of a</p>	<p>Major theme</p>	



<p>child is in school, <u>the ability to move from one room to a three-room home, which indicates the achievement of a social mission.</u> Given that, the child attended school and graduated from college." "These policies are designed to progress people out of poverty while running their business with oversight from the financial institution has led <u>to sustainable business</u>'</p>	<p>social mission Poverty -sustainable business'</p>	<p>7. Contributing to poverty alleviation.</p>	<p>SRQ1</p>
<p><b>Participant 11</b> <u>Packaging size and labelling</u> have increased demand in <u>low-income markets,</u> which has increased sales. <u>Package resizing</u> is typical of big companies that can scale the product to <u>local markets that can increase sales.</u> We have <u>improved on packaging materials</u> due to <u>collaboration</u> with a third-party firm. I have designed the <u>products so that consumers with lower income can afford the product and reasonably patronized the low-income markets."</u></p>	<p>-Packaging size and labelling -low-income markets -local markets that can increase sales -products so that consumers with -improved on packaging - patronized the low-income markets."</p>	<p>Major theme 8. Identifying business opportunities.</p>	<p>SRQ1</p>
<p><b>Participants 20</b> <u>Inclusive innovation</u> couple with <u>inclusive marketing strategies</u> has enhanced the social and <u>economic well-being of people</u> through <u>innovative solutions</u> for <u>affordable access to</u></p>	<p>inclusive marketing economic well-being of people</p>	<p>Major theme</p>	<p>SRQ1</p>

<p><u>products and services</u>. The <u>customers benefit from improving their lifestyle and increase customer satisfaction</u>. The business involvement in services also <u>includes consumer consulting</u> to offer services that improve the customer experience and <u>wellbeing that resulted in returning costumers</u>.</p>	<p>-affordable access to products and services          -improving their lifestyle          -includes consumer consulting          -Increase customer satisfaction.</p>	<p>9. Improve the quality of life</p>	
<p>Participant 16          The business' involvement with <u>partnerships reveals a relationship</u> that can increase the <u>business' resource base</u>, which could help the <u>business to survive</u>. <u>Partnerships</u> have helped to get bigger projects and <u>identify businesses</u> on a large scale. We have <u>improved on packaging materials</u> due to the partnerships. <u>Partnerships are beneficial</u> they can identify businesses on a large scale. Businesses can create benefit by reducing cost and risk exposure of a business operation</p>	<p>partnerships reveal a relationship          -business' resource base,          -identify businesses          -Partnerships are beneficial          -Businesses create benefit          -reducing cost and risk exposure</p>	<p>Major theme          10. Partnership with big companies</p>	<p>SRQ1</p>

Data	Assigned Codes	Themes Formed	RQ
<p><b>Participant 10</b>            “My <u>passion and motivation</u> to serve my customers increases when I listened and satisfy those demands with the products. I avoid failure by <u>signing contracts and agreements</u>. Building <u>knowledge in business management and business plan</u>, we believe <u>failure gave the owner strength</u>; it strengthened the business. To engage in sustainable business ventures one requires <u>commitment, cognition, and motivation</u>”            “Failure is not the issue, and instead the <u>issue is challenges personal experience and self-motivation</u> are critical to survive”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-passion and motivation</li> <li>-signing contracts and agreements</li> <li>-knowledge in business management and business plan</li> <li>-personal experience and self-motivation</li> <li>-commitment, cognition,</li> <li>-failure gave the owner strength</li> </ul>	<p>Major theme            11. Avoiding business failure lessons learned</p>	<p>SRQ2</p>
<p><b>Participant 15</b>            “The survival of the business requires the <u>separation of business expenses activities from those</u></p>			

<p><u>of the family. For financial management, from those of the family, and maintaining a constant stream of cash flows</u> has enabled the business to survive. We applied managerial finance <u>to improve on bookkeeping accounts, internal credit, the advice in financial records, and audits check of records.</u> We used bank advisory to services understand accounts and <u>keeping good documentation and records</u> for personal expenditures”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-separation of business expenses from those of the family</li> <li>-maintaining a constant stream of cash flows</li> <li>-improve on bookkeeping accounts,</li> <li>-keeping good documentation and records</li> </ul>	<p>Major theme 12. Managing financials and bookkeeping</p>	<p>SRQ2</p>
<p><b>Participant 13</b> My management team traveled overseas in Turkey to visit factories and view comparable products, <u>learning and identifying product lines</u> that are performing abroad. To implement this knowledge, we <u>redesign the products to serve the customers.</u> The visitors brought back ideas, feedback, and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-learning and identifying product lines</li> <li>-redesign the products to serve the customers</li> <li>-Marketing strategies that</li> </ul>	<p>Major theme 13. Improving business processes</p>	<p>SRQ2</p>

<p>opportunities. The team identifies <u>businesses and nature of operations</u> <u>Marketing strategies that involved packaging</u> and branded items enabled the business to engage in business opportunities</p>	<p>involved packaging</p>		
<p><b>Participant 20</b>  “<u>One must track all performances on every one of the processes.</u> Management strategies with a team should have empathy with costumes. <u>Market segmentation</u> by products is an essential <u>management strategy</u> for the business. I learn to manage the business using finance and <u>marketing skills.</u> <u>Cash flows</u> are vital to the company; <u>the regular monitor of cash flows ensures the cash flow projections</u> where spending has to align with the bottom line. <u>Market target-setting task</u> is used to monitor and evaluate employees,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-track all performances on processes</li> <li>-Market segmentation by products</li> <li>-manage finance and marketing skills</li> <li>-cash flow projections</li> <li>-Market target-setting task</li> <li>-employee performance with setting targets</li> </ul>	<p>Major theme  14. Manage and monitor business operations</p>	<p>SRQ2</p>

<p><u>tying employee performance with setting targets.</u></p>			
<p><b>Participant 15</b>          “We use <u>social media platform</u> for <u>advertising the product</u> to customers. <u>Graphic design</u> allows <u>customers to view and place orders online</u>. Technology capabilities are necessary for businesses to survive. <u>Internet sales have improved</u> service delivery to customers. The mobile money apps have help with loan repayment. <u>Technology and innovation</u> are vital to business survival”  <u>technology for business objectives</u>, as well as how <u>inclusive marketing strategies</u>”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-social media platform</li> <li>-Graphic design allows customers</li> <li>-customers to view and place orders online</li> <li>-Internet sales</li> <li>-Technology and innovation</li> <li>-business objectives</li> <li>-inclusive marketing strategies</li> </ul>	<p>Major theme          15. Technology support and innovation in business</p>	<p>SRQ2</p>